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Around the Jetties

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Issue 93

An Anglers Newsletter

Tamboon had an entrance to the sea, similar to here. Things were pretty good there. We lived like kings. We had our old camp oven. We would have our two or three beautifully cooked roasts with it. Often kangaroo. It saved my life I think the kangaroo. Ever tried eating a swan? We ate them hundreds of times. We shot a few ducks in season and out! But that's not the case today. I'm not capable.

From "Casting the Net" Kitchener (Kitch) Allan, Mallacoota Tim Lee and Jill Ellis

[\(The story of early fishing families of the Gippsland coast.\)](#)

Editorial



This issue of Around the Jetties provides exciting information for recreational anglers who fish in East Gippsland, with the announcement of a release of estuary perch in Lake Tyers and a trial stocking of mulloway in the same estuary. If successful, these stockings will undoubtedly draw anglers to the area, and this will mean considerable pressure on this small 25sq hectare estuary. The estuary is already under considerable pressure and certainly, the numbers of large dusky flathead being caught has declined.

Of course, there is an answer to this problem, it lies only 5 kilometres away, and that is the Gippsland Lakes. As seen in the last issue of Around the Jetties, (Issue 92) The Gippsland Lakes have a historical background of mulloway entering the estuary, and catches of large fish. Readers might remember the tale of the commercial fisherman who caught 47 large mulloway weighing in the vicinity of 1,000 lbs in Bancroft Bay for a Heads of Government dinner in Canberra.

It would seem a program to boost the mulloway in the Gippsland Lakes together with marine stockings of bream, Australian bass and estuary perch would see this wonderful system return to its former glory as one of this states greatest recreational fishery. This would have the immediate effect of easing the fishing pressure on Lake Tyers and establishing two major recreational fisheries in East Gippsland with all the economic benefits that would follow.

Of course, there is one major holdup to this development taking place, and that is ten commercial fishermen. The stocking of the Gippsland Lakes to improve the recreational fishery is totally incompatible with commercial fishing of the same species, and until this is resolved, the recreational fishery in the lakes will remain poor and pressure will be exerted on the small Lake Tyers estuary. Fisheries Victoria has done its part in stocking Lake Tyers and anglers will look forward to the new challenges in fishing this marvellous estuary. However, the question of commercial netting in the Gippsland Lakes is a Government decision.

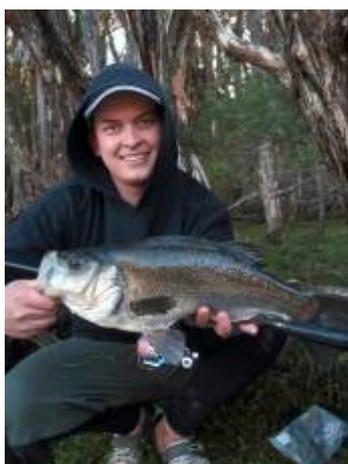
It should be remembered that the Gippsland Lakes could be a cornerstone to the Governments “Target One Million plan for Victoria.



Estuary Perch for Lake Tyers?

After a long wait it appears as if estuary perch will be stocked in Lake Tyers and the stocking could be as soon as December this year. The actual stocking will be dependant on catching brood fish from which to breed and it would appear that this would need to take place this month. It was appropriate that a meeting of around 25 anglers took place to discuss this proposal. That meeting was held at the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club rooms, as this club has been an active proponent of stocking Lake Tyers with estuary perch. Actually, anglers had suggested this stocking in 2007 when the Lake Tyers Fisheries Reserve Management Plan was being developed, however several submissions from recreational anglers seeking a stocking of estuary perch were ignored by the Steering Committee. (No angler from the Lake Tyers Beach AC was on that committee.) The meeting in the Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club rooms was the culmination of a long process to initiate stocking of estuary perch as a trial.

Back Ground



Historically estuary perch had been in Lake Tyers and were only occasionally caught by recreational anglers. In the 1980's a commercial fisherman caught over 1 tonne of estuary perch, however the fish did not seem to recover from this event.

In recent years, this publication recognised anglers who caught an estuary perch in Lake Tyers and the first of these appeared in Issue 48 July 2011 and showed angler Robert Harvey with a beautiful estuary perch that was caught in Lake Tyers.

Since that time, a number of anglers with estuary perch have been featured in Around the Jetties.

The most recent and most successful angler was Ron Brymer with a number of estuary perch caught and released.



(Around the Jetties Issue 86 January 2015) and given the sizes of his



catch, one would suspect these fish were spawning in Lake Tyers.

