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Around the Jetties

November 2015

Issue 96

An Anglers Newsletter

Editorial



Crisis in the Gippsland Lakes

December 1996 Urgent Regulations for the Gippsland Lakes

“Urgent regulations have been implemented to ensure conservation of severely depleted stocks of black bream in the Gippsland Lakes and inflowing rivers. Commercial catches and catch rates have declined about 50% over the last six years.”

Dr Murray McDonald Victorian Fisheries.

Fisheries Victoria published the above in December 1996 as a matter of urgency, at the same time the recreational bag limit was reduced to five bream, and a quota was placed on commercial netters of a monthly catch of 730kgs of black bream.

The situation in the Gippsland Lakes is little different today, with commercial netters continuing to remove black bream and dusky flathead, the two key recreational species of East Gippsland.

The Gippsland Lakes, with declining fish populations, is in a very different situation from that in Port Phillip Bay where snapper and whiting stocks are regarded as being very satisfactory.

This fact makes the non-buyback of commercial netting licences in the Gippsland Lakes very hard to understand. If the buyback in Port Phillip Bay according to Minister Pulford, “will attract more visitors to this prime fishing destination, boosting local economies and supporting local businesses,” then the same result could be expected for the Gippsland Lakes. It is also strange that with the Target One Million project, Victoria’s largest estuary is totally neglected and I would have thought this lake system would have been a cornerstone for the Target One Million project.

Perhaps it is a simple matter of there being more votes available for the incumbent political party around Port Phillip and Corio Bays than in the Gippsland Lakes region. Recreational anglers in Gippsland support the buyback in Port Phillip and Corio Bays but wonder at the neglect of the lakes system.

Netting in Port Phillip Bay to End

Its Official with Bill before Parliament



Legislation to end commercial netting in Port Phillip Bay was introduced into the Victorian State Parliament on the 22nd October with Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford stating, “Phasing out commercial netting in Port Phillip Bay is the flagship commitment of our Target One Million plan.”

In the Ministers Media release on this topic, it is suggested the removal of netting will increase catch rates and the size of fish for recreational anglers. The Parliamentary

Bill will specify how compensation payments will be determined for the 43 licence holders with the first licences to be surrendered from April 1st 2016 with a revised package of up to \$27 million to compensate licence holders with payments between \$350,000 and \$1.6 million depending on catch histories. Commercial netting in Port Phillip Bay will cease by April 2022, however eight non-netting licences will remain.

No details of these eight licences have been provided however, it is thought these may be long liners.

Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford stated, “Removing netting from Port Phillip Bay will help attract more visitors to this prime fishing destination boosting local economies and supporting local businesses.”

VRFish the peak recreational angler body has welcomed the Government Bill saying it had long opposed commercial netting in bays and inlets.

Executive Director of Fisheries Victoria Travis Dowling is quoted in the Age Newspaper of October 23rd October that he “did not anticipate any significant increases in fish prices at a retail level.” Mr Dowling added that of the 59,000 tonnes of fish consumed in Victoria each year only about 1 per cent came from Port Phillip Bay.

Netting in the Gippsland Lakes to Remain

Its Official with Letter from the Minister

I received a letter from the Minister for Agriculture dated the 14th of October in response to a letter I wrote. The minister in this letter makes the following decisive statement-

“There is no intention to reduce the number of commercial licences in the Gippsland Lakes at this time.”

The Minister in her letter indicates the Government has committed to protect spawning fish at the mouth of rivers and to increase the availability of fish through stocking, as well as supporting local clubs and increasing the participation in fishing and improving recreational access. The Minister concludes her letter saying, “I believe these measures in combination will support an improved recreational fishing experience in the Gippsland Lakes.”

Editor

I would believe that the Ministers comment regarding restocking of the Gippsland Lakes is an impossible dream whilst ten commercial fishermen remain netting in the Gippsland Lakes, and with the decline of the most sought after species namely black bream and dusky flathead I can see little chance of increased angling participation in the Gippsland Lakes. The real situation today is reflected in the following statement of Pearl Findlay-James Chairman of the Twin Rivers Bream Classic in 2005.

“Over several years of running the Bream Classic, this organisation has seen the steady decline in catch rates by recreational fishermen. As businesses directly involved in tourism we can testify to the loss of customers who are passing through our area in search of bream in waters further to the east of the state. The loss of associated income has impacted seriously on the businesses around the Twin Rivers, the Tambo and Nicholson Rivers.”

