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# Around the Jetties

**November 2013**

**Issue No 74**

**An Anglers Newsletter**

“The carp is the queen of rivers; a stately, a good, and a very subtle fish; that was not at first bred nor hath been long in England, but is now naturalised. The carp endures most hardness and lives longest out of his own proper element. And therefore, the report of the carp’s being brought out of a foreign country into this nation is the more probable.”

Izaak Walton writing in the Compleat Angler 1655

## **Editorial**



Perhaps the most important item in this edition of Around the Jetties is the appointment of Dallas D'Silva as Executive Officer of VRFish. This appointment comes at a challenging time when there seems to be discussions taking place on the possibility of an increase in the recreational fishing license. At the same time, within Fisheries Victoria, the number of fisheries scientists has drastically declined from 61 in 2008/9 to 20 today and despite the RFL Fund contributing almost \$2m to the employment of Fisheries Officers their numbers have declined by 15% since 2008/9. VRFish has been almost silent this year with a breakdown in communications and only two newsletters to anglers. The immediate future will be most challenging for recreational fishing in this state and the hopes of anglers will

largely depend on the energy initiative and communication skills of the newly appointed executive officer of VRFish. I am sure anglers will join with this publication in wishing Dallas D'Silva well in his new and challenging role.

## **Another View On the Buyback of Commercial Licences**

The following position on commercial netting was put forward by Round Table member and member of the Ministers Interim Fisheries Advisory Council, Ross Winstanley.

*“Regarding further rounds of RFL funded commercial licence buybacks, I probably take a different view to you and many other recreational fishers. I recognise that one maybe two of the three buybacks in the past 14 years were essential to keep faith with rec fishers, and to remove latent effort from the fisheries. However, as a fisheries management professional, I also see open-ended buy-backs as sloppy unprofessional management. A responsible professional approach would be to look to look at the current levels and trend directions in commercial and recreational fishing catches and effort in relation to the major fish stocks in the Gippsland lakes, Corner Inlet, and Port Phillip Bay, to determine the appropriate levels of commercial fishing and express them in terms of commercial access licence numbers for each fishery. Only then should buy-backs be considered as one of the possible structural adjustment measures. That’s my strong professional position.”*

## Editor

I responded to this view on buy-backs of commercial licences, suggesting that some commercial fishermen were requesting that commercial licence buy-back be again placed on the table. It seems sensible to me to meet this requirement remembering that the introduction of the “All Waters” recreational fishing licence in 1999 included the commitment that it would be used to fund ongoing buybacks from Port Phillip to Mallacoota. With regard to the Gippsland Lakes fishery, over the years it has depended on black bream.

Today the average annual catch is less than 50 tonnes and has been as low as 26 tonnes and this is down from 400 tonnes per annum in the mid eighties to 200 tonnes in the mid nineties. Today the catch will go as high as 140 tonnes in a flood event as was the case in 2007. These were breeding fish forced out of the three major rivers by fresh water, and these fish had entered the rivers to spawn. The effects of this type of fishery that removes breeding fish are long term and I doubt they can be justified today.

In our local community, not one restaurant provides black bream on its menu and as far as fresh fish is concerned, you can only purchase black bream at one outlet, if you order in advance. This is hardly a fishery providing consumer needs, and ten commercial fishermen are largely surviving due to recent flood events boosting their catch rate of black bream. In addition, sea bream and flathead are readily available from trawlers operating off the coast and I suspect few consumers could tell the difference.

With regard to dusky flathead, the other major Gippsland Lakes species, the regulations introduced in 2011 to assist with this species long-term sustainability have not been applied to the Gippsland Lakes commercial fishery. This species currently supplies 16-24 tonnes per annum in the commercial catch, and the commercial fishermen have no quota and no regulation to protect the breeding female dusky flathead. Again this is an iconic species that is an estuary fish that trawl fishing offshore can replace with other flathead species, and they are caught under a scientific quota level and sold around the state.

It just seems to me and almost all recreational anglers, that the commercial fishery of the Gippsland Lakes survives by fishing for estuary species that are under threat, and the buyback of estuarine commercial licences would make no difference to the supply of fish to consumers given the estuary fish could be replaced by trawl species caught off the coast under regulated quotas.

There is obviously a basic difference in the view of recreational anglers of the Gippsland Lakes and I would suggest with most recreational anglers across the state, and the view put forward by Ross on the netting of estuarine species commercially. The question immediately arises as to whether the personal view of Ross would be advanced on the Fisheries Advisory Council or the views of the vast majority of anglers.

