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# Around the Jetties

**May 2015**

**Issue 90**

## An Anglers Newsletter

Our fishing days are all too short. This is so even at times when fate and fortune are against us. All our knowledge does not help. But with a couple of nice trout in the bag our ardor is satisfied and we stroll along the bank taking things easily.

David Scholes

Ripples, Runs, and Rises 1998

### Editorial



The current changes advanced by the Labor Government signify an exciting time ahead for recreational angling and many challenges to meet. One of the biggest challenges will be to produce the 5 million fish per annum for stocking waters around the state given that in 2014, only 2.8 million fish were stocked in state waters. This was a key government commitment, pre-election, and certainly is a foundation for the other commitment of increasing the number of anglers in this state from 730,000 to 1 million by 2020. The report from the Statewide Recreational Roundtable indicates that the species for stocking in marine waters have not yet been identified, and there is a need to identify potential waters where they will be released

### **Bullock Island Hatchery.**

This may be the time to for Fisheries Victoria to consider reinstating and utilizing the Bullock Island hatchery at Lakes Entrance. This facility in the past has produced several hundred thousand bass and 30,000 black bream. The bass fingerlings were lost due to water problems and the black bream were euthanized as a result of an agreement between TAFE and Fisheries Victoria.

**The point being this facility has proved capable of producing fingerlings efficiently.**

**This Photo taken in 2008**



The deteriorating facility is currently unused. The development of a Bullock Island hatchery would not only produce fingerlings but also would provide an associated tourism venture and provide added employment and local business opportunities. This hatchery option for marine species would seem to warrant immediate investigation for species such as Australian bass, estuary perch, black bream, and dusky flathead, and these

species could add to the potential of the Gippsland Lakes, as a major state recreational fishery. Currently Australian bass are sourced from a Narooma hatchery in NSW.

### **The Gippsland Lakes and Commercial Fishing.**



There is no doubt that black bream could be stocked in the Gippsland Lakes. Minister Cameron, in 2006, released over 20,000 black bream fingerlings in several areas of the Gippsland Lakes in a publicity and picture shoot. These fish were produced at the Fisheries Victoria facility at Queenscliff in a one off event. Over 30,000 black bream fingerlings were produced in a TAFE class on fish management, at the Bullock Island Facility, but never released. Western Australia has been producing and releasing successfully black bream fingerlings over the last fifteen years. There would seem to be no major problem with the production of marine species fingerlings at the Bullock Island hatchery.

### **What is a problem is the netting of species in the Gippsland Lakes by ten commercial fishermen.**

They would remove large numbers of stocked fish, and this would include bass and estuary perch, which move to the Gippsland Lakes from rivers to spawn. The removal in commercial nets of spawning black bream in floods from the mouth of rivers has been one of the great tragedies of fisheries administration in the Gippsland Lakes. In 2007/8 this amounted to over 100 tonnes of black bream. The concept of developing the Gippsland Lakes, as a place of fishing excellence and having this concept co-exist with commercial netting will be impossible to achieve.

The Labor Government will need to decide whether the future of the Gippsland Lakes is part of the “**Target One Million Plan**” and its thousands of recreational anglers or is the Gippsland Lakes fishery to be handed to ten commercial netters who have no quotas or limitations on species. **The answer to this question is not clearly spelt out in any plans for the future of recreational fishing in the Gippsland Lakes.**

## **Target One Million Plan a Boon for Fishers and Families**



This was the heading of a Media Release from the Hon, Jaala Pulford Minister for Agriculture released on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2015 unveiling \$20 million in new initiatives and services to grow recreational fishing in Victoria. This plan aims to increase the number of recreational anglers from 730,000 to 1 million by 2020. Under the plan fish stocking will increase to 5 million each year “attracting more visitors to our regions for fishing opportunities.” The Minister commented upon this plan saying, “Increasing the number of recreational fishers to 1 million will create jobs, support local businesses and strengthen our rural and regional communities.”

### **Editors Comment**

Whilst “Target 1 million” is a commendable concept a number of areas of concern for the recreational angling community immediately arise and apply particularly to East Gippsland and the Gippsland Lakes. Whilst the Government is committed to the removal of commercial netting from Port Phillip Bay and Westernport there seems to be no plan for the removal of commercial netting from the Gippsland Lakes despite declining fish stocks of black bream and dusky flathead, and the lowest commercial catch of species in thirty years. **In real terms, the situation in the Gippsland Lakes is far worse than Port Phillip with its excellent long-term forecasts for the recreational snapper fishery. In many ways, the Gippsland Lakes provide an ideal resource for development, and the number of anglers visiting the lakes in the 1980’s, illustrated what a resource this lake system provided to the community and local employment and businesses.** In the Ministers media release is the statement that, “under the plan, fish stocking will increase to 5 million per year.” However, to meet this stocking figure the number of fish being produced in hatcheries such as Snobs Creek will need to double given the total stocked in 2014 was 2.8 million fish and this included 107,000 estuary perch. **(Readers will be aware of the efforts of the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club to have estuary perch stocked in Lake Tyers.)**

