



Lynton.G.Barr
P.O.Box 23
Swan Reach 3903
Victoria
Phone 03 5156 4674
Email- delbarr1@bigpond.com

Around the Jetties

January 2013

Issue No 64

An Anglers Newsletter

“The finest gift you can give to any fisherman is to put a good fish back, and who knows if that fish that you caught isn’t someone else’s gift to you.” (Lee Wulff- Legendary fly designer and author)

Editorial

A warm 2013 welcome to readers of Around the Jetties. This issue brings a wide variety of matters, including the first actions of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Gippsland Lakes in getting consultants to prepare a draft for discussion. If you have access to email facilities you might like to look at this draft and particularly the statements on fishing in the Gippsland Lakes. Email www.gippslandlakes.net.au

There does not seem to be any Ministerial Advisory Committee member with links to recreational fishing, however the same cannot be said for commercial fishing interests with the former secretary of the Estuarine Fishermen’s Association a full member of the Advisory Committee. Given the parlous state of recreational fishing in the Gippsland Lakes, the issue of any actions by this committee affecting an already decimated fishery will need to be monitored by anglers and local clubs. This might be a challenge for the future of recreational fishing in the Gippsland Lakes.

Another matter that is creating concern is the possible decline of dusky flathead and bream in Lake Tyers. This observation from a number of regular anglers is thought to be partly associated with the vastly increased fishing pressure on this small estuary, and this is likely to be connected with the decline in fish stocks in the Gippsland Lakes and rivers, which no longer attract anglers as they did a decade ago. Anglers who formerly fished the Gippsland lakes now fish Lake Tyers. This may be a major challenge in the next decade for Government and anglers.

Gippsland Lakes Environmental Strategy

In November the Ministerial Advisory Committee released a Gippsland Lakes Environmental Strategy draft. This was a glossy document prepared for the Ministerial Advisory Committee by a project team from Lloyd Environmental Pty Ltd. Members of the public were given until December 17th to respond to this 88 page document. I am concerned as to whether many angling clubs and anglers were aware of this draft, and the statements on fish and fishing in the Gippsland Lakes included in this document. The timing of the release of this strategy, and the short response time were also a concern. I produced a fairly detailed response on fishing statements made in the draft that were based on out of date statistics or in some cases were in my view wrong. I am happy to send a copy of my 8-page response to any interested readers or angling clubs. Ross Scott well known locally, and who has been associated with river management since 1978, provided a response on water issues including salinity and mercury in fish, and the degraded nature of the Gippsland Lakes. Ross has made his 9-page submission available for any interested readers and Around the Jetties will provide copies on request.

I provide the following from my response as a sample of the generalized fishing statements in the draft.

Draft Statement

The commercial fishery in the Gippsland Lakes provides fish to wholesale and retail markets in the Gippsland Region and elsewhere “which provides an attraction to eat locally caught fish and see the fleet in the harbour.”

This is a vision however the reality is somewhat different in that the fish in the local market are almost certainly not black bream, and I have not seen black bream on the menu at a restaurant locally, and it is years since I have seen black bream displayed in the Co-op shop. In restaurants the local fish almost entirely comes from the outside fleet, and the most favoured fish, available at almost every restaurant is flathead tails, and at hotels gummy shark. The fleet in harbour for visitors to see is the outside fleet. The Gippsland Lakes fishery makes little contribution to local fish sales apart from the small sand whiting and small leatherjackets, and an occasional King George whiting. Fish such as luderick and mullet seldom appear in the fish shops or restaurants and the same apply to tailor which is not regarded as a restaurant species. For many years it was put forward that the Gippsland Lakes fishery provides fish for those who do not go fishing. **When this claim is examined it cannot be substantiated apart from black bream, and this recreational species is now at a historically low level.**

This provides one example of the lack of understanding of the consultants’ report confusing the local outside trawl fishery with the netting of the Gippsland Lakes by ten commercial fishermen.

Diary Anglers Monitor Lake Tyers 2010/11

In the Recreational Licence Fishing Notes released by Fisheries Victoria in November 2012, diary anglers recorded the results of 120 fishing trips targeting black bream and 55 trips targeting dusky flathead in Lake Tyers in 2010/11.

Catch rates for black bream were lower than in the previous year 2009/10, but similar to the five year average, whilst catchrates for dusky flathead were higher in 2010/11 but again similar to the five year average for this species in Lake Tyers. The report suggests there is no evidence of a persistent decline in abundance of either black bream or dusky flathead.



Diarists measured 658 black bream in Tyers during 2010/11 and most bream were around twelve year old (34%) and from the successful 1998/99 successful spawning, whilst a considerable number of this catch were below the legal minimum size. (23%)

Diarists measured 479 Dusky Flathead in 2010/11 with most fish being two years old. (58%) Most fish caught were below 50cms, (90%) suggesting the dusky flathead population should be closely monitored in the future. Seven of the diarists believed the average size of black bream in Lake Tyers had increased over the last five years, whilst the size of dusky flathead had decreased. It was also observed that the abundance of undersize black bream had increased compared with the previous 3-4 years.

