



Lynton.G.Barr  
P.O.Box 23  
Swan Reach 3903  
Victoria  
Phone 03 5156 4674  
Email-  
[delbarr1@bigpond.com](mailto:delbarr1@bigpond.com)

# Around the Jetties

## January 2016

### Issue 97

#### An Anglers Newsletter

## Happy New Year and Good Fishing

### Release of Estuary Perch in Lake Tyers

On Monday January 4<sup>th</sup>, 25,000 estuary perch were released into Lake Tyers after a long process to convince authorities of the value of this marine stocking.

**Background** The process to convince authorities to stock Lake Tyers with estuary perch commenced in 2007 when the Lake Tyers Fisheries Management Plan was being developed, and several anglers provided submissions urging the stocking of estuary perch, and this request was largely based on the historical fact that estuary perch had previously been found in Lake Tyers. This request was not acceded to by the Management Plan Steering Committee. (No members of the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club were on this committee) In 2014 Fisheries Victoria produced a booklet of 15 pages to assist fisheries managers making informed decisions regarding the management of recreational fisheries in Lake Tyers including the possibility of stocking this water with estuary perch. This study was commissioned by the secretary of the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club, John Harrison and funded from anglers licence fees in an effort, to provide support for the stocking of this water with estuary perch.



In the period 2013/14 over 200,000 estuary perch had been stocked in other waters around the state including west Victorian freshwater lakes, but the stocking of Lake Tyers seemed to be on hold, despite the fact that a few estuary perch had been caught over the years in Lake Tyers.

This Estuary Perch caught Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 2013 by Ray Clissold of Sale

In 2015 with a change of Government, and appointment of a new Executive Director of Fisheries Victoria, **Travis Dowling**, the stocking of estuary perch in Lake Tyers was approved and this stocking became important

as this was a release of this species in a marine estuary for the first time. The organisation of this stocking fell to the Coordinator of the **Target One Million** project **Craig Ingram**. Craig organised keen recreational anglers to fish for brood stock, at Marlo and Bemm River. Within a couple of months estuary perch brood stock were spawning in a hatchery at Narooma and plans were being made for the release of over 20,000 estuary perch fingerlings into Lake Tyers.

**The Release.** The member for Yan Yean, Danielle Green, represented the Andrews Government at the release of the estuary perch, as part of the Governments Target One Million Plan for recreational fishing in this state, which aims at getting more people fishing more often. This stocking complements an earlier stocking of 5000 mulloway fingerlings, which was a Victorian first.



The member for Yan Yean stated that “Lake Tyers now boasts Victoria’s biggest marine stocking effort with year one of this two year trial,” and anglers and fisheries scientists will watch the results of this trial with interest. 5000 estuary perch were also released at Bemm River to boost its perch population and to acknowledge the contribution of brood fish from this area to the breeding program.

Don Cunningham who led the Bemm River search for brood stock was absolutely delighted to have this contribution of fingerlings to the Bemm River recreational fishery.

The fish being released were much smaller than the mulloway fingerlings and four boats moved these small fish to weed patches in the main lake. This cover will provide food and protection in the months ahead. The growth rate of the fish will depend on how they acclimatize in their new environment. In some western district waters estuary perch were reaching minimum legal size within two years and this was the case in Lake Bolac.

Special thanks are due to Executive Director of Fisheries Victoria Travis Dowling and Craig Ingram Coordinator of the Target One Million program at a state level for supporting and undertaking this marine stocking, and John Harrison at the local level for his enthusiasm over nine years for this project.



The Trailer with brood stock being transferred to boats for distribution, Craig Ingram, John Harrison and Grandson at the jetty prior to release

Today’s stocking of estuary perch means 173,000 perch have been stocked this year. Other areas stocked included Werribee River(45,000) Devilbend Reservoir (35,000), Lake Hamilton (18,000) Melton Reservoir (30,000) and Albert Park Lake (18,000).

## Commercial Fishing Phase Out in Port Phillip and Corio now Law

Legislation to end commercial fishing in **Port Phillip Bay** passed through State Parliament and was announced by Media Release on the 25<sup>th</sup> November. The phasing out of commercial netting will take place over the next seven years, and it is believed this move will see improved recreational catch rates and an increase in the size of fish caught. **Corio Bay** will be closed to netting by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and all netting will be phased out by 2022.

\$27 million dollars has been allocated to compensate the commercial fishermen and after 2022, eight licences will be made available for non-netting fishing in Port Phillip Bay, and although I have not seen the method of fishing for these licence holders stated, it is expected to be long lining.