It is obvious that the Target One Million program is offering little to the Gippsland Lakes, Victoria’s largest inlet or lagoonal lake system. This system has a threatened fish population and a declining angler participation, and the Ministers comments provide little hope for the future for recreational anglers. I would have thought the Gippsland Lakes would have been a cornerstone for the Target One Million project, however it would seem this magnificent lake system has been ignored apart from the proposal to protect spawning fish at the mouth of rivers, which has been a commitment of successive governments.

It needs to be noted that whilst VRFish has strongly supported the buyback of commercial netting licences in Port Phillip and Corio Bays, no comment has been made on the neglect of any action to develop the recreational fishery of the Gippsland Lakes.

Another problem associated with the neglect of the Gippsland Lakes, remembering that Lake Tyers is only a small 25 hectares in size, is the increasing fishing pressure on Lake Tyers. On the Melbourne Cup Weekend, I was amazed that there were more boats at the launching ramps at Lake Tyers than at the ramps in Lakes Entrance. Anglers are obviously bypassing the Gippsland Lakes to fish in Lake Tyers and if this continues, there will be long term problems for the Lake Tyers fish stocks. The neglect of the Gippsland Lakes may lead to an overfished Lake Tyers. This has been predicted by many recreational anglers. The recreational fishing in the Gippsland Lakes has declined over the last two decades because of low numbers of fish. A commercial buyback would certainly reduce fishing pressure in the Gippsland Lakes, allow for restocking in this large body of water and may have a positive effect on fish stocks in Lake Tyers .

Mulloway Released in Lake Tyers

A First in Victoria



On Thursday 16th of October recreational anglers and guests representing local authorities and including Harriet Shing, MLC for Eastern Victoria, (left) were invited by Fisheries Victoria to join with Fisheries Officers and staff to be part of the first release of Mulloway in a Victorian estuary. Readers of this newsletter would be aware of the historical background of mulloway being caught in the Gippsland Lakes, and particularly that almost unreal catch of commercial fisherman Pat Milito in the 1980's of 49 large mulloway in Bancroft Bay. These



fish were caught and used for a Heads of Government dinner in Canberra and were thought to have weighed in excess of 1000lbs. There is also the story of Pat Milito catching a large mulloway at the mouth of Chinaman's Creek while netting bait This fish weighed in at 112lb and was featured on the front page of the local paper. Both these stories are verified catches of extremely large mulloway. [Fishing News 1993 An Article by Geoff Wilson](#)

In Lake Tyers, anglers have provided stories of large fish running their lines, but no verifying photos have come forward to suggest the culprit was a mulloway. It does seem conceivable that if mulloway have entered the Gippsland Lakes it is probable that odd mulloway may have also entered Lake Tyers but hard proof is lacking. **(I understand only one mulloway has been caught in commercial nets in the last five years.)**

In 2010, a report was undertaken by Dr Mathew Taylor of the University of NSW for Fisheries Victoria to assess "The Potential Suitability of Victorian Waters for Selected Fish Releases." This report looked at the ecology of species for release in Victorian estuarine waters. Lake Tyers was one of the estuaries examined and mulloway was one of the species commented upon.

The report states, "Larger mulloway have been captured in the estuary, but there are no records of juveniles occurring here." Dr Taylor then adds the following statement "the lack of key juvenile habitat within the estuary means that mulloway releases are unlikely to improve recruitment and should not be undertaken in this estuary."

What this means is that Fisheries Victoria has undertaken what could be regarded as a risky project that is not supported in the Taylor Report of 2010. This is a brave move. It may have a significant influence on Victorian estuaries and angling in the future, as anglers see and respond to the challenge of large mulloway. In the case of Lake Tyers, it is largely a fishery based on black bream and dusky flathead. If the introduction of mulloway is successful, the fishery will be of much wider appeal across the state, and other estuaries may well seek releases of mulloway fingerlings; remembering this species is a fast growing fish with a reputation as a fighting fish, and added to that, the species has been successfully released in some NSW estuaries. Anglers will watch this bold move by Fisheries Victoria, with considerable anticipation in the next 3-4 years.

Craig Ingram, coordinator of the "Target One Million Project" and actively involved in this project together with recreational anglers, East Gippsland Catchment Management staff, Councillors from East Gippsland Shire, and Fisheries Victoria Officers waited for the arrival of the 5,000 fingerlings from the New



South Wales Fisheries Port Stephens Hatchery. The fingerlings were being brought by road on a trailer carrying two large containers on a non-stop trip to Nowa Nowa for the release due at 1.00pm. The vehicle arrived some twenty minutes late after experiencing traffic problems in Sydney, which in reality is a wonderful effort, and the fingerlings appeared to be in good condition and very active.