The angler diary program has been operating in Lake Tyers since 1999/00 and is currently funded by the Recreational Fishing Grants Program. Volunteer anglers have been contributing detailed information to Fisheries Victoria, which improves the understanding and the monitoring of fish stocks in this small estuary.

If you are a regular angler fishing Lake Tyers and would like to get involved in the angler diary program, contact Pam Oliverio at the Fisheries Research Branch on 03 5258 0111 or email Pam.Oliverio@vic.gov.au

Editor

The above information is taken from the publication “RFL Notes 2012” and provides information for both researchers and anglers on the condition of the recreational fishery in Lake Tyers. The information in this report reinforces the need for the changes in recreational size limits for dusky flathead introduced by Fisheries Victoria on November 1st 2012, which was both sought and supported by a majority of anglers who could see this regulation might conserve the iconic dusky flathead for future generations of anglers.

Whilst angler diarists can contribute local knowledge, this report through the catchrates gives an indication of the abundance of both black bream and dusky flathead, and together with the length and age of fish, can provide a guide to the health of the fishery. It is important to note that this report is from 2010/11, and anglers are currently noting changes that may give a different picture for 2012/13.

Angler diarist Bob McNeill, who contributes to this angler’s newsletter, provides a record to this program by means of his diary of his catches including where the fish were caught, the bait, and hook size and the length of fish (See later in this edition)

Congratulations to the Fisheries Research Branch and Simon Conron who has worked with anglers to develop this cost efficient system to monitor fish stocks in our estuaries and bays.

Lake Tyers Today

Generally in recent months fishing in Lake Tyers has been poor, with very few bream being caught, and the dusky flathead fishing has been spasmodic, with the best catches being taken by a few regular Lake Tyers anglers. One of the best anglers is John Harrison, who is also a research angler, and who in this role removes the otoliths of fish he catches and forwards them to Fisheries research for ageing and general research. I had the following note from John on the 31st December.

“was on the water at 5.30am this morning and for two hours plus fishing had one bream only and that undersize. On my ventures out I have found the flathead extremely slow compared to previous years with the best success around the channel markers. I am tempted to say that the revised regulations for duskies have come just in time, however bream catches throughout the system have been very poor for several months and I suspect that may be an environmental factor.”

John’s comments together with Bob McNeill’s report in the following item would suggest that the recreational fishing in Lake Tyers should be closely monitored in the immediate future.

On the 30th December, I was at Lake Tyers and was surprised to find about eleven anglers fishing in the shallow arm of water in front of the Lake Tyers Tavern. I watched for a short time and saw a number of bream caught. When I spoke to one of the anglers, he indicated this group of anglers had fished this small area for almost a week. He had three size bream and I was surprised to find he was catching them on squares of pilchard. A number of the bream being caught were small and were returned to the water, however most anglers had one or two size bream. Given the general fishing in the estuary, this small congregation of bream in this very shallow water was surprising.



John Harrison provided some interesting comments and observations on this unusual occurrence.

“The congregation of bream below the Tavern indicates to me that the bream are seeking increased salinity resulting from seepage through the sand barrier, so possibly the lake water is on the fresh side. Also interesting is the number of pelicans. Yesterday I counted 64 fishing in a very organised way in front of our house and there was also a significant number I did not count near the entrance to Fisherman’s Arm. An average count in normal times is between 2 and 7.”

Tavern bream fishing is interesting. Reports of some lethargic fish being scooped out by hand and by net further around to the east. Also some fish caught earlier with signs of the cocopod bacteria showing in yellow blotches on the scales. I saw the start of the fishing frenzy in the front of the Tavern. A couple on their own were pulling in fish one after the other and they had a 20 litre white bucket almost full. I returned in the afternoon and they were back again, this time with the bank lined with others so it doesn’t take long for word to get around. The couple had at least 20 recently caught fish. I was there again next morning at dawn and they were the first there, just setting up, and still had four fish from the previous evening in their bucket-said they would clean them later. Such a waste and slaughter and no sign of fisheries. The interesting thing was that the ‘good’ fishing was confined to a very small area and a lot of people had no fish.”

Editor

Thanks to John for this first hand information. A number of issues and concerns have been raised in John’s comments. I have pointed out previously on several occasions that a Reference Group was appointed by Fisheries Victoria to “oversee the implementation of the Lake Tyers Management Plan.” A meeting was called by Fisheries Victoria in August 2010, but since then the Reference Group has never met. I would have thought that issues like the move to change flathead regulations and sickness in bream would have been issues for this group to consider and provide advice to the Executive Director of Fisheries Victoria. I also wonder if a similar committee appointed for Mallacoota Inlet, has met more regularly than the Lake Tyers Reference Group, or has Fisheries Victoria dispensed with this local input into Management Plans.