Once the Bill is gazetted in coming weeks formal offers of compensation will be sent to affected licence holders.



Minister Jaala Pulford is quoted as stating “Phasing out of commercial net fishing in Port Phillip Bay is the flagship commitment of our “Target One Million Plan. It will get more people fishing more often, right here on Melbourne’s doorstep.”

Actually recently released statistics show 838,000 anglers currently fish in Victoria, and this figure is naturally increasing. Now that is not far from the Target One Million a Labour Party commitment prior to the last election.

### Editor

The Minister for Agriculture’s view that the bill will get more people fishing on Melbourne’s doorstep is correct but does little for anglers who fish this states largest inland estuary namely the Gippsland Lakes. There is the suggestion that recreational anglers will be satisfied if spawning fish at the mouth of rivers are protected. This view was put forward by the Minister on a rural broadcast on ABC on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, and she specifically stated the labour party had no interest in a buyback of commercial licences in the Gippsland Lakes

## Coalition Supports the End of Commercial Netting in the Bay

Peter Walsh the Shadow Minister for Agriculture on the 12<sup>th</sup> November put out a Media Release noting that the Coalition would support the Bill to phase out commercial fishing with one amendment that is to bring forward the phase out in Corio Bay by April 2018. He stated in his media release that “ this date change would bring faster resolution to a long fought local issue, and would ensure it is resolved before the next election.” He added “phasing out commercial netting will ensure we have healthy bays and better fishing opportunities for many years to come.” The only opposition to the Bill for the phase out of commercial netting was the vote of the greens.

### Editor



It should be noted by recreational anglers that the Coalition made a commitment in November 2011 to spend \$2 million as a first step to phase out commercial netting in the Gippsland Lakes. In the current statement of support for the phase out of netting in Port Phillip and Corio Bays no mention is made by the Shadow Minister of Agriculture, Peter Walsh, on whether his party still supports the phase out of commercial fishing in the Gippsland Lakes. Does this mean that this commitment no longer applies, and rural recreational anglers again are left with very little support from the rural party that supposedly supports rural activities. I have written to Shadow Minister Peter Walsh (17<sup>th</sup> November

2015) seeking to find out if the coalition still supports funding a buyout of commercial licences, but have had no reply.

### A Fact that should not be Forgotten

Recreational anglers and the community should not forget that three commercial fishermen approached the local member Tim Bull MP in 2012 seeking the buyback to be again put on the table.

This was reported in Issue 74 November 2013. Tim Bulls response was, “any buyout needs to be funded and this has been a matter for the Ministry and Treasury to consider. I have had ongoing discussions with the commercial fishermen on this matter following the original request last year.”

It is evident that 30% of the commercial fishermen at this time wanted to consider a voluntary buyback of their licences

## A Big Week for VRFish and Rec Anglers

### Rob Loats Elected VRFish Chairman



At the November annual meeting of VRFish the recreational angling Peak Body, Rob Loats was elected president. Rob has had a long association with recreational fishing. He is currently a member of the Murray Darling Basin Murray Cod Fishery Advisory Group, the North Central Catchment Management Authority Natural Resource Management committee, and has represented recreational anglers on Fisheries Committees such as the Fisheries Revenue Allocation Committee.

Rob is a life member of the Mid Northern Association of Angling Clubs, and Donald Angling Club as well as the Wimmera Angling Club. The photo of Rob Loats is most appropriate with him holding a large yellowbelly. Rob in private life is a primary production business manager from rural Victoria.

Rob first attracted my attention several years ago with his work on the re-establishment of the iconic catfish once so popular in the Murray system and its tributaries. This involved trial breeding of the species in lakes with a view to restocking the Murray and tributaries. This newsletter wishes Rob well in the challenging times ahead for recreational fishing.

Dallas D'Silva, General manager of VRFish, thanked former chairman Russell Conway for his contribution to recreational fishing advocacy and VRFish over the last four years in his role as chairman, and in his role of representing fishers at the Commonwealth level on important issues such as the Geelong Star.

## **VRFish Releases an Economic Study of Recreational Fishing**

VRFish is to be congratulated on the release of the **Economic Study of Recreational Fishing in Victoria** (November 2015.) This report prepared by Ernst and Young and provides an understanding of the economic contribution and net benefit of recreational fishing in Victoria and is a most important document.