**The development of the Gippsland Lakes recreational fishery should be one of the foundation blocks for the “Target One Million” plan** but at the moment there does not appear to be any plan that involves

recreational fishing in the Gippsland Lakes, and this is disappointing because this water has huge potential in supporting the “Target One Million” plan.

Source Media Release Jaala Pulford MLC, Minister for Agriculture 2nd May 2015

## Are You Aware of these Research Projects?

The following research projects have been undertaken by the Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee, however this information has not been made available to recreational anglers other than in a media release in January 2014. I am advised that VRFish the recreational anglers’ peak body has not been a party to this research. Each of the following research projects have been completed but not released, and again anglers can only wonder why?

### Projects

1. A research project to review stock assessment methodologies to improve information on black bream and improve the capacity to manage the fishery.
2. A research project to assess the economic value of fishing in the Gippsland Lakes.
3. A study of the economic value of boating on the Gippsland Lakes

### Other projects listed for 2015 by the GLMAC

- (A) Fieldwork to be undertaken in the Mitchell River sampling bream larvae. (No detail or press releases on this project)
- (B) Aerial mapping of sea grass beds in the Gippsland Lakes. This project it is suggested will be undertaken in early 2015, but no indication as to who is undertaking this project or even as to whether this project will go ahead.

All of the above is of interest to recreational anglers but they have not been provided with any information on the research being undertaken and its findings that may affect their sport. It has been difficult for recreational anglers to understand the approach of this committee. Given the complete restructuring of this committee it is unknown whether projects listed for 2015 will proceed.

## A Time of Change

On the 1<sup>st</sup> May a Media Release from Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water entitled “**Protecting the Future of the Gippsland Lakes**” was received. However in Minister Lisa Neville’s media release, no comment is made regarding the important recreational fishery that should be based on the Gippsland Lakes and in the view of many that is a major omission.

With the restructuring of the Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee, the East and West Gippsland Catchments Management Authorities will be part of the new Coordinating Committee and this committee will include other local bodies such as Parks Victoria, local governments, scientists and community members. The resignation of the CEO of the Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee will also mean a new administrative structure. The Government will fund the new structure with \$2.5 million in the 2015/16 State Budget. The media release from Minister Neville indicates that this body will undertake practical on-ground environmental works to improve the health of the lakes. The Minister says, “*This budget investment in the magnificent Gippsland Lakes will further enhance their economic social, cultural and environmental values for the benefit of the region and Victoria as a whole.*” (See letter re Nicholson River Dam)

It is to be hoped the new structure will have adequate scientific membership to ensure the Gippsland Lakes reach their potential as one of the major recreational fisheries in this state. If this development of a recreational fishery occurs in this states largest lake system, then businesses, jobs and tourism will follow. The foundation for this development is a recreational fishery that attracts anglers from around the state and development will be based on a successful and dynamic recreational fishery.

As fishing writer Steve Starling said in the Fishing World Magazine in 1987 “**The Gippsland Lakes are unquestionably one of the Garden State most significant fisheries resources**” and that resource in 1987 attracted thousand of recreational anglers. The resource of the Gippsland Lakes is still available; it just needs development and protection from commercial netting and above all, it needs recognition as one of Victoria’s lakes with the greatest potential for development.

Source- Media Release Lisa Neville MP Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015

## Shellfish in Port Phillip Bay

I received a note and a copy of the Albert Park Yachting and Angling Clubs special May issue of their newsletter “Snapper Snippets from Bob Pearce who is involved in the fascinating project to regrow shellfish reefs in Port Phillip Bay. Around the Jetties has provided background details of this project in previous issues.

Port Phillip Bay had at the time of European settlement large stocks of native flat oysters (or Mud Oyster) and blue mussels however over almost 100 years commercial dredge fishing and ecological impacts have ruined much of the reef that was the habitat for both oysters and mussels. This habitat and the oysters and mussels performed ecological functions including filtering the water of the bay. The remains of this shellfish biomass can be seen from shell deposits under the sediment of the bay floor and old timers in the Albert Park Angling Club link this with fish depletion.