Bob McNeill's Lake Tyers Report

This period (September to October) was one of the worst periods that Bob had experienced in a number of years with bream being extremely difficult to find, and no flathead. Bob fished the Toorloo Arm and the Nowa Nowa Arm down to Devil's Hole with general poor results. Over this period he caught 19 size bream from 22 outings, and this in itself indicates how difficult fishing had been. All bream were taken on prawn. The lake was nearly closed at the end of this fishing period and according to Bob he had personally little indication of an influx of other species during the open period apart from the report of a good salmon being caught near the channel markers and observing a substantial school of small tailor.

Bob puts this inactivity down to a lack of heavy rain, which brings fish "down", from their spawning areas. All this changed on the 21st of October when Bob caught two small flathead, and then on the 23rd when he caught 12 dusky flathead including two 47cm fish. This of course coincides with the thought of most dusky flathead anglers that these fish come on the bite around the end of October and the season lasts to July. Speaking to a number of keen Lake Tyers anglers, it was evident at the start of this period the catches of flathead were in the range of 38-44cms. Bob at this point was unable to get his favourite bait, live mullet, but found he was getting good fish using that all round bait of glassies and also small pilchards.

Reports like this from this diary angler always add to our understanding of the Lake Tyers recreational fishing. The next thing of course will be to wait on reports of other species that entered the lake during the period it was open being caught, remembering that in the past snapper, salmon, gurnard and leather jackets have all been caught following an open period.

Bob's October to December the 20th Report

Bob reports that the results I have had and his are very similar, and that his catch of dusky flathead would average 39-40cms with hardly any fish under 28cms. In this period Bob caught 134 flathead with the biggest being 57cms. On the 17th November, Bob caught 9 dusky flathead 41-45cms and all flathead contained well-formed spawn whilst the stomachs contained 3-4 small crab up to 10 cents in diameter. Bob suggested that his catch rate in December declined and this might have been due to the number of boats on Lake Tyers. The last week in October marked the start of the dusky flathead season for Bob and this seems to be the same for most anglers. In this period, Bob only caught two flathead. The baits used by Bob were glassies and pilchards early in this period and later he used live mullet, but these were very difficult to obtain, and it has been the same for all bait anglers. Bob stated, "despite getting 6 and 7 fish at my last couple of outings I tend to be rather pessimistic about the flathead fishery in Lake Tyers. This year for the first time I am not able to go to a spot feeling confident of at least catching one fish. Angler numbers are consistently high and mid-week there can be 12-14 trailers and when I come in at 9.00-9.30 on weekends, parking is often full." I think many regular anglers like Bob are starting to be concerned at the fishing pressure on the dusky flathead and bream stocks in this small estuary of Lake Tyers.

Thanks again to Bob McNeill for his regular Diary Report. This diary is forwarded to the Marine and Freshwater Fisheries Research Institute of Fisheries Victoria to add to the pool of knowledge on this estuary and the fish species that recreational anglers target.

Odd Bits and More

A Rare Fish

I was reading the December issue of the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) magazine, which is always an interesting read when I came across the following picture and article.

A-lot-a-ling

Crew member Richard Knox couldn't believe his eyes when this massive pink-ling was hauled on board the Petuna Endeavour. The average pink ling is 1m long and weighs less than 10 kg's. The maximum reported weight for pink ling is



25 kg's at which time it would be thirty years old. However the pink-ling pictured weighed a whopping 45 kg's and was 1.74m long. Pink ling live along the southern coast of Australia from Perth to Port Macquarie including Bass Strait around Tasmania, in open waters on the continental shelf and upper slopes between 200m and 800m. They occur in other southern hemisphere countries including New Zealand, Argentina and Chile. Many fishermen believe that ling live in burrows when on soft bottom but they are also often associated with canyons. Pink ling is an important commercial species in Australia and are managed under quotas set by the Commonwealth harvest strategy

Editor

I wonder how many anglers have ever seen a photo of this unusual fish. This magazine reported that the Australian Government snapshot on the status of the Australian trawl fishing stocks found only two species overfished, namely school shark and southern blue fin tuna. The report found that Australian fish stocks are in good shape, with the sustainable approach adopted by bodies such as the South East Fishing Trawl Industry.

A Rewarding Catch

Lake Tyers anglers have been concerned over a number of years at the small number of large dusky flathead being caught.

In my own case in the mid nineties I was catching and releasing around ten dusky Flathead over 10lbs each year,

yet in the last three years I have only had one dusky over 10lbs and that would seem to have been the experience of most recreational anglers. Graeme Merryful, a regular Lake Tyers angler reported that in the period Nov-early December he caught and released two large dusky flathead. One was 85cms and the other 92, and both fish would be close or better than 10lbs.