## **VRFish Appoints New Executive Officer**

Whilst it does not seem to have been made public by either a media release or on the website of VRFish, which is strange, a letter has gone to VRFish State Council members announcing the appointment over three weeks ago of Dallas D'Silva as the new executive officer of VRFish. That letter is published for the benefit of anglers.

### Dear VRFish State Council Members

*I have pleasure in advising members that the VRFish Board has selected Mr. Dallas D'Silva to take up the position of Executive Officer with VRFish. Dallas was the successful candidate from a field of over 30 candidates.*

*Dallas has 15 years experience in fisheries management in temperate and tropical Australia. He has held senior positions in fisheries government departments in NSW, Victoria and Queensland.*

*Prior to his appointment with VRFish, Dallas was the Industry Liaison Manager for NSW Fisheries, Manager of Strategic Initiatives for Fisheries Victoria and Executive Officer of the Australian Fisheries Management Forum.*

*Dallas brings to VRFish, an extensive network of professional contacts within industry, non-government organisations and State/Federal government departments.*

*Dallas is also a keen angler and spear fisher, and is married with 2 young boys.*

*The VRFish Board is confident Dallas will provide VRFish and all Victorian recreational fishers with the knowledge, expertise, professional management and enthusiasm needed to build and advance our organisations ability to advocate strongly for recreational fishers. Dallas will commence duties on Monday 7 October 2013.*

*Please join me in welcoming Dallas to our organisation.*

*Kind Regards,*

*Russell Conway*

*Chair VRFish.*

This publication congratulates Dallas on his appointment and looks forward to seeing VRFish develop as the peak body of recreational anglers in the future. Dallas would be remembered in this area for his chairing of a black bream assessment meeting at the Italian Club in 2005. This was the first stock assessment meeting that commercial fishermen boycotted, and Dallas was forced to have a separate meeting with the commercial fishermen prior to resuming his chairing of discussions on black bream numbers with recreational anglers.

Hopefully, recreational anglers will now be able to look forward to newsletter communications on a regular basis with VRFish, and an aggressive protection of recreational anglers interests. The recent past has not been a good period for the recreational peak body, with almost no communications with anglers over recent times, and only two insignificant media releases in the last twelve months. It can only get better.

## VRFish Action

Since writing that last item I have received (29<sup>th</sup> Oct.) a copy of the VRFish fortnightly update to members and it makes great reading and indicates that VRFish now has a great chance to represent members and above all develop lines of communication with this states recreational anglers. A communication plan is being developed and the new executive officer is discussing with the DEPI the possibility of accessing email addresses of Recreational Licence Holders so that VRFish can communicate directly with anglers. Dallas D'Silva and Russell Conway will meet with the Minister on the 19<sup>th</sup> November and meetings such as this provide an opportunity for VRFish to raise issues that are important to anglers.

Consideration is also being given to raising the profile of the organisation and consideration may include whether the name VRFish is the best option for the future. A review of accommodation needs is also being considered, and Dallas writes, "I think there are benefits in the VRFish Office being located near to our stakeholders and by this I mean we should consider setting up an office at a well resourced and popular angling club/boat ramp."

In a previous Around the Jetties I wrote that VRFish was in a state of paralysis with only two newsletters in ten months, however this has dramatically changed and I believe anglers can look forward to an active and dynamic Peak Body that puts communication with its members as a key requirement. I am very optimistic for the future. It should be remembered that Dallas D'Silva after chairing a two-day Gippsland Lakes black bream stock assessment in 2005 will bring considerable background knowledge of the concerns of Gippsland recreational anglers to his new position. Already he has organised discussions regarding access to Corio Bay for recreational anglers with the commercial fishing industry.

I think recreational anglers can look forward to exciting developments in the future and a change in approach that focuses on the anglers and their aspirations in this state, and as one former VRFish Chairman said to me "and this is only the beginning."

## State-wide Recreational Fishing Roundtable

In recent issues, I have brought to the attention of readers the operations of the State-wide Fishing Roundtable, which meets quarterly to provide advice to Fisheries Victoria. The Terms of Reference suggest that a summary of the matters discussed at meetings would be made available to anglers generally through the Fisheries Victoria website. However, it would appear this has not been done, almost since the commencement of this bodies deliberations. This in turn gives the body an element of secrecy with discussions and advice not available to anglers generally. The Roundtable chairman, Merv McGuire has informed me by email today that he hopes the summary would be posted next week.

It is the responsibility of Fisheries Victoria to provide this summary of meetings. I understand the last meeting was on September 13<sup>th</sup> and items such as an increase in recreational fishing licence fees was discussed and a paper presented, however the summary of that discussion has taken Fisheries Victoria eight weeks to make public to anglers, and that is presuming it is published next week.