Boats were on hand at the Nowa Nowa jetty from Fisheries Victoria and the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. The intent was that the fingerlings would be transferred to containers on these boats, taken down the estuary and released into the deeper water of areas such as Devil's Hole.



Also on hand was the enthusiastic member for Eastern Victoria, Harriet Shing, MLC, who came over from Warragul for the release of the fingerlings. She described her reaction to the day as, “the weather was so great that I ditched the waders, took my shoes off and released the first batch, watched over by a pair of sea eagles,” and she was in the water releasing the first mulloway fingerlings as the photos verify.



At the release the local member stated, “The first Victorian stocking of mulloway fingerlings at Lake Tyers would ensure the location remained a premier Gippsland fishing destination.” Recreational anglers will hope she is right and Lake Tyers remains a premier fishing location, however there is a chance these fingerlings might head out to sea and look for other locations. This is part of the risk.

The mulloway fingerlings are marked, so that the stocked fish will be distinguished from naturally bred fish, although that is unlikely given the lack of mulloway in Lake Tyers. A further stocking will also take place at Tamboon Inlet where 2500 mulloway fingerlings will be released. According to Craig Ingram, Tamboon Inlet has had a historical connection with mulloway in the estuary in the past, and this may auger well for the future fishing in this beautiful estuary.

A feature of the day was the gathering of interested authorities. An active participant was Graeme Dear CEO of East Gippsland Catchment Management authority, whilst Fisheries Victoria Inland Waters Manager Anthony Foster was also busily involved in the organisation. Some recreational anglers travelled a considerable distance to be part of this special occasion, including Don Cunningham a correspondent for this publication from the Bemm River Angling Club and, Rob Caune from Marlo represented VRFish, the recreational anglers peak body.

It is now a matter of time to see if this new fishery develops.



Craig Ingram (left) and Don Cunningham (right) at the release of the Mulloway



Some Mulloway Statistics

The heaviest mulloway recorded was 74kgs. This fish was 181cms long and was thought to be 42years of age. 50% of male fish reach maturity at 2 years of age and when around 51cms in length. 50% of female fish reach maturity at 3 years of age and when around 68cms in length. In the period 2004-2012, 127,000 mulloway fingerlings have been stocked in NSW waters. In Victoria the minimum size limit for mulloway is 60cms with a bag/possession limit of 5 fish.

Important Current Mulloway Research

I received an email regarding mulloway research from Dr Lauren Veale an aquatic ecologist whilst at the same time at Nowa Nowa mulloway were being released into Lake Tyers. - Lauren works for the Nature Glenelg Trust, which recently received funding from Recreational Licence fees to undertake research over three years on mulloway across Victoria. Details of this research was provided in Around the Jetties Issue 89 April 2015. The following is the current information.

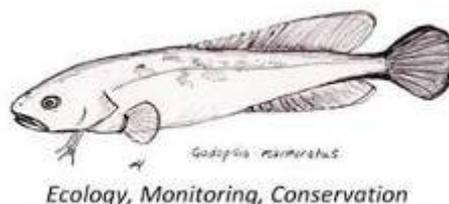
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Lauren writes-

“One of the main objectives of the study is to determine the stock boundaries of mulloway in Victoria and their connectivity with nearby genetically distinct subpopulations i.e. NSW/Southern Queensland and South East Australia. Determining genetics of mulloway occurring across Victoria is crucial to effective management.” To assist with this research anglers along the Eastern Coast of Victoria including Mallacoota, Lake Tyers, and the Gippsland Lakes are being invited to provide mulloway fish frames.”

Editor

It is doubtful that East coast anglers will be able to contribute greatly to this research as catches of mulloway are somewhat rare, however Dr Veale raises the question as to what mulloway provided the brood stock for Fridays release of fingerlings and where were the brood stock sourced from. I am sure that Dr Veale will keep readers informed of the progress of her research project.

Estuary Perch Successfully Spawn



Craig Ingram has confirmed that the estuary perch brood stock caught by recreational anglers at Bemm River and Marlo and transported to the Hatchery at Narooma have spawned, and the hatchery now has many thousand small estuary perch in the tanks. The actual Great Perch Search involving anglers and Fisheries staff was reported on in some detail in the recent Issue 95 of Around the Jetties. (October) Readers will recall 16 recreational anglers fished on the weekend of the 25th and 26th September and caught 58 estuary perch. An interesting aspect

was the fact that when the 58 brood stock were scientifically tested no fish was found to be a hybrid. Craig suggested whilst this was surprising it was a great result and might indicate that hybridisation only occurs in the bass.