It was at this time that Fisheries Victoria came out with a publication to Investigate the Historical Abundance of

Estuary Perch in Lake Tyers. It is doubtful that this project produced any new information on the historical abundance of estuary perch.

The Meeting

This meeting to discuss the stocking of Lake Tyers was called by Fisheries Victoria on the 5th August with a view to obtaining brood stock during August, if this proposal was supported by the anglers present.



Attendees were invited to the meeting because of their acknowledged interest in this proposal. The proposal to stock Lake Tyers was presented by Anthony Forster, Fisheries Manager, and the proposal was supported by Alyce Parker, Acting Senior Fisheries Project Officer, and Craig Ingram well known former local who is Coordinator of the Target 1 Million Project. The meeting quickly approved the stocking of Lake Tyers.

Discussion then centred on obtaining brood stock locally within a short time frame, as the brood stock from the Glenelg River could not be used in the east of the State due to genetic differences with the eastern estuary perch.

It was necessary to develop a program similar to the “Great Perch Search” of the west of the state where anglers worked with Fisheries Victoria over a weekend to catch the brood stock. It was agreed that a “Great Perch Search weekend would be held, and the Bemm River would have one team of anglers led by Don Cunningham and a second team would operate in the Marlo area led by Rob Caune. The aim of this weekend effort was to get around 20 pairs of estuary perch. The fish caught on this weekend will need to be checked to ensure they are not hybrids and that will take 4-5 days after the weekend. If 20 pairs are found to be pure estuary perch these fish will be immediately flown to the hatchery at Narooma.

This weekend search for estuary perch is taking place on Friday 21st and Saturday the 22nd August. This of course is not a cheap process, and the actual cost of stocking the fingerlings is 97 cents per fish. Added to this is the accommodation and food for the anglers taking part in the “Great Perch Search” which adds around a further \$12,000 to the cost of this project. This is regarded as part of the “Target 1 Million” project and of the Government commitment to stock 5 million fish per annum in Victorian waters.

The actual proposal is for 25,000 estuary perch to be stocked in Lake Tyers in two consecutive years. The results of this stocking of estuary perch will be analysed and anglers assistance will be sought to report catches of this species. A similar project is being undertaken at Tamboon Inlet east of Cann River.

Whilst anglers and Fisheries Victoria have great enthusiasm for this project, the biggest concern will be obtaining the number of brood fish within the time frame.

From the brood stock caught in the Glenelg River 200,000 estuary perch have been stocked in the west of the state mainly in lakes. These fish will not breed in these waters, however Lake Tyers is an estuary where there is an opportunity for estuary perch to spawn, and perhaps provide an ongoing fishery. This fishery will be watched with great interest. It is worth remembering that the Mitchell River and the Tambo Rivers have small sustainable estuary perch colonies.

MULLOWAY STOCKING?



Anglers fishing Lake Tyers have often been surprised to hook into a large fish that has run their reels and ultimately their lines are broken off. The reaction of some has been to suggest that the fish has to have been a mulloway. Dr Mathew Tailor of Sydney University in a paper on Marine Stocking in Victoria (2010) has stated, “larger mulloway have been captured in the estuary, but there are no records of Juveniles occurring here.” He goes on to suggest mulloway should not be stocked in estuaries with lagoonal characteristics, and Lake Tyers is one of these estuaries.

This is all about to change with the meeting at Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club rooms approving the trial stocking of 2500-5000 mulloway in Lake Tyers and there could be 5000 mulloway fingerlings stocked as early as October, as mulloway fingerlings will be available from the Port Stephens hatchery from September. These fish will be chemically marked so that they can be identified as stocked fish. This will be the first stocking of mulloway in Victoria.

The offer of the fingerling mulloway was made by Anthony Forster, Inland Fisheries Manager of Fisheries Victoria, and after minimal discussion was accepted with enthusiasm by the anglers present.

Discussion revolved around the effect this stocking might have on small bream and flathead, however several anglers spoke of the large number of small mullet in the estuary and suggested this would be a primary source of food for mulloway.

Discussion also took place on whether the mulloway would remain in the estuary when it opened. This was generally unknown however, what was known was that stocked mulloway in NSW have reached 2.5kgs in 25 months.

It was also suggested that Lake Tyers with a successful stocking of mulloway and estuary perch might face increased angler pressure and it needed to be remembered this was a small estuary.

Despite these concerns, the offer of a stocking of mulloway was approved with no opposition. Tamboon Inlet will also receive a small stocking of mulloway. It was also indicated that numbers of mulloway have been known to be in the Tamboon Inlet at times. In discussion after the meeting, anglers from Bemm River expressed interest in mulloway.