This was great news for according to the 2008 research of Charles Gray and Lachlan Barnes in NSW dusky flathead of this size could produce between 294,000 to 3.9million eggs, and the survival of these large females means the survival of the dusky flathead fishery into the future. Graeme is a bait angler who fishes Lake Tyers a couple of mornings each week, and his preferential bait is live mullet, although he also has good success using glassies.

There is a real sense of satisfaction in releasing one of these fish, and of course the maximum size to retain a dusky flathead is now 55cms following the introduction of new regulations on the 1st November which are specifically directed towards protecting the female dusky flathead. Gray and Barnes found that at 57cms, 50% of females would have the opportunity to spawn at least once, and the largest flathead sampled in their study was 98.5cms, whilst it appeared that male dusky flathead did not grow over 60cms in length. It was noted that dusky flathead do grow rapidly and the researchers estimated that most dusky flathead are two years old when they reach a length of 36cms. Unfortunately this new regulation to protect stocks of dusky flathead will **not** apply to commercial fishermen in the Gippsland Lakes.



Bass Stocking of Nicholson River

35,000 bass fingerlings were stocked in the Nicholson River as part of a three-year program on the 4th December. At the conclusion of the program 100,000 bass will have been stocked at a cost of \$100,000. This project was funded from the licence fees of recreational anglers.

Fisheries Victoria's Mark Fletcher and Nicholson Angling Club's Margaret and Ken Bradley empty some of the 35,000 Australian Bass into the Nicholson River



Readers of this newsletter who obtain the email version will recall that after Issue 63 I questioned when this event would happen. I received a letter from Anthony Foster, Freshwater Fisheries Manager that indicated that the stocking would take place regardless of whether the dam had been removed. I forwarded this letter to email readers.

Anthony Foster stated in that letter *“It was always envisaged, the establishment of a population of bass in the Nicholson above the weir would create “a mountain to the sea” self sustaining bass fishery over time in the event that the weir is eventually removed.”*

Readers would be aware that we were advised it would be three years before the weir was removed. This is important as bass move into the estuary to spawn, and this cannot happen until the weir is removed. Of course the problem remains that when the weir is actually removed and the fish move to the estuary to spawn and return they will have to negotiate the commercial nets that can currently be set 400 metres from the river mouths.

I again raise the point that a commitment was made prior to the last state election two years ago that spawning fish would be protected at river mouths from commercial nets. This commitment is yet to be realised.

Local member Tim Bull MP stated in the Bairnsdale News on the 23rd May 2012 “it had been raised with him in the past whether it was worth stocking fish for recreational purposes in a system where commercial netting existed. *“My view is that it is absolutely worth it. Any commercial catch rates will be monitored and I would expect some may be caught commercially, but this will be recorded for consideration.”* It would be a positive step if anglers could be informed what steps might be taken, if the bass funded by anglers are being taken in commercial nets. I am aware that Australian bass in Queensland have a closed season from June to August, when the fish move from the freshwater to the estuaries to spawn, and then return to the freshwater. This would seem a reasonable option to protect the spawning fish.

Since 2010, Fisheries Victoria has stocked nearly 320,000 Australian bass into eight lakes and rivers in Gippsland.

Blue Groper at Beware Reef

Over 400 divers recently participated in a fish count in Port Phillip Bay and coastal waters. The sighting of seven blue groper in the Beware Reef area near Cape Conran was a highlight of this fish count. The blue Groper according to Wendy Roberts, reef watch officer, can grow to 1.2metres and is a gentle friendly fish that swims up to divers. The groper was once abundant in Victorian waters, but the population plummeted in the 1970’s probably due to overfishing. These fish are thought to live in the same area for life. In the late 1960’s, I rock fished in the Eden area, and groper were occasionally caught, but with the growth of spear fishing as a sport and improved equipment in the following decades groper seemed to vanish from this area, and given the nature of the fish they would have been an easy catch for the spear fishermen of the day.



It is exciting to see these fish possibly returning, and the part today’s divers are playing in improving our awareness of these special species.

Material taken from the Age December 10th 2012



An Unusual Fishery on the Rubicon River

The Yarra Valley Salmon Farm near Thornton is in prime trout country, however the 16 ponds on this farm are home to 50,000 freshwater Atlantic salmon. The water for the ponds is taken from the Rubicon River and is returned to the river pure after going through two resettlement ponds. What is unusual is that the fish in these ponds are hand milked for the orange eggs and then returned to the ponds for another year. Milking starts in early May and continues for a month. Atlantic salmon were introduced from Norway in 1850, and the fish in the ponds

have come from this early introduction to Australian waters. It is believed that this is the only farm in Victoria growing and milking salmon for caviar.