Recreational fishing is estimated to generate \$7.1 billion in economic activity and supports over 33,000 jobs in Victoria. In this report Gippsland recreational fishing is found to contribute \$381 million in direct output to the state economy and is second to the Port Phillip Region across Victoria in terms of the economic contribution of recreational fishing.

In a similar study in 2009 the level of participation in recreational angling was 721,000, whilst this current study has found this participation level has increased to 838,000. Recreational angling is a growing sport in this state.

In Victoria 18% of anglers fishing trips are to estuaries and 38% of the fish targeted are bream and surprisingly 25% of fish targeted are mullet with mulloway and estuary perch being the other main estuarine species with 73% of anglers being bait fishermen.. Boat owners spend on average \$15,000 on recreational fishing boats with 43% of anglers owning a boat.

The Minister for Agriculture, Jaala Pulford, on ABC rural radio morning program (25/11/15) mentioned **that the average spend per fishing trip was \$326**. This figure was taken directly from this study, which illustrates its importance to decision makers. The interviewer made a great deal of this figure indicating he never spent that amount on a fishing trip, however this includes tackle bait and equipment 29%, food, accommodation and transport 40%, boat (excluding purchase price), and other expenditure 11% and includes the costs of many anglers who travel vast distances to partake of their sport.

VRFish General Manager, Dallas D' Silva stated, "The report is the only one of its kind in Victoria able to provide a benchmark on the level of participation and economic activity generated by recreational fishing. The report will provide Government with a baseline to plan and measure growth in the sector. It highlights the importance of strategic planning and investment in improved angler access, infrastructure and stocking to support a growing and valuable activity and an important contributor to Victoria's economy, health and social fabric."

**This is a most important document and is available on the VRFish website: [www.vrfish.com.au](http://www.vrfish.com.au)**

## **Economic Value of Boating on the Gippsland Lakes**

This was a study was undertaken by AECOM Australia Pty Ltd and was engaged by the Boating Industry Association on behalf of the Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee and Gippsland Ports. This study is dated the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and I have recently had the availability of this study pointed out to me. I had sought this study from the Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee on a number of occasions without success, however on the 30<sup>th</sup> October, I was advised that the Economic Value of Boating on the Gippsland Lakes Report is available on the Gippsland Ports website and has been for over a year. I have been unaware of any Media Release or publicity of this report and certainly its unavailability has been noted in this publication on a number of occasions.

I contacted Dallas D'Silva General Manager of VRFish the Peak Recreational Fishing Body, and he indicated VRFish had not been consulted in the study, and he was unaware of the availability of the report. The actual body of the report seems to basically deal with the availability of boat ramps and moorings and the study found that there was a shortage of berths and boat storage facilities amounting to about 500, and a ramp shortfall during peak times.

Overall the recreational boating sectors economic impact amounted to \$163 million. Boating tourism accounted for the largest proportion with an impact of \$121 million according to this study.

#### **Editor**

This study is very disappointing in that little or no reference is made to the hundreds of boats involved in recreational fishing in the Gippsland Lakes. It has been stated by a member of the Boating Association of Victoria that 80% of the boats on the Gippsland Lakes are involved in some aspects of recreational fishing, but this is not reflected in the report. It is very strange that this publication, was somewhat hidden away in the Gippsland Ports website with no publicity regarding its public release.

## **Gippsland Fishing Forum for Recreational Anglers**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, one of ten Regional Recreational Angling Forums was held in the Lake Tyers Toorloo Hall. These forums organised by Fisheries Victoria provide an opportunity for anglers to receive the latest information on their sport, and raise questions of Fisheries Officers. This is the seventh successive year of these forums and this forum was the last of ten held across the state during 2015.

On this occasion the Chief Executive Officer of Fisheries Victoria, Travis Dowling was present and he provided a quite detailed report on activities of Fisheries Victoria.



In addition, the Coordinator of the Target One Million Project Craig Ingram was also present and he spoke on the Marine Projects currently being undertaken by Fisheries Victoria. As well, a number of Fisheries Officers were in attendance. An audience of 45 anglers took advantage of this forum.

Chief Executive Travis Dowling spoke of the Target one Million Project and the importance of fishing to local economies, family activities, and physical health of communities. He also noted the strong support of Minister Jaala Pulford for this program.