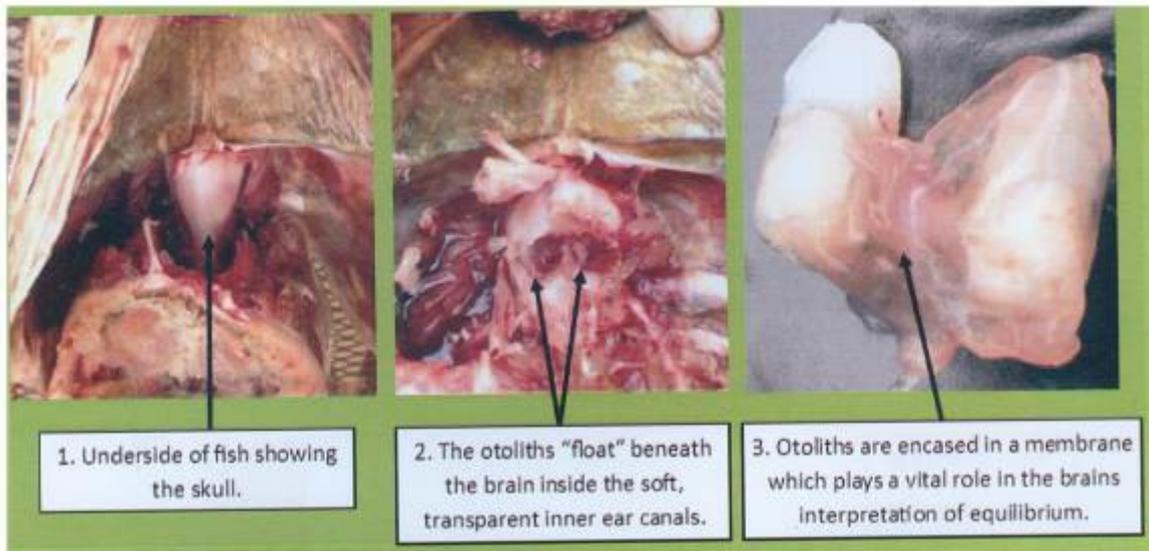
Dr Taylor writing on Mulloway suggests that after reaching maturity, fish often undertake coastal migrations, and increasingly make use of coastal reef and surf zones. He adds, “there is a high degree of estuarine residency and site fidelity in the species with up to 80% of fish returning to former home ranges after their seasonal egression.”

Perhaps this means that even if mulloway leave their home estuary like Lake Tyers there is an 80% chance they will return.

In Victoria, the current Minimum Legal Size of Mulloway is 60cms with a bag limit of 5 fish

Mulloway Research Program

I was interested to receive a copy of the newsletter of the Mulloway Angler Research Program. Currently the program is collecting frames from anglers in the west of the state and to date (February 2015) a total of 77 frames have been donated to research by recreational anglers. Whilst the Barwon and Glenelg rivers are the source of most frames, they are appealing for frames from Marine waters including the Gippsland Lakes. Each frame received is measured and the otoliths removed. This allows scientists to undertake length and age monitoring of each fish. The relationship between length and age also helps in determining the growth rate of the fish.



Early research suggests that Victorian estuaries are a prime nursery habitat for mulloway in their early stages of life. The largest fish donated of 112cms was caught in Wrights Bay in South Australia and the second largest a 110cm specimen was caught in the Glenelg River. Both fish were approximately 8 years old. The oldest specimen aged in South Australia was 42 years old whilst the oldest in NSW was 24 years old.

Growth rates of mulloway vary and in 2008-10, a 3 year old mulloway varied in length between 48 and 73 cms whilst a fish of the same age in 2014-15 measured between 55 and 98cms. It is not known why the growth rates of some mulloway are so varied.

Future work on mulloway will look at dietary analysis and attempt to pinpoint the main sources of food, and determine if this varies throughout the species life.

Source

Thanks to Franz Grasser for providing this research newsletter from the Nature Glenelg Trust on the Mulloway Angler Research Program that is currently being conducted.

Franz Grasser writes in an accompanying letter-

The Glenelg Trust and Fisheries Victoria have also applied for funding to conduct acoustic tagging in Victoria and in Port Phillip Bay. At least, this could be done at marginal cost because most of the necessary listening stations are already in place for the ongoing snapper project, so we are hopeful this might proceed in future to help us learn more about the movements and behaviour of this enigmatic species.