The small estuary perch will remain at the Narooma Hatchery until they are due to be released and it is suggested that this release might take place prior to Christmas. This has been a great project involving both Fisheries staff and recreational anglers. The big question will be whether the release of estuary perch in Lake Tyers will see a self-sustaining estuary perch stock develop in this estuary. Again time will tell, however if successful this project will influence the stocking of marine fish in East Gippsland estuaries.

Growth Rate of Estuary Perch

Lake Bolac in South West Victoria was stocked with 7000 estuary fingerlings in 2012. In April 2015 this lake was surveyed by Deakin University together with five other lakes. The biggest estuary perch in Lake Bolac were found to have grown to 28.3cms and weighed 486 grams. It would appear that if this growth rate is repeated in Lake Tyers then size fish might be available in 2019.

Since 2012, more than 220,000 estuary perch have been stocked in Victorian waters. Estuary perch have a life span of some 40 years so if the stocking of Lake Tyers is successful then a quality fishery may be seen to develop.

[Growth Statistics Fisheries Victoria Media Release 12th May 2015](#)

An Interesting Advertisement

The following advertisement appeared in the Lakes Post on the 7th October 2015

SOLD

**For Sale.
Commercial
Fishing
Licence
Gippsland Lakes
\$300,000
Boats nets and mentoring
Rob Morecroft**

The background to this advertisement is interesting in that several commercial fishermen in 2013 asked local member Tim Bull MP if he could approach the Minister and urge him to put the buyback of commercial licences on the table again, so that commercial fishermen who wished to leave the industry could do so. Readers might remember the comment of the local member when asked about this question in Issue 74 November 2013 of Around the Jetties when he said “Any buyout needs to be funded and this has been a matter for both the Minister and Treasury to consider. I have had further

discussions with the commercial fishermen on this matter following the original request last year.”

No action was taken and no offer was made on this request first made in 2013 by a number of commercial fishermen for a buyout to be again considered. This request to provide a buyout would have been fully supported by recreational anglers.

I understand a further approach was made by a group of commercial fisherman to the current Minister for Agriculture for a buyback with the change of Government, but this was refused. Left with no government interest Rob Morecroft has put his fishing licence and equipment on the market.

This would have been a marvellous opportunity for government to buy this licence at a most reasonable price. It needs to be remembered that when the Coalition Government, in its pre-election commitments in November 2014, allocated \$2 million towards a buyout of commercial licences on the Gippsland Lakes, it was suggested by Lakes Entrance Fisherman’s Cooperative General Manager Dale Sumner on ABC at the time that the amount allocated by the Coalition for a buyback would probably be only sufficient to buyback two commercial licences. In a very large detailed article in the Lakes Post (12/11/2014) Mr Sumner put the case that stocks of bream are healthy and would continue to be sustainable and he provided his reasons for the reduced commercial catch levels of today.

It would seem given the price placed on the Morecroft licence, the \$2 million provided by the Coalition Government would have bought out around 4-6 licences should the commercial fishermen of the Gippsland Lakes have accepted a voluntary buyback. This would have substantially reduced netting pressure on key species such as black bream and dusky flathead. I think most recreational anglers and tourists who venture to the Gippsland Lakes would have thought the purchase of the Morecroft licence and the voluntary offer to other commercial fishermen would have been a sensible and economic approach to the question of commercial netting in estuaries.

The issue of netting in the Gippsland Lakes has been an issue since 1896 when the Fish Protection Society and Anglers Club of Bairnsdale, “urged most vigorously to have all netting in the Lakes and rivers stopped.”

The license has been sold. Rob Morecroft has informed me that that the Mitchelson family who have a long history of commercial fishing have purchased this licence. Thanks to Rob Morecroft for permission to use this information.



Another Thought

I have put forward the view on several occasions that commercial licence holders who accept a buyback of their licence **where applicable** should be offered positions within Fisheries Victoria after retraining. These fishermen would bring a wealth of knowledge to Fisheries Victoria particularly in supporting research projects, and public relations within communities, and even in areas of enforcement. The skills and knowledge that these fishermen have accumulated over years is largely lost when a voluntary buyout takes place. This is not a suitable option for all commercial netters however a small number might provide great support to Fisheries Victoria. As I write this my mind turns to the Morecroft website and this commercial fisherman’s communication skills and the knowledge he provides to recreational anglers on this website, and I wonder how many other commercial fishermen have special skills that could add to the role of Fisheries Victoria- **if they wished to continue their careers in the area of Victorian Fisheries in a very different role.**