#### **Amongst matters raised by the Chief Executive were the following.**

- The buyback of commercial licences from commercial fishermen in Port Phillip and Corio Bays is underway with Port Phillip to be complete by 2022, and Corio to be complete 1/4/2018.
- Amounts paid to commercial fishermen are as high as \$1.6 million to buy back licences and it is expected a major decline in licences will take place in the next twelve months.
- The Better Facilities Program introduced by this Government will see \$2000 paid to every angling club in the state to support these clubs.
- The increase in fish stocking from 3-5million fingerlings is a key part of the Target One Million Project and has been widely sought by anglers across the state.
- Fisheries are concerned at the declining water levels in many of the lakes across western Victoria. Travis Dowling indicated that Lake Bolac was very low and that Fisheries were attempting to catch and relocate rainbow trout and estuary perch that had been stocked in this lake. Lake Toolondo is also a concern as well as other waters in the states west.
- Over 170,000 anglers now have the Fishing Guide on their smart phones and this has meant changes to regulations can be instituted far more easily.
- Changed regulations may soon include in Lake Eildon Murray cod fishery being open all year round. 99.6% of cod sampled in Lake Eildon were stocked fish, which indicates there is little spawning of this

species in Eildon. Normal regulations re bag limits apply, namely 2 Murray cod in Lake Eildon, and one per day in other waters.



- The Executive Officer, Travis Dowling, spoke of the damage opera House nets can do to wildlife in streams. He showed a prototype of a net that would catch yabbies and at the same time would protect wildlife such as the platypus.

- Opera House nets can only be used on private waters and anyone found using them in public areas faces a fine of \$750. Over 60,000 Opera House nets have been sold in Victoria and this is a concern to fisheries.

- It is intended to reduce the bag limit for yellowbelly from 10 per day to 5 per day. This follows reports of large catches of this species by anglers in most waters across the state, and many of these fish are large. This is part of Fisheries Victoria's reaction to changing conditions in fisheries and is proactive management.

### Marine Fish Stocking

Craig Ingram, Target One Million Coordinator spoke of the marine stocking currently taking place in our estuaries.

- Craig indicated that the Estuary perch search and spawning had been most successful and he expected that 25,000 fingerlings could be released in Lake Tyers in January. He thanked all who had been involved in the catching of brood stock.
- Craig was particularly pleased with the release of Mulloway and described the fingerlings as excellent strong little fish. He actually predicted that some small mulloway might be caught in lake Tyers in the next twelve months.
- It is expected that a report on the success or otherwise of the prawn stocking in Lake Tyers of two years ago would be released in the next month.
- Craig spoke of the large numbers of mulloway that were caught at Tamboon in the past and that the stocking of this water with 2500 mulloway was an attempt to redevelop this fishery.



Rob Caune representing VRFish spoke for a few minutes on the VRFish release of the Economic Survey of Recreational Fishing. (A report on this important document is provided earlier in this newsletter.)

The second half of this Forum provided the chance for questions to be asked, and this full hour was taken up and questions and discussions continued after the meeting closed at 9.00pm. Amongst the questions was the old question as to what can be done about the numbers of large black cormorants. The response was that little could be done and that the species was a protected bird. It was doubted that communities today would allow reduction of wildlife.

Other questions covered the design of boat ramps, fish stocking and distinguishing between dusky flathead and eastern blue spot. (This distinguishing between the two species of flathead has been a concern for a number of years.)

This was a great night and anglers would have come away from this forum armed with more knowledge on current movements in their sport. The attendance of the Chief Executive and the Coordinator of the Target One Million Program added greatly to the night.

# Talk Wild Trout 2015



This is a report on a most important meeting held in Mansfield on the 21<sup>st</sup> November to examine the decline in trout fishing in a number of rivers in the North East of the State.

Thank you to Anthony Foster, Freshwater Fisheries Manager, Fisheries Victoria, for supply of material and permission to use photographs from the conference booklet in this newsletter.

**This statement sums up concerns**

**“The summer of 2013/14 was an unhappy one for many of Victoria’s trout stream anglers. Widespread reports of poor fishing were received from many normally productive wild trout streams.”**

## Major Trout Conference held in Mansfield

This conference was attended by 160 anglers, with the guest keynote speaker being Dr Dan Dauwalter from the United States organisation [Trout Unlimited](#) which has 160,000 members. His main message was “keep the habitat for trout clean and fish within that habitat will thrive.”

A list of other notable speakers added to the day, and that evening a film festival of trout fishing films was screened by the Mansfield Fly Fishing Club to conclude conference.

The local Mansfield paper made the observation that “the trout fishing industry in the North East contributes millions of dollars to the economy each year and attracts thousands to the region with camping and fishing in many of the major rivers, creeks and lakes.”

