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# Around the Jetties

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Issue 102

## An Anglers Newsletter

“The finest gift you can give to any fisherman is to put a good fish back, and who knows if the fish you caught isn’t someone else’s gift to you.”

Lee Wulff Fishing Author and Fly Fisherman

## Final Edition

### Editorial

It is with great sadness I announce that this issue will be the final issue of Around the Jetties following ten years of publishing this angler newsletter. In that time 104 issues were produced that



averaged over ten pages per issue, with ten issues per year, so if you had received all issues you would have received around 1000 pages of fishing news over the past decade. Prior to commencing Around the Jetties I wrote a two page fishing section in the Feathers and Fur magazine for a decade, so in the last twenty years I have had busy time writing on fishing.

This decision to end publication of Around the Jetties has been forced on me due to a major health problem that I am currently facing and have had for two years.

I would like to take the opportunity of thanking all those anglers who have contributed to this publication, and in

particular the information willingly provided by Fisheries Victoria Managers and staff for publication. Thanks also to the Executive Directors.

From eight or so original readers the number of readers today is over 1000.

## An Anglers Reassessment of Trout Regulations

I have received a fascinating assessment of current trout fishing regulations and suggested changes to regulations across the state that could have a major positive impact on trout fishing. This was in a paper written by Trevor Hawkins, a Field editor and illustrator for AFN publishing. Trevor has had over forty years' experience with fly fishing and angling generally. **This article was published in the Freshwater Fishing magazine Issue 139** and Trevor who is a reader of Around the Jetties has given permission for his paper to be quoted in Around the Jetties. Because the paper on trout is a substantial document covering most of the states trout waters, I have had to be selective and rather than using limited quotes I have précised this wide ranging paper. This paper raises many issues for trout anglers to consider

### Excerpts from the Paper



#### Background

“Trevor Hawkins suggests that to get our once fabulous trout fishing back on track and thriving again may take some lateral thinking from both trout anglers and fisheries managers. He says “from my personal experience I’ve seen the dedication and effort by the freshwater division of fisheries who are implementing the government’s commitment to Target One Million. Its worth pointing out that the people at fisheries are themselves passionate freshwater anglers and that’s fantastic. We have a proactive government while on top of that, we have a dedicated freshwater fisheries division. All we need now is for licensed trout anglers to stand up, be counted, and say what we want from our trout fisheries over the short and long term

#### What went Wrong

The perfect storm of prolonged drought that finally broke some six years ago followed by a short period of boom, where trout numbers and sizes were fantastic and of course that sudden breaking of prolonged drought also saw a huge increase in pelicans and large black cormorants descending on many lakes where young trout had not long before been liberated....I watched a very large mob of pelicans feeding in one small area of the Mitchell River at Bairnsdale for over a week solid feeding on small bream or bass I presume. In that same season I saw for the first time numbers of black cormorants working the Upper Mitta River in both the pools and something I had never seen before, in the fast white-water, I also encountered large numbers up on the Eucumbene River above Kiandra where I’d never seen them before in all my years of fishing.

Since that period of drought breaking rains we also moved into a number of years where the temperatures in those prime trout areas of the northeast east of the state have been consistently higher than normal, and that’s resulted in a few years of the worst trout fishing I have personally experienced and I know I’m not alone with that.

#### Some Personal Suggestions

##### Size Limit

The first thing that should be done is the reintroduction of a minimum size limit across the whole state. This would immediately show anglers that trout are seen as a valuable fish worthy of protection. I’d personally like to see 250mm as a minimum size but 22mm is probably more acceptable. Fisheries shouldn’t wait around on this in my opinion...make a decision one way or another and introduce a minimum size in time for the 2016-2017 trout season.

##### Bag Limits

There is no justification for maintaining a bag limit of five trout across the board in Victoria especially on many fragile streams where variable natural recruitment is relied on to maintain a worthwhile fishery. It’s time



to recognise that most anglers see trout as a true sportfish and not a resource to be harvested in large numbers for food.