Bob McNeil's Lake Tyers Report



This report covers the period from the 21st July to the 13th of October. Bob on this occasion provides a somewhat disheartening report stating “ what a cold miserable winter and to make it worse, this was the smallest number of fish I have recorded in my Research Angler Diary for this number of trips ever.”. The number of size fish he caught from 21 fishing trips was 30 bream, with the surprise being three trevally to 36cms and one early flathead. As Bob wrote this report the lake was still open to the sea, and he commented that he had seen several schools of tailer in the lake and he had a good tailer to the side of the boat before losing him. Bob made the

observation **that swimmer crabs are in the lake in plague numbers,** and in his diary he comments regarding the removal of bait by the crabs. In his last trip, which was not recorded in his current diary caught six undersize bream and had six large crabs to the side of the boat.

Bob made a comment about the new ramps saying they are excellent with plenty of room for two boats launching. Flathead are currently being caught in Lake Tyers mainly on lures as live mullet are very hard to obtain at this time.

Bob concludes his report stating that mullet are scarce and if the current fishing trend continues anglers might also be in short supply, but on a positive note some whiting are being caught in Lake Tyers.



Editor- It is always great to have Bob McNeill's report, and I noted in his diary that instead of being on the water before 6.00am of a morning Bob seems to have been on the water at a more sedate 7.30 am in the July –August period, however I noted he is now back to his earlier start to a mornings fishing. Bobs comments regarding crabs are interesting, and in the past anglers have never been troubled with crabs.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

I received the following letter from the President of the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club Barbara Decker on the 11th October. This letter was in response to a letter from regular contributor Ron Brymer on estuary perch in Lake Tyers. See Issue 94 (September)

In this letter Ron states, “Excited to read about the stocking of EP's in Lake Tyers. Now we need to convince the “catch and kill” anglers at Lake Tyers to start practicing “catch and release” with this species.”

Barbara Decker writes

Dear Mr Barr

The communication from Ron Brymer in your last newsletter cannot go unchallenged. He is correct when he says perhaps his comment about the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club is a “bit unfair.” In fact it is not only unfair but I find it offensive. He makes members sound like a bunch of rednecks.

The Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club has worked tirelessly over the years to improve conditions for anglers and the users of Lake Tyers generally. Not only have member worked with local authorities to protect the lake foreshore and the surrounding areas e.g. accessibility via tracks, but was the driving force to have Boat Ramp No 2 upgraded, work recently finished and improving facilities for launching and retrieving boats.

We have also participated in many community projects, making donations to various local charities, providing fishing rods for residents of a local aged care facility, funding the Father Christmas gathering for kids on Christmas Day and providing a defibrillator, which is kept at the General Store. The list could go on.

It should be pointed out that the Club increased the size of bream weighed in from 26 to 28cms several years before it became the legal size. Bag limits were also reduced from 10 to 5 many years ago.

If Mr Brymer wishes to “catch and release” that is his right. He should also respect the rights of those who wish to “keep and eat.”

Barbara Decker

President- Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club.

Editor

I thank the President of the Lake Tyers Angling Club for her letter and her views. This publication is very aware of the fine work of the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club and has provided coverage and photos of many projects the club has been involved in over recent years. This is not an issue.

What is an issue is the suggestion that “catch and release’ fishing should be applied to estuary perch in Lake Tyers, if and when they become a sought after species in this water.

This seems a most reasonable suggestion for this species. Equally I am one of those anglers who would be classed as a “catch and kill” angler who likes to come home with a couple of nice bream for the table. However, in recent years I have released many fish. I find that many of the young modern anglers of today practice “catch and release” and in many ways these young anglers are changing the approach to recreational angling. In my view “catch and release” is the way of the future but there will always be a place for those who practice “catch and kill” to provide fish for the table and this is part of the heritage of angling. These two approaches to fishing are compatible. We practice the “catch and kill’ approach to provide a fish meal, and we “catch and release” to simply enjoy the sport of a days fishing.

The approach to fishing is changing, and today most recreational anglers are conscious of the pressure on our fish stocks, and the fact that if we are not careful fishing may not be available to future generations.

Another Letter

I received the following letter from John Spirason an enthusiastic Tambo River angler.

Hello Lynton,

I have been an avid reader of Around the Jetties for the past ten years. I really enjoy the newsletter and appreciate the effort that you must make to ensure such a good product. I cannot recall previously disagreeing with your point of view and so this will be a first time.