Despite improved water quality and the banning of dredging the oyster and mussel beds have never recovered because there is a need for a mass of shell material on the seabed, and this was the habitat for baby shellfish. According to Dr Paul Hamer Senior Fisheries Scientist Fisheries Victoria “we are trying to work out how to kick start the recovery of the bays oyster and mussel reefs to get back some of the key functions these habitats once provided.”

Dr Chris Gillies, of the Nature Conservancy explains how this is being attempted by bringing “adult flat oysters from commercial farms to Fisheries Victoria Hatchery where they spawn millions of baby oysters. These young oysters attach on to old scallop shells where they are left to grow for three to six months. Limestone is placed on the sea floor to provide a solid foundation for the juvenile oysters to settle and establish as adults. Thousand of mussels are also placed at the trial sites and they will naturally bind together to form a new mussel bed.”



Bob reports that at two trial sites (one in Geelong) both have

oysters and mussels growing at both sites (three tones at each site.) The key bodies involved in this project are Trust for Nature Conservancy, Fisheries Victoria, the University of Melbourne and the Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club. The Trust for Nature Conservancy, involved in similar projects in the past, brings both funding and practical knowledge to this project.

Bob adds this important statement in his report “If the current trial is successful, it is realistic to presume it will be replicated in other parts of Port Phillip Bay and then more generally into other Victorian bays and estuaries.” This project has received \$270k of funding over three years but more will be needed and the Albert Park Yacht and Angling Club have commenced fund raising for the project.

This publication will be kept informed of the progress of this project. Actually one of the interesting aspects of this development is the cooperative approach of the bodies including anglers who are making this development happen. Perhaps we will see more such cooperative projects in the future.

Photos for this article are from Snapper Snippets APYAC newsletter provided by Bob Pearce.

## What is The Nature Conservancy?

This body is the leading conservation organization working around the world to protect important lands and waters for nature and the people Founded in 1951 in the United States the TNC has grown to work in more than 35 countries with a staff of over 4,000 with 600 scientists. Currently the NC operates more than 200 marine conservation projects.

To find out more visit <http://www.natureaustralia.org.au>

**Jaala Pulford** MP Minister for Agriculture says, “I commend the clubs APYAC initiative and encourage recreational fishers and the broader community to support APYAC in this terrific project.”

Source- I obtained most of the information in this section from the APYAC newsletter that was entirely devoted to restoration of lost reefs in Port Phillip Bay.

## Trout Cod Fishing Becomes a Possibility in the North East

Fisheries Victoria is calling for comment on the possibility of opening Lake Kerford and Lake Sambell near Beechworth in North Eastern Victoria to controlled trout cod fishing. Fisheries Victoria has proposed a minimum size of 40cms and a maximum size limit of 50cms with a catch and possession limit of 1 fish per angler. Close of comment on the proposals was the 18<sup>th</sup> May and VRFish will provide a submission from members of the State Council following the meeting of this body on the 16<sup>th</sup> May. Both the lakes at Beechworth have been stocked over the years with trout cod so the suggestion of an open season relies on continued stocking of these small lakes. Trout cod have reestablished in the Ovens River and in the Murray River below Yarrawonga, and reports suggest a substantial number of trout cod in the snaggy Ovens River below Wangaratta. The recovery of this species will be considered complete when waters such as the Ovens River are opened to fishing for trout cod and the species is capable of naturally spawning in numbers that will ensure the species survives naturally. Some years ago Craig Ingram former MLA for East Gippsland who was Chairman of Native Fish Australia proposed a trial opening of trout cod waters in Victoria with a one fish bag limit following reports of fish numbers at that time, however this proposal did not go ahead.



Source-Media Release VRFish General Manager Dallas D’SilvaF

**Macquarie Perch**-It was announced by Fisheries Victoria in May 2014 that 40,500 Macquarie perch fingerlings had been stocked into the Ovens River between Myrtleford and Gapsted and 26,000 into the Goulburn River between Molesworth and Trawool. This is a most significant announcement and adds to our native fisheries, particularly in the Ovens and Goulburn Rivers.



It needs to be remembered that in the mid

1950’s Macquarie perch were in substantial numbers in Lake Eildon, and each year they moved into the Jamieson River and moved upstream. In one year it was suggested in the Melbourne Sun that recreational anglers caught over a tonne of perch in the Jamieson swimming hole. Within a couple of years this movement of perch into the rivers ceased, and became only a memory. In the late 1950’s Fisheries Victoria netted the Jamieson River in an effort to get brood stock for Snobs Creek but I understand this was not successful. Both the trout cod and the Macquarie perch declined to such a degree they were considered extinct in some waters, and in Lake Eildon you never heard of a Macquarie perch being caught, but many anglers remembered that massive movement of perch into the Jamieson River in the 1950’s. Both species are currently listed as nationally endangered species.