Mansfield Shire Councillor and Mansfield Fly Fishing Club member Russ Bate who stated that out of this conference “we are hopeful we will see a way forward to recovering a big part of the shire’s tourism economy and bringing back the fly fishermen to this area.”

### The Priority Rivers were

Aire, Dargo, Goulbourn, Howqua, Jamieson, Kiewa, King, Mitta Mitta, Ovens, Toorongo, and Yarra Rivers, and Nariel Creek.

A first part of a research program undertaken prior to this conference had the following findings, based on twelve priority rivers being surveyed between 19<sup>th</sup> Jan and the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

Surveyors used back pack (see below) and boat electro fishing.



### Key Findings

- There is evidence of brown trout recruitment in 11 of the 12 priority rivers, with no brown trout recruitment in the Jamieson River
- There is evidence of rainbow trout recruitment from the 2014 spawning in 9 of the 12 priority rivers including the Jamieson
- The Aire, Goulbourn, Howqua, Kiewa, Ovens, and Toorongu all had at least one site with greater than 50 trout captured per 100 metres surveyed.
- The Goulbourn, Howqua, Kiewa, and Toorongu Rivers all had one site with greater than 100 trout captured per 100 metres surveyed.
- The Ovens River showed signs of trout recovery following the 2013 fires.
- The survey site at Harrietville had a high abundance of mature brown trout. No brown trout were collected upstream of Harrietville, although rainbow trout were collected indicating signs of recovery.
- The Dargo River had very low numbers of brown trout except for the highest altitude site.



- The number of trout captured per 100 metres in Nariel Creek (8 trout) was half that of the next lowest Yarra River with 16 trout per 100 metres.
- Generally trout were in much higher abundance in higher altitudes sites. However two of the four rivers surveyed in Coastal Victoria had higher numbers of trout at lower altitudes. (Aire and Toorongu Rivers) Included in this booklet is a detailed assessment of trout numbers in each of the priority rivers. I found this fascinating and it provided information

### Talk Wild Trout 2015

This was the title of the conference and is the title of a 68 page beautifully illustrated booklet that was prepared for the Mansfield Trout Conference. I would strongly recommend any angler interested in trout fishing to get a copy. This book not only analyses the trout stocks in the 12 priority rivers, but lists the rivers to be surveyed in 2016. Included in the 2016 list is the Dargo, Mitta Mitta Rivers and Morass Creek in Gippsland.

Of great interest are articles on the riparian vegetation along the banks of streams and the effect of this vegetation on the health of trout and stream temperatures. Willow removal and its affect on trout is also examined, as is the contribution of stocking to trout populations.

**If you are interested in trout fishing then this excellent publication should be on your reading list.**

Around the Jetties congratulates the editors Taylor Hunt, John Douglas, and Anthony Forster, of Freshwater Fisheries Management, Fisheries Victoria.

Thanks to John Pincombe of Mansfield who attended the conference, and obtained a copy of "Talk Wild Trout 2015" and newspaper reports on the conference for Around the Jetties. John formerly provided a Trout Guiding service in the North East of the state and is an experienced fly fisherman.

Please note the presentations at this conference were recorded on video and a short summary video clip will also be available in the near future. This publication will provide information on how anglers may access this video information.



## Lake Bolac Estuary Perch under Threat

Since 2011 Lake Bolac has been stocked with 5,000 rainbow trout and 43,000 estuary perch.

Readers of this publication would be aware the growth rate of the rainbow trout with fish reaching 6lbs in two years and the estuary perch were reaching over 30cms. This was a remarkable success story.

However, all the fish in Lake Bolac are currently under threat due to falling water levels as a result of low rainfall and a warmer than average spring. A fish salvage operation has been taking place and 127 estuary perch have been caught and transferred to Lake Hamilton. The salvage operation was supported by licensed eel fishers, local anglers, Deakin University and the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority.



The attempt to salvage fish has ceased due to limited access to the lake, deep mud and poor water quality including a severe algal bloom. Lake Bolac was full in 2011/12 however today it is only 50cms deep and is expected to be completely dry by the end of the 2015/16 summer.

Fisheries Victoria Executive Director Travis Dowling stated that Fisheries had learnt a lot from the salvage operation and will be monitoring other drying lakes in the region, consulting with water managers and anglers and reviewing the fish stocking programs.