The salmon are anaesthetised with clove oil prior to massaging for eggs. Some of the salmon are culled for sale between October and January each year, so the farm produces Atlantic salmon and caviar for the local market and also for Asian markets.

With the continuing development of aquaculture in Victoria and Tasmania of prime fish one can only wonder at the economics of maintaining a small commercial fishery of depleted fish stocks in the Gippsland Lakes.



Information Obtained from the Australian Newspaper December 22-23 2012

Fisheries Enforcement News

Media release November 30th 2012

Man busted for fisheries offences has boat seized.

“A Seymour man has been interviewed by Fisheries Officers into multiple alleged fisheries offences and had his boat seized after Fisheries Victoria officers inspected his catch at Mallacoota late last month.”

Editor It is alleged the man was a regular visitor to Mallacoota and was seen to be filleting fish before returning to the boat ramp. On inspection the man allegedly presented five dusky flathead and five whole bream. One of the dusky flathead was below the new 30cm minimum size limit, however on a search of his boat a concealed plastic box was found with 32 dusky flathead fillets and 12 bream fillets. The man will face charges including taking fish below the minimum size, exceeding the catch limit, and landing fish not in whole or carcass form. The mans 4.85 m Savage scorpion sports boat and his fishing equipment was seized by Fisheries officers. I am sure most Gippsland anglers would applaud this action by Fisheries officers.

Media release 28th December

Sale men face fines over illegal dusky flathead haul

“Three Sale men are facing charges after allegedly exceeding the catch limit for dusky flathead at Bemm River on the 27th of December.

The men aged 34,40, and 41 were allegedly found with 57 dusky flathead when inspected by Fisheries Officers upon returning to Sydenham Inlet boatramp,”

Two of the men will also be charged with fishing without a Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence.

Fisheries Officers also seized the boat and associated fishing equipment, together with the fish.

Editor.

Anglers across East Gippsland would deplore the actions of these three men, and strongly support the efforts of Fisheries Officers to stamp out such illegal catches of the iconic dusky flathead, which in Victoria is found only East of the Gippsland Lakes. These chaps are poachers and such catches are taken without thought for the many law abiding anglers who have supported the new dusky flathead regulations. The maximum fine for exceeding the catch limit of dusky flathead is \$2820, whilst the fine for fishing without a licence is \$141.

Media release 11th December 2012

Vessel seized as anglers fall foul of the law

Three Melbourne anglers are facing charges after two separate incidents at the Black Rock and Brighton Fishing ramps. The alleged offences were detected as part of Operation Blade, which is targeting snapper offences. In the first incident a Brunswick West man is facing a heavy fine or even jail after allegedly trying to obstruct Fisheries Officers at the Brighton boat ramp.



Editor-Fisheries supplied the photo of the seized vessel.

Work Undertaken on Local Boat Ramps

Readers of this newsletter would be aware of the concern raised at the safety of the boat ramps at North Arm and Metung in particular, and the danger to vehicles and persons with the slippery nature of the ramps. A petition was organised by Mark Frost of Lakes Outboards and supported by this publication. I have pleasure in reporting that work commenced on the 8th of December to lay a fibreglass sheet across the launching ramp. (See photo) This material was trialed in Western Australia and was found to be successful. The dangerous ramps will have this material in place for the influx of visitors. Thanks to the East Gippsland Shire for listening to the concerns of boat users and taking action before a tragedy occurred.



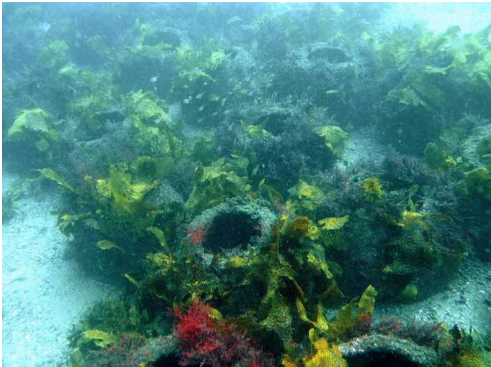
New Recreational Reefs for Estuarine Areas.

I received the following important note from [Brian Mottram, Manager of Recreational Fishing Improvements](#) (Fisheries Victoria on the 20th November following my criticism at the lack of action regarding the provision of estuarine reefs to areas like the Gippsland lakes.

“Fisheries Victoria will consult with anglers and others during 2013 to establish a short list of potential sites for new recreational reefs in the Gippsland region.

We’d be more than happy to hear from you or other anglers now Lynton, before we formerly kick this process off.