Now to Catch a Mulloway

Franz Grasser lives on the Paterson River, which is a short estuary on the eastern shore of Port Phillip Bay, and the boat ramps (4) of the Patterson River provide access to Port Phillip Bay.



I saw this photo of Franz with a wonderful mulloway caught in the Patterson River and I wrote to him seeking details of this catch. Franz responded with this interesting outline of his approach to catching mulloway.

“This fish was caught about 3.00pm on the Thursday before Easter on a live mullet. The outfit used was a 45000b Shimano Baitrunner rod spooled with 25lb mono and using a 40lb fluorocarbon trace to a 4/0 beak hook. A “Westernport rig” using about a 20z teardrop sinker on a clip above a swivel completes the rig. The sinker needs to be adjusted dependant on the tidal flow and the weed situation.

The rod is a standard 7ft fibreglass Snapper outfit, as the casting required in the Patterson river is not huge. It is important to use the Baitrunner function with mulloway in our experience because it is when the fish is running away strongly that there is the best chance of a positive hook up. This season there have been heaps of hits where the live mullet have been mouthed and often killed but without a proper run or any intention to swallow the bait.

The fish was exactly 80cm long and weighed 4.4kgs and was typical of the run of fish caught this season which mostly ranged from 70-90cms although there also a few metre plus fish including one that was just shy of the magical 20kg mark.

As you can see in the photo, the fish was caught right next to the boat ramp at No1 Launching Way. The vast majority of fish caught this season were caught on live mullet, but dead baits such as garfish, squid, cuttlefish and pilchards have also been successful at times. Hard body lures and soft plastics have also worked at times and there are several Kayak anglers who have had considerable success trolling such lures.

The main thing you need for success is patience. Even the most experienced mulloway specialists who have been catching them for years are unable to predict with any certainty when and where the fish will come on the bite. What the successful guys have in common is that they are prepared to work hard to get the right bait and then they put in big hours of fishing to maximise their chances.”

A Thought

“Since mulloway feed mainly on small live fish they will rarely take stale baits. If fresh baits are hard to obtain, try skinning a freshly caught flathead and use a strip of this”

Lance Wedlick Fishing in Australia 1962

Could this be a problem in a small estuary? But then the Glenelg River has both bream and mulloway in its waters. This question will be resolved with the research associated with this release.

My thanks to Franz for this outline of his successful approach to landing a mulloway. If any other anglers can add further information, we would be pleased to include it in the next issue of Around the Jetties.

Franz Glasser is a long serving member of the VRfish State council, and has contributed to discussions in this newsletter in the past including stocking of estuary perch in Lake Tyers

Bob McNeil's Lake Tyers Report



Bob's report for the Research Angler Fishing Diary program was from April until July, and took in fishing in the very cold winter months, however in this period Bob was on the water at 6.15 am on twenty mornings. On all occasions, Bob used prawn as his bait, and what was surprising to me was that in this period he caught 11 dusky flathead when most of us believe the season for dusky flathead commences in earnest in October. Only one flathead was under size and the largest was a specimen of 62cms.

What was most significant in Bob's catch was the number of undersize black bream. In a total of 149 fish over the fished period, 86 were

undersize. The undersize fish were nearly all between 22 and 28cms, which would indicate a fairly strong year class that should provide good fishing in the future. On a couple of occasions, Bob caught ten bream in a morning session all undersize. The only other species apart from dusky flathead caught were a small tailor and a gurnard of 30cms. It is difficult to understand how few other species entered Lake Tyers in the last opening, and almost no small snapper or gurnard being caught by anglers in the months of estuary closure evidenced this. In previous openings trevally, leatherjackets and gurnard together with snapper have entered the estuary and provided fishing alternatives for anglers.

Bob is to be congratulated on braving the winter elements to provide what has been a most interesting diary report. Just out of interests as I write up Bob's report on the 31 July, I am aware that the estuary is exceptionally high and appears almost ready for a further outbreak. I am also aware of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority carefully watching the water level of Lake Tyers and we saw an inspection of the possible breakout site by authority officers yesterday.

A Sad Passing

I was very sad to read of the passing of Andrea Brumley who died on the 28th July 2015. Andrea was the wife of Dick Brumley Senior Fisheries Officer at Lakes Entrance for a number of years. Andrea had a career in the area of natural sciences. She was known by many anglers for the excellent book she co-authored with John D. Koehn and Peter C. Gehrke on "Managing the Impacts of Carp." This 250 page publication was regarded as the most informative book on this pest in our rivers. When I was writing the book "**Black Bream in the Gippsland Lakes – In Crisis Fact or Fallacy**" in 2000, I requested up to date information on carp from Andrea, and she had no hesitation in providing a draft of the unpublished copy of "Managing the Impacts of Carp." This allowed me to include up to date information on carp in the book I was preparing for publication. Since that time, I have recommended this book to anglers interested in the issue of carp infestation of our rivers.