### **Premier Waters**

I think there is a case to be made to break some rivers and lakes into two or three groups. One of these to be Catch and release streams with all fish released back into the stream. Suggested examples of this to include The Upper Mitta River, the Bundara River and the Delatite River upstream of Merrijig as some examples of Premier streams. (Other suggested Premier Streams include Upstream Rubicon River, Ovens River, Murrindindi River)

### **2 Fish Bag limit**

All rivers other than the catch and release sections should have the bag limit reduced to 2 fish which would offer a more modern approach to a sportfish that needs protecting.

### **5 Fish Bag Limits**

The only exception to the 2 fish bag limit on rivers could be The Goulbourn River below the Eildon Pondage and the Mitta below Dartmouth dam. Both these sections should have supplementary stocking.

### **Slot Limits**

I would limit the bag to having only one keeper above 350mm in all rivers that are not catch and release.

### **Stocking Rivers.**

“Hard fished rivers” should be stocked along with angler catch research. to see if catch rates can be lifted. Rivers that would benefit from stocking include the Yarra River, Howqua River, Jamieson River, and Upper Goulbourn River. This would add to wild fish replenishment and support weekend and visiting anglers.

### **Stocking Lakes**

Our lakes can be managed very intensely with stocking. We should however concentrate on the best lakes to make standout fisheries rather than stocking numerous average waters. Stop stocking Pyke’s Creek Reservoir with trout and instead establish a yellow-belly water close to growing population or Lake Bellfield and establish a instead unique bass fishery at the same time improving the trout fishing at Lake Fyans and Wartook that are proven trout waters.. Don’t stock trout into Rocklands but introduce yellow belly. Drop a lot of the small lakes from around Ballarat off the stocking list, and put the stocked trout into Andersons Lagoon and Newlyn where angler numbers are far greater. Concentrate on creating a few premier lakes such as Lakes Bullen Merri, Lake Purrumbete, Lake Toolondo, Lake Fyans etc. Stock Tullaroop Reservoir as this is a lake with great potential. Stock Eildon Pondage with more trout and possibly exotic salmonids to further develop this year round family fishery

### **Bag Limits for Lakes**

I’d leave lake bag limits as they currently are except for Toolondo and Hepburn where I’d reduce them to two fish only, with a minimum size limit to encourage trophy trout captures.

### **Conclusion**

I make no apologies for giving my views because like most trouties I am passionate about our fishery. I would add its about time trout anglers started to put their hands up and apply for some of the recreational Fishing Licence grant money, and this is because trout groups are simply not applying for funding.

We all know that maintaining a good trout fishery depends on the quality of stream habitat. Clubs and groups should be coming up with trout stream habitat proposals, and letting the Fisheries Managers know what you want and when.”

### **Editor**

To read the entire Trevor Hawkins paper, go to [Freshwater Fishing Magazine Issue 139](#). Perhaps angling clubs should be looking at this paper and discussing the suggestions made and above all providing feedback to the Freshwater Division of Fisheries Victoria. As the Hawkins paper suggests, trout anglers have an important part to play. This paper adds to the discussion of the state of trout fishing that was initiated at the **Talk Wild Trout Mansfield Conference of the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015**. It should also be noted that Fisheries Victoria, is carrying out research with nine projects, and part of this is improved engagement with fishers. This paper should be read in conjunction with the Conference Proceedings of the Mansfield Conference, which I believe is one of the best studies undertaken on this subject.

‘The angler forgets most of the fish he catches, but he does not forget the streams, and lakes in which they are caught.’

Charles K, Fox

## **Victoria has Nine New Fisheries Officers.**

The appointment of nine newly trained Fisheries Officers across the state will bring the team looking after fish stocks up to full strength. The new fisheries officers will be widely deployed including two to Mallacoota, and three to Yarram and one to Traralgon in the Gippsland area. The officers have undertaken a ten-week training course.