We will be looking to tick a number of boxes before we put a new reef in. So please consider the region and feel free to advise of any specific areas that you think will provide the best benefit for recreational fishers. Please email your ideas with grid references if possible to improving.fishing@dpi.vic.gov.au. “



This now provides a challenge for local anglers and clubs to look at areas for recreational reefs and perhaps to prepare a submission indicating not only the grid references but also providing a statement on the reasons for the location being put forward. Thanks to Bruce Mottram for this information as it provides an indication of the process to achieve recreational reefs in the Gippsland Lakes, the largest estuary in this state.

Victoria's Best Fishing Spots

In recent issues of Around the Jetties we have reported on the development of Lake Eildon with its extensive stocking of Murray cod and golden perch, with its natural increment of trout and redfin. In the last issue I reported on a mornings fishing on Lake Eildon.

Fisheries Victoria have recently conducted a survey involving more than 4500 Victorian anglers, and Lake Eildon was voted the most popular lake for recreational fishing, followed by Lake Eppalock, Lake Hume and Eildon Pondage. The Goulbourn River was the most popular river location followed by the Howqua River and the Ovens River near Bundalong. The survey also found that recreational fishers preferred species were redfin in lakes, rainbow trout in rivers and black bream in estuaries. More than 40% of respondents headed to Victoria's North East, making it by far the most popular inland fishing destination.

It is a sad indictment that East Gippsland Rivers, once the hub of a massive recreational fishery were not mentioned in this report of the survey.

Source-Fish-e-Fax Issue 326 December 2012

Improvements to Lake Tyers and Fisherman's Landing Boat Ramps



Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club is to be congratulated on the improvements undertaken at the main boat ramp and also at Fisherman's Landing initiated by this club. In both locations a floating jetty has been installed which will assist retrieval and launching at the main ramp (No2) and will provide a jetty to assist launching at Fisherman's Landing. This makes this launch site more accessible for aged anglers and will assist in taking pressure off the main ramp.

Lake Tyers Beach No2 Ramp

Funding for this project came from the Recreational Fishing Initiative funds provided by the State Government. This means angler members of the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club conceived the project, the State Government provided funds to finance this improvement of facilities, and the East Gippsland Shire carried out the work. The project was completed in December just prior to the influx of holiday anglers to this popular recreational fishing estuary.

John Harrison a spokesperson for the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club said that whilst the No 2 ramp is popular it is frequently congested and the additional floating pontoon on the north side of the ramp should improve efficiency and waiting times. In the case of Fisherman's Landing (Right) the area has toilets, a good ramp and parking, and with the construction of a floating pontoon adjacent to the ramp it will ensure greater utilisation of the ramp as anglers will no longer have to ground their boats when retrieving.

The project funding was the result of a joint application for funding by the Lake Tyers beach Angling Club and the East Gippsland Shire.



On December 31st I visited No 2 ramp at Lake Tyers and at 9.00am there were 29 boat trailers at this ramp, and just a little later I counted 28 boat trailers at the Fisherman's Landing boat ramp. The work of the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club has probably improved angler access to this estuary by 50%, and John Harrison and his team deserve the thanks of anglers. Fisherman's Landing is now a delightful launching ramp with its jetty, toilets and parking, and because of the pontoon jetty it will be used by an increasing number of recreational anglers.

Later in this newsletter I make some comments about value for money from projects funded from initiative funds or licence fees, and there is no better example of value for the dollar spent than this project.

In the Mail Bag

Letter Regarding Sea Spurge



From Wendy Parker President Friends of the Parks and Reserves of the Gippsland Lakes (Dec 6th 2012)

Hi Lynton,

I am enclosing a copy of an article that I sent to east Gippsland Newspapers re a recent activity that FoGL conducted with Parks Victoria.

FoGL's interest in sea spurge was initiated by an article published in 'Around the Jetties,' so thought you might be interested and may even want to publish this.

My understanding is that Parks have been aware of sea spurge in the lakes for a number of years and they have been tackling it at various spots. I think they are also planning an article for the newspaper.

FoGL is planning a weeding activity at Steamer Landing, in conjunction with Parks and some local boaties, in January, and there will be follow up weeding at the sites recently cleared in late March.

Regards Wendy Parker

Editor Thanks to our reader who made us aware of this weed threat, and congratulations to FoGL who have taken up this issue.

“Trawling or trolling?”

From Geoff Trusler (21st November 2012)

Hello Lynton. I was having a browse through issue 63 of Around the Jetties today, and noticed that in your Lake Eildon report you twice referred to “trawling” lures. Now my 1964 Concise Oxford tells me that trawling is the act of dragging a large bag or net across the bottom in order to catch fish. Trolling on the other hand is the act of fishing with rod and line using bait and lures behind a moving boat.

NOTE TO SELF- I really must learn how to insert those smiley faces into an email.