The question is asked by some anglers just how important is this body. Perhaps its significance can be measured in the fact that [the three recreational angling representatives on the Interim Fisheries Advisory Council announced by Minister Walsh are listed as members of the Recreational Fishing Roundtable](#), the other two members representing recreational interests are involved with boat sales and fishing gear imports. I understand a new Terms of Reference has been negotiated between the chair of the Roundtable, Merv McGuire and the Executive Director of Fisheries, but it seems no details have been published.

It was suggested to me by an angler with a long association with recreational fishing organisational structures that the Roundtable operates under Chatham House rules. I must confess I had to look up just what was meant by this statement. I put this to the chairman of the Roundtable who stated, "*There is no hard fast rule. They can and some do, table the views of the group or organisation they are associated with. - Most issues are open to open discussion, we get the most out of people this way.*"

The Chatham House rule allows people to speak as individuals and to express views that may not be the views of their organisations and therefore this encourages free discussion. Today the rule is largely applied to meetings of local government, and commercial organisations. The real intent is to ensure that “nothing should be done to identify, either explicitly or implicitly who said what.”

At the July meeting of the 20 members attending, 6 were Fisheries Victoria Managers and project officers. Now this communication between Fisheries Victoria and anglers is most positive and should be important to both Fisheries and recreational anglers, however the level of communication from Roundtable discussions to anglers of this state is non-existent. This is a problem if we accept a need for transparency in discussions that affect recreational fishing across this state and this problem would seem to lie within the responsibilities of Fisheries Victoria.

The Roundtable members on the Interim Fisheries Advisory Council are Merv McGuire (chairman of the Roundtable,) Russell Conway (Chairman of VRFish,) and Ross Winstanley (former Fisheries Victoria Manager.)

In addition, representing recreational interests, are John Willis (Charter boat operator/boat sales) and Pat Levy (Chairman of the Victorian branch of the Australian fishing Trade Association.)

I would hope to publish the meeting summaries of the Roundtable in Around the Jetties when they are available.

## Can You Help

### Lake Tyers and Estuary Perch.

The Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club has received funding to conduct a detailed investigation into the feasibility of stocking Lake Tyers with estuary perch.

In previous years there have been strong populations of estuary perch in the lake. In fact, commercial catch returns show that in some years professionals took as much as 1.6 tonne. The population has now been reduced to very small numbers and there has been no rebound in numbers since the cancellation of commercial fishing licences in 2003.

The aim of the investigation will be to determine if there is a case for kick starting the small, but important, remaining population with stocking over a period of two or three years. The Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club will assist Fisheries Victoria with this work.

There will be two parts to the investigation. The first part will involve examination of past commercial fishing records and the records of local angling clubs. It will also examine information held by Fisheries Victoria, particularly evidence related to recruitment failure and the potential for conservation stocking.

The second part will involve a workshop of interested local anglers to collect and consolidate existing community knowledge of estuary perch fishing in Lake Tyers and also of changes in environmental conditions observed in recent years. This workshop will also be important to determine the level of support from recreational anglers for conservation stocking of this species.

As a first step in consolidating community knowledge the Club wishes to compile a register of recreational catches of estuary perch in Lake Tyers. If you have caught an estuary perch in Lake Tyers or have definite knowledge of another angler who has, then it is important that this information be recorded. The Club is aware of very few catches in recent years. Please contact John Harrison if you can assist. (Telephone [51565648](tel:51565648) or email [jbharrison159@bigpond.com](mailto:jbharrison159@bigpond.com).)



This lovely Estuary Perch (photo above) was caught by Robert Harvey, in Lake Tyers some years prior to this catch being featured in issue 12'th May 2008 of Around the Jetties.



## Editor

When the Lake Tyers Fisheries Management plan was introduced in 2007 submissions were called for by the Steering Committee. A number of these submissions put forward a case for the stocking of Lake Tyers with estuary perch, however this request was disregarded by the Steering Committee even though the estuary had once supported this species. It is gratifying to see this issue is again being examined and the group leading this approach is the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club. I do hope all anglers will keep in mind this request and provide any support they can by providing information and supporting the workshop on this project when details are announced. This is a great example of anglers working to restore a former fishery.



## Questions on Notice to our Local Member

Over the past two years readers have raised a number of issues in this publication, and it would seem answers to these questions have not been readily available. I thought it would be opportune to put these questions to our local member Tim Bull, given that we are almost exactly twelve months to the next election. I would then hope to raise these questions again at that time and hopefully to see a positive outcome to the concerns raised by recreational anglers.