Your statement “Thus the bag limit was set for the next decade based on the ability of anglers to fill rskies rather than concern for fish stocks.” It is emotive and not factually correct. You and I know it would take a lot more than 10, or ten of the largest bream ever caught to fill a reasonable size esky.

I would strongly oppose a reduction in the bag limit for bream. I live in Punt Rd and am so lucky that it is only 1.2kms from my front door to the bank of the Tambo. I consider myself to be a very good angler or at worst a competent one. For forty years I took out and paid my licence fees each year, now being a senior I am exempt. For the past ten years I gave fished the Tambo on hundreds of occasions and have only bagged out on six visits. There have been however many many times that I have caught between 6 and 9 fish.

As a very keen angler I recognise other locals whenever I drive along the river and usually stop for a chat and the information I get from these anglers is that their catches and experiences are all similar to mine. I do not believe stopping anglers taking 6 to 10 bream on the few opportunities that they get to catch in excess of 5 will make an iota of difference when the ten professional boats continue or that the culling of cormorants is banned. If I recall correctly (and I have not been able to check) in the book you wrote regarding bream in the Gippsland Lakes you stated that cormorants take one third of the fish taken from the Lakes.

I see the work that you do in trying to get the Government to do the right thing and offer enough money to buy out the professionals and I fully support your efforts. When the professionals are gone and the cormorants are controlled, if the stocks do not improve I will then fully support a reduction in the bag limit.

Yours faithfully

John Spirason

Editor

Thank you John for your letter, which the Metropolitan Anglers Association will take as an angler response to their proposal for a reduction in the black bream bag limit. (Around the Jetties Issue 95 October) Whilst I did indicate in that newsletter that I support a five fish bag limit I did add, **“To really improve black bream stocks the proposed reduction in the recreational bag limit would need to be accompanied with the introduction of quotas for commercial fishermen”** or alternately a buyback of licences. I doubt whether recreational anglers would willingly accept a reduced bag limit whilst commercial fishermen can net with no quota or restrictions. Ten commercial fishermen in the Gippsland Lakes have enormous influence on the fishery and the introduction of change. An example of this is the introduction of a slot size regulation for dusky flathead adhered to enthusiastically by a majority of recreational anglers but ignored by the commercial sector with Fisheries Victoria approval.

With regard to your comments on cormorants I doubt if we will ever see culling take place again remembering that now they are protected under the 1975 Wildlife Act. All research would suggest culling was never successful in controlling cormorant numbers.

The effect of the large black cormorant on black bream stocks is entirely dependent on the number of cormorants on the lake system and this has been shown to vary between 200 and 8,000. The most recent research of Reside and Coutin (2001) into the Great Black cormorant stated, "In 1998 Great Cormorants may have consumed about the same weight of black bream, yellow eyed mullet and luderick as the combined commercial and recreational catch." In 1998 there was an estimated 3653 Great Cormorants on the Gippsland Lakes and this can be compared with 1991 when according to estimations there were only 200 cormorants on the Gippsland Lakes.

So there we have it, and I will leave John with the question as to whether he would ever be able to support a five fish bag limit for black bream.



The Law and Recreational Anglers

Trout Poacher Caught at Eildon Pondage

A 25-year-old Geelong man will be summoned to appear in Court after a routine inspection of his vehicle allegedly revealed more than five times the daily bag limit of trout at the Eildon Pondage this week. Fisheries Officers discovered thirteen large trout all exceeding 35cms contained in the man's esky.



The Lake Eildon Pondage is designated a Family Fishing Lake with a daily bag limit of 5 fish with only two to exceed 35cms. Northern Region Supervising Fisheries Officer said fish are stocked into Eildon Pondage to be shared by all Victorians. It was suggested that for some anglers including young children these would be fish of a lifetime. Mr Burns said Fisheries Victoria stocked the Eildon Pondage on Wednesday of this week with 460 large ex brood fish, in addition to 1000 advanced yearling rainbow trout to support the many visitors attending this weekend the BIG FISH event held at the Eildon Pondage this weekend.

[Fisheries Victoria Media Release Friday October 16th](#)

Items in Brief

Wild Trout Conference In November

This is just a reminder of the Wild Trout Conference to be held in Mansfield on the 21st November. Trout anglers will be aware of the decline in this fishery across the state in mountain streams. This conference will bring together fisheries scientists and anglers to discuss the current research and plans for the future. Angling clubs across Gippsland should consider having a representative at this full day conference so that clubs will be made aware of the proposals to restore this important fishery.