Today there is a chance that these fish may be available for the next generation if Fisheries Victoria can develop a sustainable fishery. The future for the trout cod appears assured and if the Macquarie perch stocking is successful then this will be a major achievement. It is rewarding when you consider, angler licence fees are providing much of the funding to achieve this worthwhile result.



## The Bemm River Report by Don Cunningham

The recent gale force winds finally settled just before last weekend, and twenty-six members of the McCoy group were able to fish for bream, as they love to do. The lake was holding at very high water levels and it is going to be a real challenge.

The mid day weigh in reported a lot of throwbacks, but late afternoon proved to be very productive. Good bags of bream were landed and all fish were over 30cms. I fished with fellow club member Daryl Mildenhall and can confirm their catch record.

The weekend was sunny, and the water flat calm. Each morning we fished hard to find bream at 30cms, but experienced a better run of quality fish before dark. We had a couple of double hook ups and some bites that ran the clutch. This was as good as it gets.

Now that the lake is open, local sandworm is available at Bemm River Bait and Tackle as well as local frozen prawn. I like to use sandworm on a jig head around the mouth of the channel targeting luderick and bream. This is a great option when the tide is coming, in and if there is a trevally around, as they love sandworm. The lake has become very clear, and I noticed some bream digs down in Bob's Bay, which we fished with good results on Sunday morning the 17<sup>th</sup>

The McCoy group love surf fishing, and some chose to fish Friday and Saturday evening at Pearl Point. Some large salmon were landed; they were 700grms to just over 2kgs. All the beaches were showing the effects of the huge seas, and were cut away as far as the eye could see. Beaches were hard to access, and fortunately Pearl Point was the only accessible beach. It made for a long walk, but turned out to be very rewarding. Pilchards proved to be the best bait, and some great sport was enjoyed by all.

Don Cunningham

**Editor** Thanks to Don Cunningham for this as always interesting report. It does appear that good fishing can be found at the Bemm both in the lake and off the beach at Pearl Point.

## Statewide Roundtable Meetings

The following are items of interest from the **December 2014** and the **March 2015** Statewide Recreational Fishing Roundtable.

### The following are items from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December meeting

\*Anglers interested in the wild trout recovery plan can monitor it on the website [www.depi.vic.gov.au/troutrecovery](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/troutrecovery). It was suggested short term stocking was needed to assist devastated rivers through stocking. (Snobs Creek produced and stocked 660,000 during 2014>)

\*Estuary perch and Australian bass liberations have started with perch liberations at Melton Res. Werribee River and Karkaroc Lake.

**Editor** Lake Karkaroc is a 15-hectare lake off Warrigal Rd Moorabin. It is stocked with rainbow trout and has a population of redfin.

\*100 trout have been acoustically tagged and released in NE rivers to track movements.

\*The current stocking commitment for stocking of streams with trout is 2 years.

\*In 2014 2.8 million fish were stocked in Victorian waters.

\*A translocation application has been lodged to release Murray cod into Albert Park Lake.

\*VRFish reported a study on recreational fishing is underway with a draft report due early 2015

**Editor**-*The Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee has completed but not released a study of the economic value of fishing in the Gippsland Lakes. (Is this wasted duplication ?)*

\*Ross Winstanley raised the issue that science clearly shows the Port Phillip Bay fishery is sustainable, however both political parties advocate for a commercial fishery buyout. **This is equally relevant to the Gippsland Lakes fishery.** (Editor Anglers in East Gippsland have argued this for decades)

\*The uniform of Fisheries Compliance Officers has been changed to blue!

### The following are items from the 13<sup>th</sup> of March Meeting

Unfortunately many sections in this report are just headings with no information on what was discussed. **After waiting five months for the summary this is most disappointing**

Example “Bemm River Access improvements”(No details provided)

“Toolondo access facilities update.” (No details provided.)

“Fish production and stocking update.”(No details provided.)

This approach provides no information to anglers and the above is only a sample of numbers of headings without any detail of what was discussed.

The following was information extracted from other sections of the report

### **The Right Honorable Jaala Pulford Minister for Agriculture addressed the forum.**

- The Minister highlighted the importance of recreational fishing and social and economic benefits.
- Announced discussions were well under way with Hazelwood Power Station Management to enable stocking with barramundi.
- The Minister noted a perceived lack of diversity amongst the recreational fishing community and would encourage greater diversity regards age, gender, ethnic diversity etc.
- Grants to fishing clubs announced in the policy will be targeted at increasing participation in fishing.
- Planning is under way to transition Fisheries Victoria to a statutory authority. Suggested this will be in effect by the end of 2016. (No information was provided on what this would mean for recreational anglers.)