Fisheries Education and Enforcement Director, Ian Parks said “the training has been a comprehensive program to get the officers ready for their role as education and enforcement authorised officers for Fisheries Victoria”

The recruitment program began in August last year when an amazing 315 applications were received and the short listed applicants went through a competitive recruitment process. The training included legal, defensive driving, community education, fisheries management, and an understanding of recreational and commercial fisheries both inland and marine.



## **Funding of these Officers**

When I received the Media Release (14<sup>th</sup> July 2016) indicating the nine new Fisheries Officers I contacted Travis Dowling Executive Director Fisheries Victoria to find out how this increase in the number of Fisheries Officers was being funded.



### **The following was the Executive Directors Response.**

“These new officers are filling existing vacancies and therefore there will be no call on recreational Fishing licence funds. The extra money from the increased fishing licence will go to achieving Target One Million commitments including record fish stocking targets and the better facilities program.

The total commitment in this term of government is \$46 million only \$9 million of that will come from the RFL increase, the other \$37 million is all new money from treasury, and this is unprecedented spending on recreational fishing in this state.”

**Thanks to Travis Dowling for this information.**

## Gippsland Lakes River Mouths Netting Ban

Minister Pulford launched the start of a public consultation to examine commercial netting at river mouths in the Gippsland Lakes on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The public consultation period was to run to 15<sup>th</sup>



April 2016 and the results will be coordinated by Craig Ingram, who will deliver the outcomes with recommendations by the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

It is unfortunate that in this period, a flood has occurred which in turn will mean a major removal of spawning black bream from the rivers. This discussion was not to include a commercial licence buyout. The Labour Government is to be congratulated for introducing this netting ban consultation process, remembering that it was a commitment of the previous Coalition Government, but in three years was never acted upon despite regular demands from the angling community.

The lack of any commercial buyout in the Gippsland Lakes should be compared with the Port Phillip Bay Buyout where 33 of the 43 licence holders have decided to surrender their licence and exit the fishery effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. Eight licence holders have decided to remain in the non net fishery, after 2022. (These will be long line fishermen) This has been a most successful buyout, however it has been at a cost of \$27 million. Rural anglers must wonder why a similar buyout of the ten Gippsland Lakes commercial netters has not been part of the Target One Million program. Perhaps it is a matter of more popular votes being available around Port Phillip Bay than around the rural Gippsland Lakes.

## Spread of the Koi Herpes Virus (KHV) to Tackle Carp

The following was taken from an address to the State-wide Recreational Fisheries Roundtable (March 18<sup>th</sup>) by Matt Barwick –Senior Fisheries Manager NSW, on the release of the Koi Herpes Virus in Victoria.

The Victorian Government and other state governments are offering widespread support to the program of releasing the Koi Herpes Virus in 2018, and the DEWLP will in Victoria be creating a state wide position to manage Victoria's participation. The question was asked as to whether other invasive species such as redfin would be affected by KHV. Matt Barwick advised that this release would have some effects on redfin and oriental weatherloach.

Temperatures can have an effect on the spread of KHV, however carp are carriers of the virus and when temperatures return to normal the virus will again become active. The virus will spread quickly when conditions are right and have a dramatic effect on the population of carp within a week..



The most effective method of spreading the virus is to release infected fish during spawning, and this will maximise the spread of the virus. It was suggested that early releases would impact on adult fish with ongoing releases targeting juvenile fish.

Large fish kills will pose a problem, as they could amount to hundreds of tonnes, however community consultation, and the use of carp as fertiliser or action to bury them in large graves will need to be considered. Carp are around 80% of the

fish biomass in the Murray Darling Basin so this is a big issue in the north of the state and they are the most abundant fish species in NSW. Minister for Agriculture Barnaby Joyce is quoted as saying that carp cost the economy up to \$500 million per annum so removal of carp will be widely supported, and has the potential to change our major river systems by improving water quality and the environment for native fish. As a result on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016 the Australian Government contributed \$15 million over two and a half years to develop the National Carp Control Plan with a hope that the Herpes virus would be released towards the end of 2018.