I thank our local member for taking the time within his busy schedule to consider these questions.

## The Questions are as follows

1. Three years ago prior to the election, a firm commitment was given that spawning fish would be protected at the mouth of rivers. Could you indicate when will this commitment be met, and why has it taken three years with the continuing loss of spawning bream?

**Response** Fisheries Victoria has recently commenced a review of netting around river mouths in the Gippsland Lakes and I am advised this will be looking at the relationship between floods and commercial catch rates and spawning periods. I am also advised there will be an opportunity for stakeholders input once some basic data has been compiled.

2. A continuing concern of anglers is the actions of the Maasbanker netting within 80 meters of the beaches, particularly over holiday periods. The effect of this netting on the food chain should also be a consideration. Would you consider initiating discussion on the development of an exclusion zone of ten kilometres from the entrance to the east and the same to the west? This would surely be acceptable to both the commercial fishermen and provide for the recreational surf fishermen

**Response.** I have raised this matter in one of my regular discussions with the Lakes Entrance Fisherman's Cooperative and they have advised that the catchrates of the Maasbanker have not increased over recent years. I am happy for discussion to take place relating to which areas are fished and not fished to see if a consensus can be agreed to between the recreational and commercial sectors.

3. When an all waters licence was introduced in 1999, part of the agreement was that funds derived from that source would be used to buyout commercial fishermen in the states estuaries. This agreement seems to have lapsed under the current Government. Almost three years ago three commercial fishermen approached you to have the buy back again put on the table. You stated at the time that you took this request to the Minister, but a response has never been provided to either the commercial request or to the recreational anglers interested in the outcome. Does this mean the original agreement for the introduction of the all waters licence no longer applies?

**Response.** I don't believe anything has lapsed under this Government in this area. On our election in 2010 there was no commercial buyout for the commercial estuarine fishermen on the table (it must have been removed prior) and nor did the commercial fishermen approach me three years ago in relation to a buyout, it was far more recent. Any buyout needs to be funded and this has been a matter for both the Minister and the Treasury to consider. I have had further ongoing discussions with the commercial fishermen on this matter, following the original request last year.

4. There has been strong support in the community and from readers of this newsletter for the removal of commercial netting from the Cunninghame Arm of the Gippsland Lakes from recreational anglers and tourist operators. Could you advise whether you support the removal of netting from this water, and if you do what action would you consider taking?

**Response.** I have not received any correspondence on this topic from constituents. Although netting is permitted at some times of the years in the Cunninghame Arm, I understand that commercial activity is limited to May-November, there has been no commercial activity in this area for some time. I have not formed any view on this matter as it is not something I have discussed with any stakeholders. The attached video taken in the Cunninghame Arm recently and posted on the internet makes for interesting viewing.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/de9rayihg4pxs/PostOfficeJune2013.mp4>

5. You are on record as strongly supporting the stocking of bass in the Nicholson River, however this was before it was announced that funds were not available for the removal of the dam on the Nicholson and therefore denying these fish the opportunity of moving to the lake to spawn. Will you be seeking the removal of the dam or the provision of a fish ladder or bypass of the dam prior to further stocking? Have you or the Government made any plans to support the removal of the dam? Finally will stocking above the dam continue?

**Response.** The background to this is that the State was contributing \$2m to an East Gippsland Water proposal to remove the dam, with EGW and the Federal Govt also contributing. This did not eventuate as a result of the Federal funding being withdrawn. The announcement to stock the bass was made when the decommissioning was still on the table. Despite the dam removal not going ahead, I support the stocking as it will provide a bass population above the dam and hopefully create excellent fishing opportunities. Fisheries Victoria stocks many waters that have obstructions to spawning, for sports purposes. I will again revisit this with our state water and environment Ministers as I did in the past.

6. Last year you spent a day with Fisheries Management and Parks Victoria Regional managers and a small group of local anglers examining tracks into Lake Tyers and what can be done to improve access to Lake Tyers from the East. This would greatly assist elderly anglers who seek quiet spots where they can access this lake. Can you advise if any action has been suggested as a result of this and other excursions examining this problem?

**Response.** I recently followed this up with Parks Victoria and was advised that while access has been restricted in some areas where vehicles were causing damage to waterfront areas, Parks has advised me it has maintained areas where the waterfront (or very close to it) can be accessed by vehicle. Parks has also advised it intends to release a plan for camping in this area.