[This item was a result of information in a Media Release by Fisheries Victoria 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015](#)



## The Law and Recreational Fishing



A member of the public after observing a boat on Lake Nagambie with two men in it attending setlines telephoned 13FISH and Fisheries Officers responded and apprehended the two anglers. The men's boat and vehicle was searched and two undersize cod of 53 and 34cms were found as well as a number of setlines and setline components. A bag dumped in undergrowth was found to contain 12 more setlines.

Regional Supervising Officer Murray Burns said the matter was very serious and a significant threat to the Nagambie Lakes fishery.

The two offenders will be charged on summons in relation to taking undersize fish, failure to retain fish in whole or carcass form and using commercial fishing equipment.

These anglers face fines of up to \$30,400 and heavy penalties that may include forfeiture of their boat and car and or a ban on recreational fishing altogether for a period of time.

Setlines are illegal and anglers must be in the vicinity of their rods when fishing.

## Items in Brief

### A Surprising Catch

On the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> of November I had an excited phone call from local Stan Barker who after a couple of hours fishing Lake Tyers had just got home. Now Stan doesn't fish like the average Lake Tyers angler who operates from a boat. Stan dons his waders and in relatively shallow bays, wades out and fishes casting soft plastics. On last evening Stan got onto a good run of dusky flathead and soon had his bag and had returned four, when he was into a strong fish. After a short time he was able to get this very light coloured flathead into his landing net. A quick measurement indicated the fish was 85cms in length, but most surprising this fish was identified by Stan as a sand flathead and its light colour was totally different from the normal dusky flathead.

After some research I found the sand flathead does not exceed 45cms, and that this flathead would seem to be an Eastern Blue Spot or Yank flathead. One of the books suggests it could be a light coloured dusky flathead, however I have never caught or seen a light coloured dusky flathead in Lake Tyers. I would be interested in the thoughts of anglers. On this evening another surprising catch was a 43cm luderick also taken on a soft plastic.

## Over the Bag Limit Crabs Yield Big Fine



Readers will recall the photos and story in Around the Jetties of a couple netting from a Jetty in Lakes Entrance who had in a couple a catch of 439 sand crabs. The daily catch limit for sand crabs is thirty. In the Magistrates Court at Bairnsdale the two netters pleaded guilty and were fined \$6,500 for exceeding the catch limit, using more than 2 hoop nets and obstructing a Fisheries Officer. Their equipment was also forfeited. In recent years the netting of sand crabs has become popular with some sections of the community, and in holiday times as many as 20 netters can be found on some jetties.

## New Study to Investigate Yellow Tail Kingfish.

A new two year study will be undertaken to improve the understanding of the kingfish populations along the Victorian coast. This study is to be funded from fishing licence fees. According to Fisheries Victoria Executive Director “Kingfish have enjoyed a resurgence in popularity amongst saltwater anglers, who consider them great sport and good eating.” They are caught off the coast between Portland and Mallacoota. The Executive Director stated “Fisheries managers want to learn more about kingfish populations including their growth rates, population structures and spawning habits.”

Mr Dowling said keen anglers could help with the study by donating kingfish frames and keeping records of their catches.

To register interest anglers should contact Dr Corey Green the studies lead scientist on [\(03\)5258 0275](tel:(03)5258 0275) or emailing [corey.green@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:corey.green@ecodev.vic.gov.au)

## Bass News That Affects Gippsland

On the week ending 3<sup>rd</sup> December seventeen waters across Gippsland shared 120,000 bass fingerlings. Since 2002 Fisheries has stocked nearly 560,000 bass fingerlings throughout Gippsland. In the latest releases waters to receive bass were Avon (5000), Macalister (9000), Tambo (8000), Nicholson (8000), Mitchell (10000) Thomson (5,000), and Tyers (5000) and the Valencia (3000) Traralgon (2000), Rainbow (2000) and Freestone (2000) creeks.

One of the new waters to receive fingerlings was the Timbarra River (10,000) near its junction with the Tambo River. Hospital Creek east of Lake Tyers also was a new stocking, receiving (3000) fingerlings.

Executive Director of Fisheries Victoria Travis Dowling said “bass stocking was funded by recreational fishing licence fees and Target One Million, which aims to grow participation to one million anglers by 2020.”