Source-In addition to the Matt Barwick report to the Victorian Recreational Roundtable additional material from Susan Lawler Senior Lecturer at Latrobe University

## Carp and the Gippsland Lakes

The introduction of this virus will have little effect on carp in the Gippsland Lakes as the numbers of this species have dramatically changed in recent years. In 1998/99 the catch of European carp in the Gippsland Lakes was 658 tonnes whilst the average catch was over 400 tonnes up until 2004/5. In 1996 community concern at the effect of carp on the lakes environment led to the formation of the Gippsland Lakes Catchment Action Group who suggested a subsidy should be paid to commercial fishermen of 50 cents per kilogram in an effort to encourage a reduction in carp numbers. This subsidy would also have the effect of supporting the commercial fishermen who were facing declining black bream catches. By the end of 1996 the campaign for a subsidy had largely dissipated. The catch of European carp then declined naturally to around 40 tonnes per annum and in 2012/13 was a small 29 tonnes. This decline resulted from the increasing salinity of the Gippsland Lakes associated with the deepening of the entrance. Carp are capable of surviving in water 10-19 parts per thousand saline, but when the salinity increases over 20 parts, carp retreat.

The increasing salinity of the Gippsland Lakes achieved a massive reduction in carp numbers and today carp may be found in the rivers where the carp have water with low salinity levels.



“The carp is the queen of the rivers, a stately, a good and very subtle fish, that was not at first bred nor hath been long in England, but is now naturalized.” Isaac Walton *The Compleat Angler* 1653

“In a National Opinion Poll in the U.K. carp were voted the most popular fish for recreational fishing “

### Editor

Whilst I applaud the introduction of the KHV to control carp in our northern rivers in particular, I do have some regrets at the effect of the **virus on redfin**. I would imagine many anglers of my vintage would have started fishing by chasing redfin in rivers and lakes. Today the redfin is classed as a fish that should not be returned to the water, and I find this a little sad. I had ten years fishing Lake Eildon 1960-70 and in this period every angler fished for trout in winter and redfin in summer with anglers fishing around the dead trees for redfin and trawling or bait fishing for trout.. The bags of redfin were excellent and they were fine eating and great fun to catch particularly for young anglers. Today I have regular reports from Eildon anglers that good size redfin are almost a fish of the past in Lake Eildon I suppose that's progress, but I would guess that many anglers would have vivid memories of great fishing with the much denigrated redfin.

### Introduction of English Perch In Australia 148 Years Ago

Redfin were introduced to Victoria on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1868 when Messrs Mathew Presley and Alfred Seal placed 6 English perch obtained from Tasmania into Kirk's Reservoir on the outskirts of Ballarat. These were the first English perch introduced into mainland Australia. In the 1873-4 season at Wendouree wonderful perch fishing took place with more than 200 anglers on the opening day. The best bag was 29 fish weighing 211lbs. As a result of wholesale poaching of redfin from Lake Wendouree the Water Commission introduced regulations to protect the redfin fishery, and this included a two shillings and sixpence licence fee to fish for redfin in Lake Wendouree. A minimum size limit of six inches was also part of these regulations, and these small fish were to be returned to the water unless the hook was gorged. Failure to adhere to these regulations would result in the forfeiture of the fishing licence for Lake Wendouree. (This in 1874 was the first licence and size limit introduced in Victoria.)



“All monies received by way of licence fees shall be expended in conserving the fish in the lake, and protecting the same from being taken in an unfair and illegitimate manner.”

**Source “Salmon at the Antipodes by John Clements**

## **Memories Fishing Lake Eildon in the 1960’s**

The following were items from the schoolboy Fishing Club I established at Mansfield High School some 50 years ago. Geoff Payne in 1964 fishing in Lake Eildon won the Largest Redfin award with a fish of 3lb 7oz while a similar size redfin was caught by Trevor Newman in the same year. Both fish were caught whilst the students were fishing from the bank. At a day fishing competition, in the same year, spinning from the bank of Lake Eildon William Gibb landed 33 redfin to win the schoolboy competition. William went on to become one of this states magistrates.