7. Are you as our local member satisfied with the Gippsland Lakes 400 square miles of area being allocated 100square meters of artificial reefs? This allocation could be compared with the Merimbula Lake system with 5 major reefs, the last being 2400 meters square. Have Gippsland anglers been given a fair deal when this 100 metres of artificial reef is compared with the reefs provided in Port Phillip Bay? Can any evaluation regarding the success of reefs in estuaries be obtained from such a small reef sample?

**Response.** In short, yes I am. The reason is that more artificial reefs for recreational anglers have been discussed for more than a decade, and I am pleased we are delivering on this. As you reported in a previous edition, these will be introduced across the state at various locations and consultation has been held in Mallacoota and Lakes Entrance on the best locations for local waterways. This initial step will allow success to be gauged both in relation to their success in providing recreational fishing opportunities, whether it is a good expenditure of the fishing licence fund and if there should be further provision. I am pleased this Government is delivering on this.

8. Currently over 60% of the funds generated from the All Waters Recreational Fishing Licence are being used to prop up the current Fisheries Victoria Budget. Would you agree this is an unsatisfactory use of funds and is against the agreed use of funds when this licence was introduced? Today licence funds are used to employ Fisheries officers, finance Fishcare, stock Victorian waters, and the list goes on. Are you concerned

at this trend, particularly when discussions seem to be taking place on an increase to the fishing licence cost and a broader base including those over 65?  
Should anglers be wary of any Government commitment given past experience?

**Response.** A report concerning how amounts paid into the RFL Trust Account were spent is tabled in Parliament every year. As an example for the 2012/13 financial year, the sale of about 308,000 RFLs generated almost \$6.9m. Excluding 42% of total RFL revenue expenditure that was through the Recreational Fishing Grants Program (77 projects), 36.5% was by way of allocations to DEPI for the purpose of enforcement and education and stocking (combined). A further 6% was allocated to DEPI to cover expenditure of what can broadly be described administration to run the RFL process. Therefore total RFL Trust Account expenditure internal to DEPI was about 42.5% of the total expenditure for 2012/13. The balance of 15% was by way of allocations to 'external entities' e.g. VRfish, Fishcare Victoria- considered to be very important to recreational fishing stakeholders.

A survey of licensed anglers in December 2009 revealed that the enforcement of regulations was among the three top priorities along with habitat improvement and helping to ensure that anglers have fish to catch. In an environment of tightening budgets and competing priorities, the Minister approved the allocation of funding from the Recreational Licence Fund to employ additional Fisheries Officers as requested in the survey. This is an appropriate use of these funds and provides a strong and direct benefit to anglers through the enhanced education and compliance provided by our Fisheries Officers around the state. It must also be noted the Governments Recreational Fishing Initiative has provided an additional \$16m of taxpayer funds to improve angler access and enhance recreational fishing outcomes for Victorian anglers. All funds raised through the RFL and additional funds are being spent on fisheries, whether through grants streams, via the DEPI or other agencies. Recreational fishing has never been better funded by a Victorian State Government

### Conditions on this item

Tim sought the following guarantee- prior to answering the questions "I seek your confirmation that the questions will be printed unaltered and my answers in full (providing I keep them succinct)- without any "editors comments" to which I have no right of reply in the same issue."

### Editor

I have readily agreed to these conditions and as such I will provide no comments on the answers to the questions in this issue, and leave any assessment of those answers to readers.

I do thank Tim for his response to these questions

### Bemm River Launching Ramp Development

Draft plans have been developed for an upgrade of the Luderick Point boat ramp and jetty as part of the Bemm River Foreshore management Plan. Options for the upgrade of the ramp and jetty were discussed at a public meeting in July 2013. Readers will remember that under the Gippsland Boating Action Plan of March 2012 the problems that developed from the lack of any real discussions with the Bemm River community, and anglers from around the state watched the strong response of this community to this plan. This was reported on in some detail in this publication.

**Photo. The Current Ramp at Luderick Point**



Sydenham Inlet and Luderick Point often experience conditions that are not easily overcome, including variable water levels, high onshore winds and a prevalence of seagrass. The East Gippsland Shire, employing expert advice, prepared the plan shown here. I spoke to Anthony Nelson, Strategic Projects Manager of the East Gippsland Shire, and he indicated the proposal had the involvement of Gippsland Ports, Marine Safety and Parks Victoria. However, it did not gain the total approval of the Bemm River Progress Association nor the Bemm River Angling Club and for this reason further investigations will now take place into the jetty configuration and the floating ramp structure.