### **Travis Dowling Executive Director of Fisheries provided the following information**

- The Labor Governments election commitment included \$35 million for recreational fishing with \$5 million towards fish stocking and education, \$10 million to improve recreational fishing access and \$20 million for commercial buyouts to ban netting in Port Phillip Bay.
- The new Government has committed not to increase price of fishing licences in the next 4 years.
- A joint licence with NSW is being explored.
- Hazelwood Pondage Consultation under way but confident barramundi could be stocked by the end of 2015.
- Stocking from 3-5million will happen, so anglers are asked to think of suitable waters for increased stocking.
- **Other Items discussed from Reports**
- To protect Trout cod and Macquarie perch seasonal stream closures are being considered.
- Bream tracking in Gippsland Rivers being undertaken.
- Work is continuing on testing a carp virus on native species.
- Marine and estuary stocking conditional on funding, Fisheries Victoria will review interstate experience and preferred locations and species will need to be identified.
- Fisheries discussing the role of research
- Victoria compliance officers indicate overwhelming angler support for new Murray cod slot sizes.
- New slot limits for other species are being discussed, particularly for impoundments.
- \*Early results on wild trout tracking in the NE were expected in April.
- The largest offshore reef has been constructed in Geelong and in good weather will be placed off Torquay in 25 metres of water.
- Don Ellis sought access improvements for surf beaches. A list of locations to be determined.

**Editor** Many of the items discussed and listed above will have an impact on the East Gippsland recreational fishery.

## **An Interesting Fish and More**

A couple of weeks ago I was fishing with mate John Scott on the Mitchell River in the area of the silt jetties. We fished from the launching ramp at the silt jetties to the mouth of the river. We did not have a single bream bite from 10.00am to 1.00pm, however in that time we did catch probably 10-12 small beautifully colored fish around 8-10cms in size. The color on their sides was an iridescent blue. We were fishing with prawn and sand worm however all these small fish were caught on sandworm and seemed to become hooked in the bottom jaw. I had caught these fish previously in the Mitchell and Tambo Rivers and also at Marlo in the Brodribb.

My interest had been aroused and I was anxious to get home and see if I could identify this spectacular small fish. As usual I went to my standby **“A Guide to the Freshwater Fish of Victoria** by Cadwallader and Backhouse.

It did not take long to identify this little fish as a **Bridled Goby**. (It does not have a common name) This book provides a full-page description of the Bridled Goby part of which states the “Body is covered by numerous blue green, opalescent spots with a few small spots over the head with two-three stripes radiating from the eye.

This fish is widespread and moderately common in all states. It is principally an estuarine species found in the lower reaches of rivers. It prefers a slow flowing river with a silt mud substrate covered with rocks logs or aquatic plants. This fish is a burrowing species and it constructs a short burrow beneath a solid object such as a rock and retires to the burrow when danger threatens. Its eggs are adhesive and attach to a solid object such as a rock and the male fish stays in the area of the eggs probably to guard them.



The species is an attractive aquarium fish, preferring a sand or silt substrate and live food such as small invertebrates. It is reputed to be an excellent baitfish for estuary perch.

**Conclusion.** At 1.00pm we traveled back towards the launching ramp and decided to try one more snag before heading home. An hour later we were retrieving the boat with 15 good black bream 30-38cms in the fish tank, all caught on sandworm. Fishing is a strange sport, and you never know when your luck is going to change suddenly.

## Stocked Estuary Perch Fisheries Coming of Age.

In a media release (12<sup>th</sup> May 2015) Fisheries Victoria executive Director, Travis Dowling commented on recent surveys of stocked estuary perch which indicated the stocked fish had developed well and some were now reaching minimum legal size of 27cms.

The Executive Director said, “Since 2012 more than 220,000 estuary perch fingerlings have been stocked in ten waters across the state to develop new fisheries for the species.” Stocked waters have included lakes Hamilton, Beaufort, Struan, Albert Park, Karkaroc, Bolac and Pertobe, the Werribee River and Melton and Devibend reservoirs.

Photo of Estuary Perch caught by Volunteers Anglers during the Great Perch Search of the Glenelg River and the Hopkins River. These fish were used as breeding stock by Fisheries.



Last month six of the lakes were surveyed by Deakin University and preliminary results indicated that estuary perch from each stocking had survived and “good” to “excellent” growth rates had been achieved.

Lake Bolac had the biggest estuary perch that measured 28,3cms and weighed 486grams.”This was most likely from the first stocking of 7,000 fingerlings in January 2012. Since then the lake has been stocked with nearly 43,000 estuary perch fingerlings.”