### Editor

I would suspect the 8,000 Australian bass released into the Nicholson River would be released above the dam, in the same way that 40,000 had previously been released. This means these fish will not be able to access the Gippsland lakes to spawn so no self sustaining stock of Australian bass will develop in the Nicholson River. This follows the promise of former Minister Peter Walsh that 100,000 Australian bass would be stocked in this river

This total stocking never took place when it was realized a decommissioned dam would deny stocked fish access to the Gippsland Lakes to spawn. This publication has sought the removal of this dam, however neither the Federal Government and local member Darren Chester or state member Tim Bull have been able to obtain funding to remove this dam, and the current State Labour Government seems unable to revitalise this river with the removal of this dam.. **Where else in this state is a river blocked by Government State and Federal inactivity?**

## Whiting and Commercial Nets

Over recent weeks there has been an influx of King George whiting into the Gippsland Lakes. This seems to happen to a limited extent every year, however the difference this year has been the increased numbers of this species and recreational anglers had great sport for a couple of weeks. The fish were not big averaging around 30 cms. Many anglers at this time were getting their bag of King George whiting (20). This changed in many areas including Bancroft Bay when the commercial netters moved in. At times 16 boats of anglers could be seen fishing off Shaving Point but seine netting quickly changed the availability of the whiting and within a matter of days only one or two recreational boats were seen fishing in this area. This happened of course at a time when it was almost impossible to get a bream or dusky flathead as their numbers are so low in the Gippsland Lake system.



## 2014/15 Commercial Catch Figures

I obtained a copy of the commercial catch figures for the Gippsland Lakes for 2014/15 from the Catch and Effort Unit of Fisheries Victoria on the 4<sup>th</sup> December.

### Gippsland Lakes

Commercial catch for each major species caught in Gippsland Lakes and Lake Tyers during 1978/79–2014/15

Year	Production (tonnes)															
	Anchovy, Australian (whitebait)	Australian salmon	Bream, black	Carp, European	Flathead, dusky	Garfish, river	Leatherjacket	Luderick	Mullet, sea	Mullet, yelloweye	Mussel, blue	Perch, estuary	Tailor	Trevally, silver	Other	Total
2012/13	id	1	83	30	9	id	id	7	6	16	id	1	32	3	33	221
2013/14	id	4	40	39	8	id	id	6	5	15	0	1	26	3	119	266
2014/15	id	1	55	37	9	id	1	5	9	12	0	1	14	5	89	238

<sup>1</sup>Lake Tyers fishery was closed in April 2003.

<sup>2</sup>id, insufficient data to report because there are less than five licence holders (policy requirement to protect commercial confidentiality of data), and the data have been included as 'other'.

The figures indicate a slight rise in the catch of black bream from 40 to 55 tonnes and I am informed that this was a result of low level flooding. The dusky flathead commercial catch seems to have levelled off at a low 8-9 tonnes per annum, and this is a very small catch from an estuary of 450 sq kms. Little wonder that there are few reports of recreational catches of dusky flathead. The decline in this fishery is very evident with the catch in 2005/6 being 48 tonnes. It needs to be remembered that the size limit of 55cms does not apply to commercial fishermen, which means any fish over 55cms caught in nets are just part of the catch, and these are the female breeders.

Since 2010 figures have not been available for the total value of the commercial catch in the Gippsland Lakes. Up until 2010 these figures indicated a catch valued at just \$1million. The commercial catch at the moment seems to be the lowest on record. It would be very interesting to compare the economic value and contribution of the commercial catch with that of the recreational fishery of the Gippsland Lakes.

My thanks to the Catch and Effort Unit of Fisheries Victoria for these updated figures for 2014/15



### Rock Beaching on the Mitchell River

The attached photo shows the results of rock beaching 6 kilometres of the Mitchell River silt jetties. In a recent **Parks Victoria** publication it was stated this protection plan “had been developed through a structured public consultation process, a key outcome of which was agreement that preservation of the formation is a high priority.”

I doubt any anglers would dispute the need for protection of the silt jetties, however many anglers would query whether rock beaching was the best method to achieve this result. I wonder whether the “structured public consultation” on this matter included local anglers, VRFish or Fisheries Victoria. **The resulting rock beaching will provide no habitat for fish, and at the same time makes it difficult for anglers to access the river and impossible for the handicapped or elderly anglers.**



**Parks Victoria** will seek further funding for future stages of their plan to rock wall in future years. The silt Jetties of the Mitchell River are a highly unusual feature of international interest, but then black bream of the Gippsland Lakes are a major recreational species in this state that is under threat and rock walling provides little or no support and might be considered detrimental to this important recreational fishery.. It is disturbing to see the banks of the silt jetties rocked, but no evidence of riparian vegetation being planted. In many ways the approach of Parks Victoria to protection of the silt jetties is worrying, but then its actions must have been supported by the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority who have had considerable experience with rock beaching

on local rivers such as the Tambo and Mitchell.