The East Gippsland Shire will employ eminent planners 'Coastal Engineering Solutions' to review the current plan taking into account the concerns raised by the Bemm River community. For the above reasons Anthony Nelson believes the planning should be completed this financial year, and the replacement

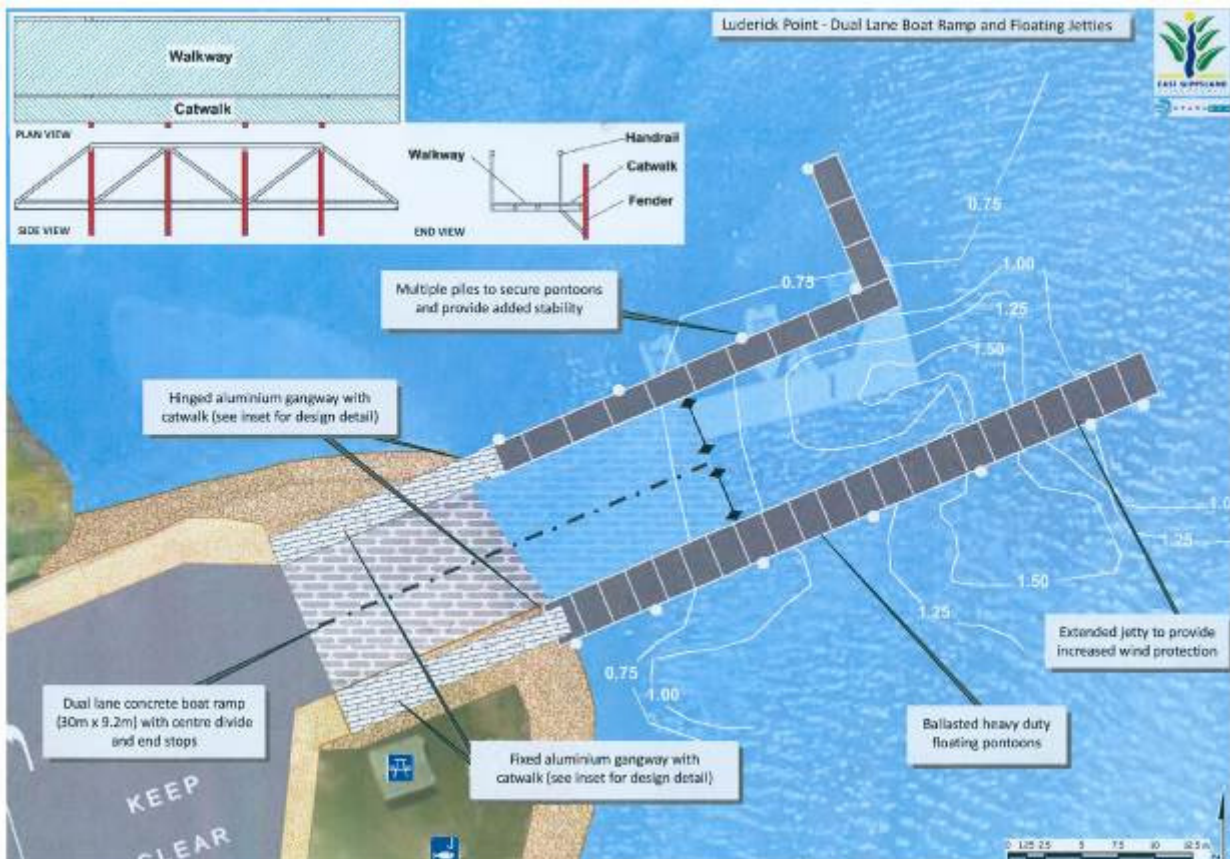


of the jetty should take place in 2015-16 subject to available funding, with an expected cost in the vicinity of \$300,000 to \$400,000. There is a slight chance that construction could commence earlier but this is dependent on a number of factors.

I thank John Murray for raising the issue of these developments, and of course all Gippsland anglers are watching the developments at the Luderick Point boat ramp and jetty with great interest as it is one of the most loved fishing spots in this state.

I have a memory of the late Jack Dyer, more than 40 years ago, one of Richmond Football Clubs greatest talking of fishing the Bemm on the Sunday Channel 7 Sports Show, and for many this was an introduction to the iconic Bemm.

### The Current Proposed Plan



Anthony Nelson also indicated in our discussions that the Marlo Foreshore development had been approved and is likely to commence in this financial year, and funding is being sought for the replacement of the old wooden jetty at Fisherman's Landing which is now well past its use by date. These developments plans are to be applauded as they will add to the attraction of local waters for anglers and the community generally.