Items to be discussed will include bankside vegetation and its effect on the trout population. Trout releases in recent years will be examined and of particular interest will be a proposed minimum size limit for trout. Why not organise a car with representatives from clubs to attend this conference. It is important that East Gippsland anglers are represented at this conference.

Conference Details

When Saturday 21st November 2015

Time 9.30-5.00pm

Where - Performing Arts Centre Mansfield

Cost Free (Lunch provided) Please register by the 6th November.

www.vic.gov.au/talkwildtrout

Bemm River Report with Don Cunningham



The weather has been good, after some welcome rain. Anglers are finding bream up the river and they are also spread out over a large part of the lake. Spawning seems to be happening in the lake as well as in the river.

Trevally are in the estuary as well as down the channel. Reports indicate that they have become part of some angler's bags whilst fishing for bream. Flathead and luderick seem to be more active this week, and maybe a good sign for the weeks to come. The

best two baits have been sandworm and prawn and the lure fishermen are being rewarded for their efforts, using a range of hard bodies, vibes, and plastics.

There has been very little seawater coming into the lake, and the water has discoloured a little since the rain.

East Gippsland Shire has carried out some repair work on the ramp at Luderick Point and as a result this weekend the ramp has performed better. Frequent side-by-side launching and retrieving has happened, and our thanks go to the Shire, for the work carried out. So far so good.

I have had a phone discussion with Craig Ingram today. Craig is project Manager for the Estuary Perch brood stock project. Craig sounded positive, as good numbers of baby perch have been transitioned to the pond system, where they will continue to develop to a fingerling stage. Presuming there are no setbacks, these fingerlings could be ready for release in December.

Editor

Thanks to Don for this interesting report. Readers will recall that four of the five boats to fish the Bemm in the Great Perch Search left the Bemm without launching their boats and headed to Marlo because of the state of the launching ramp at Bemm River, so Don's ramp report is important and augurs well for the Xmas holiday makers heading to the Bemm. It is expected that the East Gippsland Shire will release a Media Statement in two to three weeks time outlining further proposed work to be undertaken in the New Year.

No onsite work has commenced on the proposed fishing platforms that would provide river access for anglers, which almost certainly means the platforms, would not be available for the Xmas visitors to this inlet and river. Whilst this is a disappointment, I think anglers across the state would be delighted to read of the proposed ramp works to be undertaken at Bemm River, as this is a community whose economic well being is largely dependant on the recreational fishing of Sydenham Inlet. We will look forward to the East Gippsland Shire press release giving details of this project.

Recreational Licence Fees Advisory Group

Fisheries Victoria is seeking nominations from keen recreational fishers to join a working group that will provide advice to the Government on how best to spend licence fees. This working group will consist of eight recreational anglers appointed for a three-year term. Fisheries Victoria Executive Director, Travis Dowling said, "These volunteers review and prioritise submissions from angling clubs, community groups, councils and Government agencies."

The group will include one person nominated by VRFish, and another representing recreational fishing business interests. Mr Dowling added, "The next term of the working group will also include 50% representation by females."

Nominations for the Working Group close on the 27th November. For an expression of interest form, contact Mr Robin Billen from Horton International (03) 9650 2555 or via email billen@horton-intl.com.au

Comment

The 50% female membership is a rather surprising change that seems to be largely unheralded by the Government or by VRFish in the context of a Working Group.

I would believe that 40% of the collected fishing licence fees will not be available for allocation, as they have been committed to funding 10 Fisheries Officers. Approximately \$6 million is collected from fishing licence purchases annually.

New Plastic Fishing Licences Available from Nov 1st

Recreational anglers who buy a 1 or 3 year Victorian Fishing Licence on line will receive a plastic licence by mail within 7 days of purchase and will provide immediate coverage for the angler. The plastic licences will be more durable and reduce the need for anglers to replace their licences. Around 405 of Victorian fishing licences are currently purchased on line.

To purchase a fishing licence online via the DEPI website www.depi.vic.gov.au/fishing

East Gippsland Anglers Forum

The annual Anglers Roundtable Regional Forum will take place in the Lake Tyers Toorloo Arm Hall 430, Lake Tyers Beach Road on the 2nd December.

This is the seventh successive year these forums have been held and this forum is one of ten forums covering the state organised by Fisheries Victoria. These forums provide the opportunity for anglers to bring forward issues of concern, and to discuss with Fisheries Managers local concerns. In the past, these forums have been very well attended, and discussion has been wide-ranging and interesting. I urge anglers to mark calendars with this date, and do consider attending this once a year chance to put your concerns to Fisheries Victoria, particularly given the current changes taking place with the introduction of the Target One Million Project. This forum will commence at 7.00pm and conclude by 9.30

Petition Presented By One Man Band.