Travis Dowling stated, “This excellent growth rate at Lake Bolac coupled with the species long lifespan up to 40 years, suggests quality fisheries can be created with estuary perch.”

The executive Director concluded the media release saying, “a full report including an analysis of growth, relative abundance and diet, will be available in January 2016 and will inform future management and stockings for the species.

Source- Stocked Estuary Perch Fisheries Coming of Age-Fisheries Executive Director Travis Dowling



**Editor**-Lake Bolac is an amazing lake. Readers may recall this lake was dry in the recent 2007/8 drought. When it filled Fisheries immediately stocked the lake with Rainbow trout fingerlings, which grew to 3-4kgs in a little over twelve months and this created a startling trout fishery. Then Fisheries Victoria stocked these same waters with estuary perch, and I along with





many other anglers thought those large trout would thoroughly enjoy dining on small estuary perch. The perch have survived and are now reaching minimum legal size, and this has become a wonderful success story of the development of a fishery. Actually some 50 years ago when teaching at Stawell High School I traveled to Lake Bolac to fish for eels at night and they were prolific in this lake but I never caught a fish. By the way Bernard Murphy in 1998 caught a 7.8kg short finned eel in Lake Bolac and this was a world record for this species of eel.

## Stocking the Key to Lake Eildon's Future

“A new study has revealed that Lake Eildon's Murray cod fishery is almost entirely dependant on stocked fingerlings rather than the natural breeding of fish already in the lake.”

Fisheries Victoria Executive Director Travis Dowling said 148 Murray cod from Lake Eildon were analysed by Fisheries scientists and 99.6 per cent were found to be stocked fish. Eildon received one million extra Murray Cod funded by recreational fishing licences in what was Australia's biggest stocking program ever. This study would seem to confirm that stocking is crucial to this native fishery in Lake Eildon and will be crucial to maintain this fishery into the future.

I fished Lake Eildon regularly in the period 1964-72 and had my old clinker boat permanently moored on the lake. At that time the lake was an outstanding redfin and trout fishery. The lake had a few cod in the Delatite arm but they were a rare catch and I didn't know of any anglers who caught them. Over the winter period trawling for trout was the normal method of fishing whilst, in the summer months bait or jugging for redfin was the approach of most anglers.



Today cod and golden perch are the most sought after species, redfin and trout to a lesser degree, and the numbers of both redfin and trout seem to have declined according to reports I have received from a number of anglers. At the same time there have been excellent reports of intermittent catches of Murray cod up to 20lbs and golden perch catches up to 12 lb.

John Pincombe with a nice Lake Eildon Cod.

What this study indicates is that to maintain this fishery native cod fishery in Lake Eildon continued stocking will be necessary, however

in some other waters such as the Lower Goulbourn and Loddon Rivers stocked golden perch have contributed around 50% of the fish population which indicates the possibility of a self sustaining fishery in the future for this species. It will be interesting when figures for stocked golden perch in Lake Eildon become available, because if it follows other waters such as the Loddon and Campaspe Rivers around 50% of the fish population might come from natural spawning,

Source—Media Release Fisheries Victoria May 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 “Stocking ensures Eildon remains an Anglers Paradise

## VRFish Says, “State Budget is a Winner.”



VRFish has applauded the Andrews Governments commitment to recreational fishing with its \$20 million allocation in the 2015/16 State Budget. VRFish joined with Jaala Pulford MP Minister for Agriculture at Casey Fields on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May for the announcement of the funding of \$20 million over four years. This is regarded as a significant investment towards the \$35 million

Target 1 million policy. 200 large rainbow trout were released at Casey Fields and it was terrific to see the local residents catch the 2 year old rainbow trout within 15 minutes of their release. Photo supplied by Dallas



Dallas D'Silva General manager of VRFish said, "The funding will kick off the commercial netting buyback in Port Phillip and Corio bays that is to be phased out over 8 years. It will also boost fish stocking to 5 million fish per year, improve boat launching infrastructure, and support better access to waterways. "VRFish Chairman Russell Conway said, "It's the biggest one off investment in recreational fishing in Victoria. Victoria's 721,000 adult recreational fishers say thank you to the Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford."