## Odd Bits and More

### A Great Charter

Former VRFish chairman and keen fisherman, Bob Pearce recently undertook a fishing trip to Darwin and a sample of the photos of catches of fish give an indication of a great trip. In Bob's words-

*"I went with Arafura Blue Water Charters, and I can strongly recommend them. They worked extremely hard to get us on to the fish. Food was really good and plenty of it. Great boat also. The*





charter is all off shore. There is no fishing in estuarine systems, therefore no barramundi fishing. You can visit there website by clicking the link: [www.arafurablue.com.au](http://www.arafurablue.com.au)  
The price for the three-day charter was \$1750, which I think is great value for money. We were fishing about 80km out of Darwin and the most surprising thing to me was how calm the sea was, with a virtual absence of swell. Arafura Charters can be contacted on **08 8932 3006.**"

I thank Bob for the information on this charter, and it certainly will make anglers consider this option for that special occasion or just three days away with a couple of mates. Now that's got readers thinking!



You gotta love great Golden Snapper fishing. Also, look how rough it was 100 Km off shore.



We caught our boat limit of Spanish Mackerel (16). The biggest was 18Kg

## Love our Lakes at a Price

On Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> November the **Love our Lakes** Program takes place at the Bellevue Hotel Motel in Lakes Entrance. The program is quite interesting with three keynote speakers in the morning led by Dr Karl Kruszelnicki, and then in the afternoon a forum session in two hours with six speakers and for those undertaking the full package a dinner that evening and an excursion the next day. This program was designed to **educate inspire and empower those who attend.** The program is presented by the state Government funded **Gippsland Lakes Ministerial Advisory Committee.**

I have no problem with the program other than to suggest the afternoon forum topics can hardly be covered in the 30 minutes allowed per topic, rather my concern is at the cost of attending such a forum. **\$10million has been provided over four years for the Ministerial Advisory Committee to achieve its aims,** and given that a number of the speakers are DEPI employees and as such would require no speaking fees, the cost seems exorbitant. To attend the forum on Friday would cost \$180 and if you took the full package, including the dinner and an excursion the next day \$250.

**This costing precludes many from attending the forum** and the allocation of 30 minutes to discussing topics such as "Lakes Salinity," "Algal Blooms," "Abundance of black bream," "Monitoring wetland birds," and "Seagrass and Fish Assemblages," provides little chance of any depth of discussion or understanding.

## Letters Letters Letters



### The Value of Feathers

I received this interesting letter from Mansfield fly fisherman John Pincombe, who has provided this publication with great information on Lake Eildon. John previously had a fly fishing guiding business in the North East of the state.

*"While away over winter I was staying a week at Yamba in northern NSW.*

*Walking around the local market I observed a lady selling what looked like small packets of various natural and dyed Hoffman saddle hackle feathers, Each having 10 to 15 varied feathers per pack.*

*I asked her what she was selling and she informed*

*that young girls use the feathers in their hair. I asked how much they were and she said, five dollars.*

*I replied 'Per packet?' She replied 'per individual feather.'*

*She said, 'in Brisbane they are ten dollars per feather.'*

*When I told her I had a number of natural and dyed caps and saddles at home she gave me her card and offered to purchase my feathers. I kindly declined even at a retail value of \$500 to \$1000 per cap.*

*Interesting how the use of fly tying materials has changed over the years."*

### **Editor,**

This just illustrates the value of feathers in areas other than fly tying and just how fashions of the day can influence demand for types of feathers.

### **Further comment on Estuary Perch**

I received the following in a letter from Ross Winstanley who is a member of the Ministerial Fisheries Advisory Council representing the interests of recreational anglers and a member of the Recreational Fishing Roundtable.

*"A bit of feedback on the estuary perch item. During the 1970s, Bruce McCarraher of Fisheries Victoria surveyed fish populations in Victorian estuaries and coastal streams from Mallacoota to the Glenelg River. One of his main observations was that estuary perch are consistently among the most abundant sportfish species right along the coast but was almost completely unknown to anglers at the time. While a lot has changed in that they are now keenly sought after in many inlets, the point I'd make supports Chris Hoyne's comment in the newsletter that there is no need to stock estuary perch in these coastal waters. Like trout where they occur in most Victorian streams, estuary perch populations are self-sustaining and occur in numbers and at sizes that are limited only by the carrying capacity and natural limitations imposed by their environment. Sure, fishing pressure can affect numbers overall, particularly of larger fish, but if you look at waters where they have been targeted for many years - such as the Glenelg, Hopkins and Bemm rivers - the populations seem to stand up well on their own.*

*Regarding the 1000 estuary perch released in Lake Hamilton in 2000, the DEPI web site has a report on estuary perch fisheries which states that small numbers have been caught there over the years. These include several of 1 to 2 kg and Fisheries researchers caught one of 47cm a couple of years ago. DEPI concluded that, as a long-lived species that survive well in wholly freshwaters, they may be hard to catch but remain available to fishing over many years. The report indicates a 3-year stocking target of 150,000 fingerlings in inland waters, extending into 2014."*