*By the way, I also haven't fished Eildon for at least forty years, and it's great to see it's fishing so well.
Ps- The real reason for sending this is to wish you and Dawn all the best for a safe and happy Xmas and New Year
Cheers Geoff Trusler*

Editor- You are absolutely right Geoff and congratulations you have won the competition as the first reader to recognise this mistake. Well done, and sorry about the lack of a prize. For readers you might remember we often go to fishing reports of the late 80's and this provides a startling contrast with the fishing in the local rivers and the Gippsland Lakes with fishing today. Geoff provided those tourist reports several years ago, and we still find them a fascinating insight on recreational fishing in the lakes and rivers and the change that has taken place in the last twenty years

From Jennifer Alitt

East Gippsland Fishcare Facilitator

Re Photos in "Around the Jetties" of a Fishcare Volunteer weighing and releasing a fish at the Twin Rivers Bream Classic. (20th August 2012)

Dear Lynton

In the August edition of "Around the Jetties" you have written an article regarding the 2012 Twin Rivers Bream Classic.....

In this article two photos were included of the East Gippsland Fishcare Volunteers; one is a photo of the Fishcare volunteers weighing in a black bream at the weigh in station at Johnsonville and also one of a Fishcare Volunteer releasing a black bream back into the Tambo River.

Fishcare Gippsland is concerned that photos of Fishcare volunteers were published in the August edition of "Around the Jetties" without obtaining the volunteers permission.

As a volunteer organisation, we are required to obtain permission to use images of people for the media. This is to ensure that the best interests and privacy of those photographed is not jeopardised or breached. In future we would greatly appreciate notification, and a request to use images of the Fishcare program and its volunteers.

If you have any enquiries in relation to my letter please feel to contact myself or the President of Fishcare East Gippsland on the contact details as stated below.

Yours sincerely Jennifer Alitt

Editor

This is an interesting letter for a number of reasons. I responded to Jennifer's letter on the 28th of August indicating that I regarded "Around the Jetties" as a private newsletter that goes to anglers who have requested it with no subscription required, and as such is not part of the media. Secondly I had the support of the Fishcare Volunteers, who actually posed for the photographs, and I had thanked them for this, and finally I thought this was positive publicity that would be appreciated by Fishcare, and anglers concerned for bream stocks. No comment on the role of Fishcare was made in the accompanying article other than the two photos showing the weighing and release of the fish. Comment was made on the parlous state of black bream in the local rivers and Gippsland Lakes.

I do however draw reader's attention to the fact that Fishcare has received over \$600,000 from recreational licence fees since 2008/9, and perhaps it is now time to question whether this funding of Fishcare is the most economic use of funds and in the interests of the anglers who provide those funds. Given the suggested lack of funds for research, and the seeming lack of money to finance a buyback of commercial licences from commercial fishermen who have requested being bought out in the Gippsland Lakes, it does seem reasonable that the funding of Fishcare is examined. It also needs to be remembered that licence revenue is funding 13 Fisheries Officers at a cost of almost \$2million It has been stated that, "Fieldwork is Fishcare's focus which involves talking to recreational anglers on site about how important it is to be well informed and to act responsible." This seems to be an important part of a Fisheries Officers role, 13 of who are already funded through angler licence contributions.

From Bob Pearce

Coordinator of the Recreational Fishing and Trailer Boat Owners Advocacy Support Group Magazine.

Re Commercial Fishing

Hi Lynton

In my younger days fish were abundant right throughout the Lakes and the three main rivers. No one seems to have the will to try to fix any of the problems. The first and most obvious thing would be to deal with the commercial netters. In years gone by the Gippsland Lakes could support a significant Commercial Fishery and

there would still be plenty of fish for recreational anglers to catch, but not any more, because of the serious environmental problems. Last year Fisheries Victoria stated publicly that they were going to do a deal to buy out the commercial netters, but it has fallen in a heap for some reason. I think it is only a matter of time before it happens though.

Keep up the great work you do for recreational fishing. The 'penny will drop' one day.

Best wishes Bob.

Editor

Bob Pearce is a former Chairman of VRFish, and is currently coordinator and editor of the Recreational Fishing and Trailer Boat publication.

Worth a Moments Thought

Record Blue Fin Tuna.- On ABC radio recently it was noted that a 228kg blue fin tuna sold on the Tokyo Fish Market for a world record figure of \$1.2 million or \$7500 per kg. Makes for an expensive sushi!!!



Trawling Our Beaches- I noticed that the local trawler Maasbanker was operating 150 metres off Lake Tyers Beach in late December. Spoke to several visiting surf anglers who expressed anger and frustration given there is 90 miles of beach yet the area where they have access to the beach is regularly trawled in the holiday period.

Summer Safety Officers-From October to April teams of safety education officers will be stationed at waterways across Victoria to promote boating safety. Three regional teams will visit boat ramps and be available to answer questions and provide information packs to boaters. Funded by Transport Safety Victoria Maritime branch.