### **Editor**

I think all anglers would be very pleased at the commitment of the Labor Government to the removal of commercial netting in Port Phillip and Corio Bays. This is a major step towards improving recreational fishing. To be fair I have spoken to a number of East Gippsland recreational anglers who have difficulty in understanding why there has been no commitment to removal of commercial netting in this states largest estuary, namely the Gippsland Lakes. There is no doubt recent surveys in Port Phillip indicate a good future for snapper and whiting fishing, whilst the Gippsland Lakes have declining fish stocks and poor fishing, and commercial fishermen who are able to net all species with no catch limits. The Gippsland Lakes is Victoria's largest estuarine fishery, which today is in decline, and yet commercial netting is permitted to continue. The approach of ignoring the commercial netting and a fishery in decline seems somewhat inequitable to many East Gippsland anglers.

## **Recreational Angling and the Law**



### **Breach of a Prohibition Order**

A 30 year old Rosewood West man has been fined \$2000 and ordered to pay \$79.64 in court costs for continuing to breach a prohibition order, which prevented him from fishing in Victorian waters. The man pleaded guilty in the Frankston Magistrates Court after being apprehended on two occasions fishing last year, which was a breach of his prohibition order imposed on him in 2013 for exceeding the catch limit, taking undersized fish, and the illegal

sale of fish.

His boat, trailer, and fishing gear were forfeited and he was placed on a further 12 months prohibition order. I think this angler was rather lucky given that fines of up to \$14,700 and 6 months imprisonment as well as forfeiture of items can be imposed for breaching a prohibition order.

Regional Supervising Fisheries Officer Dane Robinson said, "Prohibition orders are imposed by the courts for offences of a serious nature and where the person is likely to offend."

## **Letters Letters Letters**

### **VRFish and Private Jetties**

I received this letter from Dallas D'Silva VRFish General Manager on the 6<sup>th</sup> May

*Dear Lynton*

*Trust you are well. Thanks for the email on netting around private jetties. I am following this up with Fisheries Victoria at the moment. I will be in touch again as soon as I have some information.*

*Regards Dallas*

### **Editor**

This was in response to the item in the last issue of Around the Jetties where two commercial fishermen placed nets around a private jetty and then created a disturbance to force the fish from the protection of the jetty into the waiting net. We will be most interested in any response achieved by VRFish remembering that commercial fishermen are not permitted to net within 30 metres of public jetties.

### **The Nicholson River Dam**

On Friday April 24<sup>th</sup> I received the following letter from Tim Bull MLA Member for East Gippsland.



Dear Lynton

*I refer to my email dated April 3<sup>rd</sup> advising I had made representations on your behalf to the Hon. Lisa Neville Minister for the Environment and Climate Change regarding the removal of the Nicholson River Dam. Minister Neville's Chief of Staff, Hamish Park, has written to me acknowledging receipt of my correspondence. Upon receipt of a more detailed response, I shall be in contact with you again.*

*Kind regards Tim Bull*

### **Editor**

It is to be hoped that the Nicholson River is recognized as an important stream when assessing the Gippsland Lakes and as the Minister Lisa Neville said in a media release Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Gippsland Lakes are vitally important for the region- and the State. It should be remembered that the Nicholson River should be a vital part of the Gippsland Lakes rather than the host to a disused dam and barrier to fish movement. In 2014, 123,000 Australian bass were released in 16 Gippsland waters. Because of the dam wall limiting fish movement the promise of 100,000 bass for the Nicholson River made by the previous Government has never been realized. In many ways this is a continuing disaster. Federal Member Darren Chester MLA wrote to the Minister for the Environment Greg Hunt on the 18<sup>th</sup> March at the request of this publication on this issue but no response has been so far forthcoming,

### **Statewide Recreational Fishing Roundtable Information Again Available.**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> May I received an email from Brian Mottram Manager of Fisheries Improvements (Fisheries Victoria) indicating he noted when reading Issue 89 that we had talked of the importance of publishing the summaries. He wrote-

*"Fisheries Victoria find these meetings useful to discuss many recreational fishing issues and opportunities with a diverse group of stakeholders that have an interest in recreational fishing.*

*Publishing outcomes of these meetings is important to those who don't attend. Fisheries Victoria will continue to work with the Chairman to publish a summary following each meeting. We expect to be able to publish future meeting summaries without any delays. Regards Brian"*

### **Editor**

I thank Brian for his email, and because of the summaries being available, this publication will be in a position to provide a diversity of up to date reports to readers including the fact that there will be no increase in the cost of an angling licence in the next four years. Recreational anglers appreciate having access to such information. **See the reports of the December and March Roundtable meetings in this issue of Around the Jetties.**

### **Survey by Anglers of the Gippsland Lakes**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> May, I received the following letter from Rob Caune Secretary of the Gippsland Angling Clubs Association.