*Keep up the great work!*

*Cheers Ross*

### **Editors Comment**

Thanks Ross for your thoughts on estuary perch, and the possible stocking of Lake Tyers. In the eighties estuary perch were abundant in this estuary as indicated by the 1.5 tonnes taken by commercial fisherman Pat Milito in one day, and this is backed by the catch records of that time. This is not the case today and if you speak to anglers who fish Lake Tyers they have caught almost no estuary perch since that time. As a case in point the late Peter Spehr did not include one estuary perch catch in the over 5000 fish he tagged from Lake Tyers.

The case for stocking is an attempt to reverse the situation of today and attempt to provide a starting point for the return of this species to this estuary that once had a reasonable stock of this sporting species. To many Gippsland anglers it would seem a better option to stock Lake Tyers than Western District Lakes where the species has no opportunity to spawn, and given the history of the estuary there seems a reasonable chance of establishing a self sustaining fishery.

### **And that Fish Again**

Readers will recall that interesting fish that was caught in Lake Tyers and was featured in an item in the last issue of Around the jetties.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> September I received the following note email

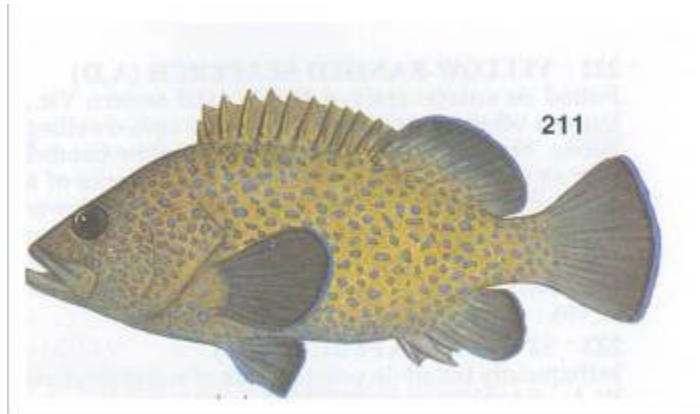


Hi Lynton

The fish pictured in your latest *Around the Jetties* looks like a yellow fin bream, are you sure it wasn't

Cheers Steve.

### Eastern Wirrah



### Editor

To be honest I can't be sure, but it is not a yellow fin bream as the dorsal fin is quite different, however my best guess is that it is a Wirrah, which extends to this area. By the way a good book at reasonable cost to assist with fish identification is [SEA fishes of SOUTHERN Australia](#) by Barry Hutchins, a marine biologist and Roger Swainston a natural history artist. It is the Complete Guide for NSW, Vic, Tas, and SouthWest WA.

In their book the description is as follows- Encountered by both Anglers and Divers, the Eastern Wirrah (shown above) is common on coastal reefs in NSW but several have been found in Victoria and Tasmania. The dark edged blue spots on the head and body turn dark brown after death. Base colour varies from greenish brown to dark brown occasionally with darker blotches Fins often edged with blue.

### Thanks

A very special thanks to the Lake Tyers beach Angling Club for their generous donation of \$500 to help defray the cost of producing and circulating "Around the Jetties." This donation is especially helpful in providing hard copies and postage for those anglers who do not have computer access, and it just so happens that many of these are our senior anglers.

Thanks also to those folk who followed up on our request to check if friends were missing from our mailing list. We have been able to retrieve quite a few and some have also introduced new readers.

### Around the Jetties on Line

We are pleased to announce that *Around the Jetties* can now be sourced on the Lake Tyers beach website- [www.laketyersbeach.net.au](http://www.laketyersbeach.net.au)

The newsletter will still be emailed to readers and of course those who do not have access to email facilities will still receive hard copies. Now those with email facilities will be able to direct friends and other anglers to *Around the Jetties* on this website and they will be able to access back copies. Currently the most recent five back copies are on the website and future newsletters will add to this source of information.

This is a great site with fishing news; local accommodation available at Lake Tyers and local weather plus reports on the lake and this is always interesting to anglers.

Our recent cruise to the South Pacific was a good break with interesting lectures on Captains Bligh and Cook and also lectures on maritime events such as the sinking of the Sydney, and the hospital ship Centaur off the Australian coast. Our overall impression was that the Pacific islanders are charming people and the children are wonderful despite the conditions under which some live. We are very lucky to live in this great country of ours

**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  
Lynton Barr**