2013 Recreational Fishing Guide- The following statement appears in this Guide for the first time. "Although dusky flathead can be found elsewhere, any flathead caught in Lake Tyers or any estuary east of Lake Tyers would be a dusky flathead." Anglers will still need to determine whether a flathead caught in the Gippsland Lakes is a duskie or a Southern bluespotted flathead (yank). Readers may recall that in an article in Around the Jetties Issue 48 July 2011 John Harrison research angler provided a detailed article on identifying dusky flathead from Southern bluespotted flathead and it was found tail markings were inconsistent and this is the identifying factor in the current Guide. Perhaps we might reprint this article in the next issue.

Chinook Salmon Released- In a Media release 23 November 2012, it was announced that 10,000 advanced fingerlings of Chinook salmon were released into Lake Bullen Merri, a crater lake near Camperdown. It is proposed that more Chinook salmon will be stocked in Lake Purrumbete and Lake Elingamite from March 2013. A release of these fish took place in the late 1970's in the crater lakes and they reached weights of up to 12kgs however such releases were discontinued due to breeding problems. These difficulties have now been overcome at the Snobs Creek hatchery near Eildon. Local angling clubs will monitor the performance of the fishery over the next four years.

Next Issue of Around the Jetties

The next issue of Around the Jetties will be the February issue. .

Readers- Don't forget you may get a friend or an interested angler onto the mailing list for Around the Jetties by simply sending us an email with details of the person you are nominating and his email address or a letter with details of a mailing address. We do not advertise but rely on readers talking to others and the number of readers just continues to increase.

Thanks To those readers of hard copy who have forwarded stamps or donated funds for printing. Your thoughtful assistance is greatly appreciated.

Good Health and Good fishing

Lynton Barr



Farewell to an Anglers Friend

Dianne Crookes who has undertaken creel surveys for Fisheries Research at Gippsland Lakes boat launching ramps and along the banks of the Tambo, Nicholson and Mitchell Rivers has retired after twelve years of interviewing anglers. Dianne had worked in the Marine Science Laboratory at Queenscliff for four years prior to the move to East Gippsland.

From the position of a full time Laboratory assistant at Queenscliff Dianne's Creel Survey work took place two days a week between March and November when she attempted to interview anglers along the banks of the rivers that flowed into the Gippsland Lakes.

Dianne sought information on the species the angler was targeting, the hours fished, the bait and hooks used, and information on how often the angler fished. If the angler had caught a fish it was measured and any fish returned were noted on her information board.

This information was sent to Fisheries Research and was added to the work undertaken by diary anglers and the work of scientists to provide a better picture of the fish stocks of the rivers and Gippsland Lakes. In this role Dianne became a friend of many anglers, was often offered a cup of tea or even a sausage off the barbeque, and one old fisherman was even heard to say as Dianne left her car, *"Here's my girl, I've been waiting for you."*

Dianne enjoyed her work, and found many of the old anglers who fished during the week a delight to talk to, as were the younger anglers who fished mainly on weekends. Many anglers were glad to be part of the creel survey and see the information they provided contributing to a better fishery.

When asked her view on the state of the fishery, Dianne said when she started survey work in 2000 she was busy all day, however after the collapse of the fishery in 2002/3 when the commercial catch dropped from 137 tonnes to 26 tonnes, recreational catches have reflected this decline and been low but generally consistent at that low level.

When asked whether the Dr Murray MacDonald statement of 1997 that "in a study over the past two years, over 1200 recreational anglers were interviewed and approximately 60% had not caught a fish." applied today. Dianne thought about this and then answered "yes but probably 50%," however she also acknowledged she still sees the very occasional angler with his bag.

Dianne noted that in recent years, she has seen far fewer undersize fish being kept and therefore compliance with fisheries regulations has improved. She now seldom sees a hook remover being used and generally there is awareness amongst families of fishing regulations.

When asked what odd catches she has seen, she said a brown trout at the silt jetties, a whiting at Johnsonville, and she had reported a snapper at Johnsonville. Very few estuary perch have been part of anglers' catches and she never saw a mulloway in those years of surveying anglers catches. In her view, more anglers fish the Tambo River than the Mitchell, and she feels this is due to the excellent access available for the elderly.

When asked what has been the highlight of her years interviewing anglers, Dianne indicated that it was the friendships made with anglers many of whom fished the rivers regularly and were delightful characters, that was a most rewarding aspect of undertaking creel surveys.

When I asked Dianne why she was leaving her friends on the river banks she answered that the floods of last year made roads and river banks difficult for her to carry out the surveys, and when an angler had to push her up a bank after she had clambered down to get his details she decided it was time. Her one wish is that anglers would take their rubbish home, as this is a continuing problem. Dianne will be missed as she was most professional in her work, and had that ability to get anglers onside, and at the same time was a fine representative of Fisheries Victoria. Now she can spend some more time in the garden and with her grandchildren.

Thanks Dianne for a job well done.