*Dear Lynton,*

*I write to you as secretary of the Gippsland Angling Clubs Association (GACA). GACA has decided to conduct a survey of its members and unaffiliated recreational anglers on their views of the Gippsland lakes and Rivers (GLR) fishery.*

*Many of our members have expressed concern about the status of fish stocks in the GLR and the management of the fishery.*

*Our survey is to better understand these concerns and improve our advocacy on this important matter. We are a self-funded, community based, volunteer organization that receives no government funding.*

*We ask you if you would consider assisting us in distributing the survey form via your publication, Around the Jetties.*

*The survey will be distributed to all GACA angling clubs and be available by request from the email address [robertnt@datafast.net.au](mailto:robertnt@datafast.net.au) . We also hope to make it available at fishing tackle shops in the district.*

*Hoping you may assist*

*Regards Rob Caune*

**Editor**

It is very pleasing to see the GACA taking action to ascertain the condition of the Gippsland Lakes fishery with regard to fish stocks and the management of the fishery. I spoke to over 30 anglers in the weeks over the Xmas period as they came into Shaving Point after fishing in the Gippsland Lakes and never saw a size flathead and only a couple of bream in that period of time. Around the Jetties **congratulates the GACA and we will publish the survey, and we would hope to publish the results in due course.** This issue of Around the Jetties raises many issues associated with the fishery in the Gippsland Lakes, and the lack of any government proposal for a buyback of commercial licences in this large estuarine lagoon.

### **Some Facts on Black Bream in the Gippsland Lakes.**

The most valuable species caught by commercial fishermen in the Gippsland Lakes is Black Bream but this is a declining fish species as the following facts illustrate.

- 1.** The commercial catch of black bream has consistently declined. Average tonnages of this species are as follows 1983/4 **446tonnes** 2001/2 **154tonnes** 2002/3 **28tonnes**.
- 2.** Dr M. MacDonald Fisheries Scientist in 1997 said, “in a study over the past two years over **1200 recreational anglers were interviewed and approximately 60% had not caught a fish.**”
- 3.** Fisheries Victoria introduced controls in 1996 “*to protect the small remaining adult bream stocks so that sufficient reproductive capacity is maintained to ensure stock rebuilding occurs when conditions are more favourable.*”

Conditions have not changed and there has been no stock rebuilding. The commercial catch in 1996 was 89 tonnes it has averaged 35 tonnes per annum over the last decade.

- 4.** In the decade 1986-1996, commercial nets removed 1836 tonnes of black bream from the Gippsland Lakes with **an average of 183 tonnes per annum.**

The catch between 2002 and 2009 apart from the flood year of 2007 **averaged 35.3 tonnes per annum.**

- 5.** The 2010 Fisheries Victoria Black Bream Status Report said the commercial catch trend was “variable but **generally low since 2003.**” The commercial targeted effort trend was decreasing with the catch in that year 35 tonnes with a market value of just \$411,000.

- 6.** The above report stated, “*Victorian annual commercial bream catches declined significantly from 200-270 tonnes in the late 1980’s to a low 42-43 tonnes in the 2000’s.*

***This trend is primarily a reflection of declining catches in the Gippsland Lakes”***

**Please fill in the attached Gippsland Lakes Angling Clubs Survey and return your views to the address on the bottom of the survey.**

### **Around the Jetties on Line**

[www.laketyersbeach.net.au](http://www.laketyersbeach.net.au)

The newsletter is still emailed to readers and of course, those who do not have access to email facilities will still receive hard copies

**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.*

***Good Health and Good fishing***

## Gippsland Angling Clubs Association fishing survey for the Gippsland Lakes and Rivers (GLR)

1. Your Name.....

2. Are you a fishing club member...Yes/ No

3. How many years have you regularly fished the GLR .....Years

*Please circle you response to the following questions.*

4. Over the period of time you have fished GLR has the amount of hours required to catch a fish

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed about the same.

5. Over the period of time you have fished GLR has the average size of the fish you have caught

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed about the same

6. Fisheries Victoria should have the ability to temporarily close the area known as Jones Bay to commercial fishing in order to protect spawning fish. Do you...

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not sure

7. What would best describe your current fishing satisfaction level in regards to the GLR.

- High
- Medium
- Low

8. If the quality of fishing improved in the GLR would you fish more often in a year?

- Yes
- No
- Makes no difference.

9. What do you believe has the biggest influence on the quality of fishing in the GLR ?

- The health of the environment
- Commercial Fishing
- Commercial Fishing and environmental health

10. Do you believe that the economy of the Gippsland Lakes region would improve if commercial fishing was banned from the Gippsland Lakes.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please return the completed survey to Po Box 17 Marlo 3888 or by email to [robertnt@datafast.net.au](mailto:robertnt@datafast.net.au)