These couple of memories provide an indication of the quality fishing provided by redfin fifty years ago. I now wonder why some of the Western District inland Lakes are not classed as redfin waters and stocked with redfin. It would be another different fishery for anglers to appreciate. I recall a top redfin fishery in Lake Colac some years ago and anglers travelling to Colac for this recreational fishery. Redfin could still be an attractive fishery.

“There is no use walking five miles to fish when you can depend on being just as unsuccessful near home.”  
Mark Twain

## **Recreational Angling and the Law**



### **Anglers Congratulated**

“Fisheries Victoria has congratulated the majority of south-west anglers and people who visited the region on their general positive fishing actions and behaviour so far in the Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) season.”

Fisheries Officer Cameron McCallum indicated that during June and July nine fisheries Officers from across Victoria conducted **over 350 boat and land based inspections at**

**Portland and Port Fairy.** Officers included charter boats in their inspections and also used aerial surveillance of tuna fishermen using fixed wing aircraft.

Mr McCallum said fishers were compliant and Fisheries Officers detected 12 alleged offenders and seized six Southern Bluefin Tuna. These offences included not having a fishing licence and failing to land a SBT in carcass form. A 43 year old charter operator is expected to be charged after he was allegedly detected with a commercial quantity of SBT. “A vehicle was intercepted near Warrnambool after the June long weekend and contained 14 whole SBT.”



Mr Macallum said that Southern Bluefin Tuna are a priority species in Victoria and have strict bag and possession limits. There is a daily bag limit of two fish per person but also a statewide possession limit of two whole Southern Bluefin tuna.

It has been pointed out in this publication previously that the Bluefin Tuna Fishery off Portland provides an economic boost to Portland community valued at over \$9 million per annum. **Fisheries Victoria has said it is vital fishers understand and respect the world class offshore fishing the season offers around Portland and Port Fairy.**

## The Bemm River Report 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016



With Don Cunningham

Bemm River has had a big flow of water until now, but as the flow subsides, we are seeing clear water coming into the inlet. The water has been a good height, and angling very productive during what has been a very cold and windy period. I fished Friday and Saturday morning, the weather was fine and I had no luck. I came in for lunch, and missed out on the afternoon session. Just after lunch seemed to be the time the fish came on the bite and with about ten boats and canoes out it was a very rewarding afternoon. Good bags were reported and the catch and release anglers in their canoes were happy to report some wonderful sport

Motor Oil Z Man Grubs as well as bloodworm Wrigglers were put to good use. Bait fishermen had success using sandworm, but on Sunday the bream were

harder to find.

There is not a lot to report on the surf as the weather has been very cold and windy and not conducive to surf fishing.



Anglers will be pleased to hear that two fishing platforms have now been completed on the river. There has been an upgrade at Dolly's Garden, as well as a new platform near the drain, and there are plans for a further platform further upstream. The platforms are fairly sheltered, and should be fishable when it is too rough on the lake. Fisheries Victoria has had a plaque made in memory of Don Ellis, and it has been placed on one of the platforms. Don was a strong advocate for these platforms, and without his effort this project would not have happened.



Editor

Don Ellis was president of the Metropolitan Anglers Association and on a visit to Bemm River he found the weather did not permit boating and access to the river was almost impossible for many of his members. Following this experience he raised the issue of fishing platforms on the river which would allow fishing in inclement weather and cater for the elderly and handicapped. This move was supported by this publication,



and Fisheries Victoria. These platforms have become a monument to Don Ellis and his contribution to recreational fishing as he passed away before they were completed.

## Submissions Re The Increased Fishing Licences Cost from July 1st.

With the government decision to introduce an increase in the fishing licence the proposed licence changes were released for public comment on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2016. As a result 105 submissions were received by Fisheries Victoria from anglers and the public. Many supported the changes however others raised concerns. The following gives an indication of the concerns that were raised.

\*Some submissions questioned whether they would benefit from increased licence fees to improve fishing

\*A few submissions questioned the CPI based annual licence price increases from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.

\*Some submissions suggested that exempt anglers such as pensioners and Senior card holders should be required to buy a licence even if it was at a notional cost.