## Bush Tracks into Lake Tyers

The tracks on the east side of Lake Tyers are a continuing problem. Anglers attempting to get to Crystal Bay and other angling spots will find the tracks severely eroded and guttered. Readers will remember that several years ago this publication together with Fisheries Managers, politicians and Parks Vic spent two days with John Harrison of Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club inspecting tracks and discussing upgrades including camping areas and gravel boat launching areas.

It would appear nothing has been done by Parks Victoria to improve access or facilities. This may be due to a massive reduction in funding imposed by the previous Government. (\$122 million in 2011/12 to \$77 million in



2014/15) When the new Government looks at angler access, the tracks on the east of Lake Tyers should rate a high priority. In particular these tracks are used by elderly bank anglers and provide access to remote areas. At the moment some areas are only accessible with a four wheel drive and it would appear nothing has been done to maintain tracks in months. It has been announced in the last few days that the current Government according to Minister Ms Lisa Neville is investing \$56.5 million back into parks ‘to improve the facilities in our parks.’ It is to be hoped that anglers will see some funding directed to the restoration of tracks into Lake Tyers.

## Bowfishing for Carp a Possible Reality

According to writer Chris McLennan in the Weekly Times (25<sup>th</sup> November 2015) the “NSW Government will launch the nations first full blown trial , to gauge interest in the sport of bowhunting the noxious carp that infests inland waters.. The 18 month trial will be limited to specific sites in inland NSW. People could apply for a bowfishing permit from the DPI to take part in the trial which commenced on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The Australian Bowhunters Association looked on the trial as an “opportunity to showcase the sport.” of bowhunting.

At the completion of an 18 month trial, a survey of the anglers who took part will be conducted to provide information on effort and results as well as any economic benefits.

According to VRFish General Manager Dallas D' Silva, both spearfishing and bow fishing for carp is being considered by the Victorian Government. [Minister Jaala Pulford indicated the Victorian Government would be monitoring the NSW trial.](#)

#### **Back in Time**

Some thirty years ago I took the issue of bow hunting noxious European carp up with Fisheries Victoria, after my son, a young lad had despatched 9 large spawning carp with bow and arrow in a flood area of the Waranga Basin. Fisheries Victoria would not support this action and warned bow hunting of European carp was against the law with serious penalties. This matter was then raised in the Victorian Parliament at Question Time at my request by the Hon. David Evans MLC, but was rejected by the relevant Minister of the day.

## **Cormorants Numbers on the Gippsland Lakes**



The issue of Cormorant numbers on the Gippsland lakes was raised at the recent Recreational Anglers Forum, and this concern has also been raised by local member Tim Bull MP who provided the attached photo of large numbers of cormorants near the entrance to the lakes. Tim has indicated that he will be seeking to establish just what is the number of cormorants currently on the lakes. The 2001 study of Cormorants by Reside and Coutin suggests the population since 1987 has increased threefold. In 1990/91 the population declined to a low 200-300 birds but rose to almost 8000 birds in 1992 however this number of birds had dispersed by 1997 to just over 1000 birds. In other words the population of the Great Cormorant on the Gippsland Lakes varies markedly and to get a trend it may be necessary for an annual aerial census to be undertaken. What is known is that the majority of cormorants come from inland breeding colonies and numbers of great cormorants on the Gippsland Lakes may reflect conditions in the inland waterways. Reside and Coutin in their 2001 study wrote of the need for a more comprehensive study of "fish stocks, cormorant populations, and their diet." Now that was 15 years ago and I am unaware of any further studies in this area.

[Source J.Reside and P.C.Coutin "Estimates of the population, diet, and fish consumption of the Great Cormorant 1998"](#)

### **Death of Highly Respected Lake Tyers Angling Identity**

**Allen Beveridge 14/1/1925-12/12/2015.**

**A short obituary will appear in the next issue of Around the Jetties.**

**Readers of this printed version are asked to note that postage costs have increased to \$1. If you have email facilities or can access the On Line version through the Lake Tyers website (see below) please let us know. We are considering production costs, which are prohibitive.**

**Around the Jetties on Line at [www.laketyersbeach.net.au](http://www.laketyersbeach.net.au)**

**Readers-** Don't forget you may get a friend or an interested angler onto the emailing 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 that address. We do not advertise but rely on readers talking to others and the number of readers has continued to increase.

**Good Health and Good fishing**

**Lynton G Barr**