Local campaigner John Fitzgerald presented a **petition of 7000 names** to local member Harriet Shing calling on the State Government to ban commercial netting in the Cunningham Arm of the Gippsland Lakes. The township of Lakes Entrance fronts the Cunningham Arm and is the point of access to the lakes of tourists and the elderly who holiday in Lakes Entrance. It also provides jetties that the elderly, the young and the handicapped can fish from with safety and in close proximity to their accommodation.

Commercial netting can only take place in the Cunningham Arm at night Monday to Thursday using a 732 metre in length seine net, however the arm is closed to netting from December 1st each year to 30th April each year. In many ways, commercial netting of this area is an affront to the thousands of tourists who come to this area to holiday, and given the reduction in the number of commercial netters from 32 to 10 in the last decade it should not handicap the current commercial netters.

I think the amazing aspect of this petition is that it was coordinated by John Fitzgerald and demonstrates the depth of feeling on this issue. If the Government is serious about the Target One Million Project, and encouraging recreational fishing then the Cunningham Arm should be closed to commercial netting immediately. I congratulate John for his effort, which was achieved with no support from VRFish or recreational fishing bodies and just shows what can be achieved with individual enthusiasm.



Dusky Flathead Regulations Remain



Travis Dowling, Executive Director of Fisheries Victoria has written to anglers who contributed submissions regarding the renewal of the current dusky flathead regulations to inform anglers that there will be no change in these regulations in the next twelve months. In his letter he stated-

“The 55 cm maximum size limit implemented by this Fisheries Notice provides a no-take refuge for large dusky flathead and is intended to help rebuild breeding stocks. This was implemented following a decline of catches of large females in East Gippsland estuaries, which was supported by creel and research angler diary data collected in Mallacoota Inlet and Lake Tyers. The 30cm lower size limit was put in place following

consultation with recreational anglers. Applying the upper size limit to commercial fishers operating in the Gippsland Lakes may see high post-release mortality amongst dusky flathead captured in mesh nets and not help to achieve the purpose of the Fisheries Notice.”

Development of the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

Little by little information is becoming available regarding **the change of Fisheries Victoria to a Statutory Authority.** The following information was taken from the Chairman’s report of the September meeting of the State-wide Recreational Fishing Roundtable.

A Miss Sally Fensling, Acting Executive Director Regulation and Enforcement, has been appointed to establish this Statutory Authority. The Victorian Fisheries Authority Board will be appointed by the Minister, with the CEO being appointed by the Board, with the Ministers assistance. Miss Fensling has indicated the process is

complicated and is likely to take significant time. The Victorian Statutory Fisheries Authority will report annually to Parliament and publish its business and financial reports.

At the most recent State-wide Recreational Roundtable Meeting, Miss Fensling was introduced and she spoke of the development of this authority. It was stated at this meeting that the development of the Statutory Authority had been sought and pushed by recreational anglers, however I have seen no papers or discussion on this major change. The State-wide Roundtable Minutes on this topic conclude, "General discussion about the establishment of the Victorian Fisheries Authority which has been pushed and requested by recreational fishers."

I would very much like to bring to readers more information on the Victorian Fisheries Authority, however I have seen nothing on this important topic. I look forward to receiving a major discussion paper on this topic providing some indication of the advantages of the move from Fisheries Victoria to the Victorian Fisheries Authority. Perhaps that is a role VRFish should be undertaking. I have spoken to several secretaries of Angling Clubs and they say they have no information on any proposed change. Questions such as what is the place of the commercial fisheries on this Authority Board, and will 50% of the board be female members together with dozens of other questions arise? Perhaps this will be a topic for the Regional Forums. Minister Pulford has said that Government expects the Victorian Fisheries Authority to be operational by the end of 2016.

VRFish and the Geelong Star

VRFish and the Recreational Fishing Foundation joined together with Federal Member for Corangamite, Sarah Henderson MP and Jason O'Neill at a rally to Ban The Geelong Star from fishing in Australian waters. This rally was held on 25th October at Torquay Angling Club, Fisherman's Beach Torquay. No report has been received on this rally.

Last Issue for 2015

Unless some issue arises that warrants a special issue, this will be the final issue for 2015.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to this newsletter over the last twelve months and to all who have encouraged me by their comments to continue with the publication. Dawn and I wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I anticipate the next issue of Around the Jetties will be out in late January 2016, unless unforeseen circumstances change that plan.

Around the Jetties on Line

www.laketyersbeach.net.au

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

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