\*Almost 10% of submissions commented on interstate licence recognition between Victoria and NSW particularly around the Murray River.

\*Many submissions discussed boat ramp fees their accessibility and maintenance however this funding was outside the scope of the licence.

“All the matters raised in the submissions were carefully considered and assessed against the reason for changing licence fees- that is to create more revenue to meet the increasing demand for high quality fishing in Victoria. Given the last fee change was in 2008, the new fee structures are necessary to support the growing participation and improving each angler’s fishing experience.”

Fisheries Victoria

### Editor

The Government upon its election in 2011 stated there would be no increase in its first term in the cost of fishing licences. This statement was not mentioned in the report on submissions commenting on the increase in licence fees. This would seem to indicate that the increase in licence fees had widespread support amongst the states anglers, and of course a major area of popular expenditure had already been the successful buyback of commercial licences in Port Phillip Bay.

## Fishing Competitions.

This publication has always doubted the value of fishing competitions where the major attraction is the schedule of prizes that attract anglers to take part. In the recent Twin Rivers competition with a four wheel drive as the major prize 640 anglers took part in this competition. Anglers in the main fished from the banks of local rivers and the banks of the Tambo river were occupied with tents and fires as the anglers settled in for the competition. (Both camping and fires were supposedly banned in this area.)

It was said that 50% of fish were released, but a large number of fish were caught and kept and it was suggested that a number of anglers caught their bag over the two days. In the Lakes Post Fishcare volunteers indicated that fish weighed in were full of roe, and at this time of the year this is to be expected with the fish entering the rivers to spawn. The average mature female bream will release more than 300,000 eggs so the effect of a fishing competition targeting spawning fish needs to be examined, as the result may be a reduction in that year level of bream, remembering that at the same time the commercial fishermen are netting at the mouth of rivers and removing spawning fish. (This situation might change in the future.) Species such as Murray cod, trout and salmon, Macquarie perch, and even the river blackfish are protected with closed breeding seasons, so that one can but wonder at the emphasis on removing spawning black bream from our rivers particularly given the parlous state of this fish stock.

If in the future spawning fish are protected at river mouths from commercial nets then it surely follows that bream should be protected from recreational angler based fishing competitions that depend on the removal of spawning fish for their success. This may require the introduction of a closed season for black bream or the introduction of total catch and release in any fishing competition. At the very least this is an issue that requires consideration by anglers and Fisheries Victoria.



## Unfinished Business.

This publication over the years has attempted to get Governments to meet their responsibilities in areas that affect recreational fishing. The following are just a couple of those many areas.

### Nicholson River Dam

I have found it very disappointing that both state and federal governments have ignored the requests of this publication for the removal of the Nicholson River dam, which would have allowed the 65,000 stocked Australian bass to have access to the Gippsland Lakes to spawn. (Remember successive State governments have stocked the Nicholson River knowing the bass have no access to spawning in the Gippsland Lakes.) A plan to decommission the dam was prepared in 2011 with the cost to be shared equally between the Victorian Government, East Gippsland Water and the Commonwealth Government. In 2012 the



Commonwealth Government informed the Victorian Government that it was no longer able to fund its share of the project. This publication sought to have the Federal Government reconsider its stance but it was quickly informed by the Agriculture and Water Resources Minister Barnaby Joyce that funding of the removal of the dam was a state responsibility. Unfortunately local member Daren Chester has been unable to change the view of the Federal Government and this withdrawal of support has been the key to the total lack of action to remove this dam and restore the natural flow of the Nicholson River. Lisa Neville, State Minister for the Environment, Climate and Water has said in a letter to provided Around the Jetties [“I support the decommissioning of the Nicholson Dam... I would welcome any assistance in securing a contribution from the Commonwealth Government towards the decommissioning of the dam.”](#)

It would seem that the local federal member Minister Darren Chester should become much more active on this issue given that the cost to the Federal Government of its share is somewhat less than \$1 million, and this funding would seem to be the key to the removal of the dam.

### Closure of 2kms of the Silt Jetties Road.

It was very surprising to most recreational anglers to read in local papers that several kilometres of the road to the mouth of the Mitchell River were to be closed following two meetings over almost twelve months initiated by Parks Victoria and with one angler representative. In the words of local member Tim Bull MP [“Unfortunately several angling clubs, many nearby Eagle Point residents \(Or the vast majority of the wider Bairnsdale and Paynesville population\) had no idea this was occurring. Nor was I advised myself.”](#)

Minister for the Environment Climate and Water, Lisa Neville announced in a Media Release on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015 that restoration work on the silt jetties would commence early in November, however she did not indicate when the section of that road to the mouth of the river would be closed. She did suggest that community consultation had taken place but this would be strongly argued by anglers and the public who were unaware of any consultation. It would appear that the Friends of the Gippsland Lakes Group have lobbied for the closure of the 2kms of the Silt Jetty road with no consultation with the general public or anglers. This area provides vehicle access for elderly and handicapped anglers and should be developed rather than closed.

An onsite meeting with the head of Parks Victoria for 10am on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2016 was organised by the General Manager of VRFish. The meeting to involve Parks Victoria, VRFish, and myself. As I was travelling to the silt jetties on that morning I received a phone call from the General Manager of VRFish cancelling the meeting as the head of Parks was unavailable. Since that time I have had no communication on this topic from VRFish or Parks Victoria, however I do not believe this issue has gone away, and anglers and the community must be aware that this section of the road could be closed in the future. (The Head of Parks Vic. was reported as attending a meeting in Bairnsdale on that morning.)

## The Maasbanker Continues Netting Beaches



The question of the Maasbanker has been raised by a number of surf anglers on numerous occasions and in particular to this boat netting within 80 metres of the beach regardless of anglers fishing in the proximity.

A letter I received sums up many anglers views-

### John Blain Writes 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013

“What I cannot understand why tThese are but a few of the matters that recreational anglers at some stage will need to address and that this publication has tackled in the interests of a fair go for anglers, who after all are a major part of the rural economy.

he Maasbanker has to fish in those limited areas the recreational anglers have access to (i.e. the beaches off Lakes Entrance, Bunga Arm, and Lake Tyers) when it has ninety miles of beach to choose from.

I fully accept the Maasbanker’ s right to take fish and acknowledge there are a significant number of local people employed with the Maasbanker’ s business. I also know there is an economy that surrounds the recreational fishermen which includes accommodation, retail and food industry. When anglers face netting in the same areas they are fishing they are unlikely to return.

I am of the opinion that excluding the Maasbanker from the above mentioned beach locations would bring about wide benefits to the local economy, while not materially impacting on the viability of the Maasbanker’ s business.”

This matter was taken to the local member with no result, and the General Manager of VRFish took the issue to the owner of the Maasbanker who suggested they might on one weekend of the year net off the beach areas. This response gives an indication of this boats attitude to recreational surf anglers and the fact that they regard the 90 miles of beach as there personal domain This is an ongoing problem which with an element of leadership in the community and wider should be capable of being resolved.

Whilst numerous of other items were investigated and reported on, readers might remember the state of launching ramps and the truck that slipped into the water at Metung and the publicity in Around the Jetties which led to action to provide repairs as a result of this and other incidents.

Readers might also recall in March 2012 the survey of the tracks on the eastern side of Lake Tyers with a view to improving access and facilities for anglers in this area. This survey involved representatives of Fisheries Victoria, Parks Victoria, VRFish and local MLA Tim Bull. I understand funding has been provided to Parks Vic to improve access tracks on the Eastern bank of the estuary, but almost no information has been forthcoming from Parks on this development and certainly no additional facilities are listed for these areas.



## Oyster Parasite Attacks Native Flat Oysters



Port Phillip Bay and Western Port Bays have historically been home to a large population of Australia's native flat oyster. Farming of flat oysters was trialled in Victorian bays in the late 1980's but was abandoned when the *Bonamia* disease destroyed both farmed and wild oysters. A group of farmers ventured into native oyster production in 2010 and have been working with Agriculture Victoria to establish if their oysters are infected with *Bonamia*, and how to prevent them from dying. In March 2015 approximately 75% of oysters in parts of the bay were found to have been killed by *Bonamia*.

Aquatic Health Veterinarian Dr Tracey Bradley is leading the current research at Agriculture Victoria Laboratories in Queenscliff. The disease is not harmful to humans but affects the long term sustainability and export potential of the native flat oyster in Port Phillip Bay. Research is examining factors in the oyster environment, which switch oysters from simply being infected and living with the parasite to dying in thousands. The aim of the research is to provide farmers with better knowledge and using management factors to ensure the oysters live until harvest time.

Dr Bradley said the project could help develop a sustainable flat oyster industry in Port Phillip Bay. The project to protect this fishery is led by Agriculture Victoria in collaboration with CSIRO and the South Australian Government.

Source Media Release 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016

## Conclusion

Over the years I have enjoyed putting together this newsletter and getting feedback from anglers on a variety of issues. Around the Jetties attempted to keep anglers informed of issues affecting them rather than the “where and how” of catching fish. The “where and how” is covered in numerous fishing magazines but issues such as the Nicholson Dam and the actions of the Maasbanker and numerous other matters both local and statewide do not seem to be covered by those same fishing magazines.

This publication has been supported by regular reports from [Bob McNeill’s Lake Tyers Diary Reports](#) over many years, which provided a regular picture of changes in the fishery in this estuary, and his diary became a popular section of the publication. We have also been able to bring regular [Reports on Bemm River from Don Cunningham](#) and at the same time provide regular updates on the need for boat ramp upgrades and foreshore developments in Bemm River. (See the report on Fishing Platforms at Bemm River in this issue.)

I have been very conscious of the excellent contribution from [John Harrison as a research angler](#) over many years, but also his contribution with the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club to the development of absolutely excellent facilities at Lake Tyers. Many readers would not realise that the surveys of the east bank of Lake Tyers (2012) to improve angler facilities were led by John. In recent times John has been actively involved with detailing the history of estuary perch in Lake Tyers, and this has work led to the current estuary perch-stocking program. Currently he is recording catches of estuary perch and mulloway from recent stockings for Fisheries Victoria. Perhaps one of the most interesting issues that involved John and was reported in detail in Around the Jetties was his work on the identification of the dusky flathead and its distinguishing features from the Southern blue spotted (yank) flathead. For many this issue has not been resolved satisfactorily.

I must in conclusion acknowledge the major contribution made by my wife Dawn to this publication. Dawn has edited all 104 issues and handled the setting of the publication including photos and handled public requests as well, so in many ways this was a joint publication that we worked on together.

Well it’s been a long journey and we have enjoyed the challenge, and undoubtedly we will miss the creation of this monthly publication and the feedback from anglers. It has been most worthwhile.

“The words of fishing have given me and thousands of others immense pleasure to read; they have lasted through the ages remarkably well; and they often hold much that speaks of matters far beyond the waters, but about the heart and eye, the way of human beings and their passions.”

Nick Lyons “The Quotable Fisherman” 1998

**Note-I would hope that when the official report of the Gippsland Lakes Stock Assessment: Consultation and Feedback Meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> June is ultimately made available a copy will be sent to all readers.**

**Should any vital information relevant to anglers become available I will send out a short 1-2 page newsletter to cover the item.**

## Boat For Sale

Circumstances require that I put my boat on the market.

(One Owner)

The boat has always been garaged in the carport and is a 1988 Centenary Savage.

It has been a wonderful boat for me, and I would hope it might provide similar enjoyment for another recreational angler in the future.

Price \$11,000 ONO



### Details

Savage 455 Ranger SF Aluminium Boat

Mercury motor 50HP with only 140 hours. Regularly Serviced by Lakes Entrance Marine Mechanics

Aluminium trailer built for the boat.(by Alu-Marine Inverloch)

Extras include Powerwinch, Sounder, IPERB and Safety Gear.