I wrote at that time "*The book, Managing the Impacts of Carp by Koehn, Brumley and Gehrke, provides a wonderful addition to our understanding of carp and their impact on the environment*". I strongly recommend this new publication of the Bureau of Rural Sciences."

When Andrea retired some year or two ago, she became most active in the Nicholson River Land Care group where she served as treasurer for a period and was the immediate Past President of this group. Andrea will be sadly missed by all interested in our natural environment, and certainly, her work on European Carp was supportive of recreational fishing in the Gippsland Lakes and rivers as well as providing an understanding of the effects of this pest.

Gippsland Lakes recreational fishers urge the Victorian Government to buy back commercial licences

The following was featured on ABC Gippsland Rural News 28th May 2015.

Recreational fishers have called on the Victorian Government to buy back commercial fishing licences in the Gippsland Lakes in the state's South East.

"The Government plans to boost the number of recreational fishers in Victoria to one million by 2020 and plans to ban netting in Port Phillip and Corio bays.

The editor of Around the Jetties magazine, Lynton Barr, said numbers of black bream and dusky flathead in the Gippsland Lakes were declining.

He said commercial fishing licences should be scaled back to improve fish stocks for recreational fishers.

"The two are incompatible, we could end up with a brilliant fishery in the Gippsland Lakes but I do think we need to control commercial netting," he said. "We have declining numbers of black bream and declining numbers of dusky flathead, the two main species, and yet we are still allowing the unfettered netting of these species."



PHOTO: Anglers want the Victorian Government to buy back commercial fishing licences in the Gippsland Lakes to improve fish stocks for recreational fishers. (ABC :Kat Sullivan)

Editors Comment

Many Gippsland anglers have expressed concern at the current Governments lack of any indication of action to restore the recreational fishery of the Gippsland lakes, and the first step to achieve such a result is the removal of commercial netting. Little can be done towards stocking this water whilst commercial nets remove fish, and particularly black bream and dusky flathead. Rural anglers are happy to see action being taken in Port Phillip and Corio Bays to remove commercial netting, but wonder why the same effort

is not being applied to the Gippsland Lakes. Is this a matter of more voters in the area of Port Phillip and Corio Bays than the rural areas surrounding the Gippsland Lakes? Even in the Media Release of Minister Lisa Neville, entitled “**Protecting the Future of the Gippsland Lakes**” recreational fishing does not rate a single mention even when discussing boosting the local economy. Anglers and members of the public can remember the days when recreational fishing provided an enormous boost to the local economy, with thousands of visitors from all around the state travelling to the lakes to enjoy the fishery.

This is strange when one of the current Government commitments is to increasing the number of anglers in the state to 1 million, and the stocking of fish in state waters to be 5 million per annum, yet the largest estuary in the state and its fish stocks are totally ignored.

On the 12th November 2014 the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security in the Coalition Government of that time, Peter Walsh said the voluntary buyback of Gippsland Lakes commercial netters he had announced was in response to calls from both the commercial and recreational fishing sectors.

“Reducing commercial fishing efforts will boost opportunities for recreational fishing, and in turn, help grow Gippsland businesses that are supported by recreational fishing tourism.” At this time, Mr Walsh said a re-elected Coalition Government had a vision to grow Victoria into a recreational fishing mecca and the Gippsland Lakes initiative complimented the Coalitions commitment to phase out commercial netting in Port Phillip and Corio Bays.

Bairnsdale Advertiser 12/11/2014

The approach to recreational fishing and commercial netting in the Gippsland Lakes marks a major difference between the Labor Party and the Coalitions policy on the treatment of the Gippsland Lakes. The Labor Party has provided no vision or commitment for the improvement of recreational angling in the Gippsland Lakes apart from protection from commercial netting at the mouth of rivers.

Anglers Invited to a Wild Trout Conference

A full one day conference is to be held in Mansfield at the Performing Arts Centre on Saturday 21st November between 9.30am and 5pm. Interested anglers should register online by visiting www.mansfieldmtbuller.comaut/twt

The conference will assemble fisheries scientists and recreational anglers to share the findings of research conducted on riverine trout populations over the last twelve months. Anglers would be aware of the decline in trout numbers commented on in this publication previously.

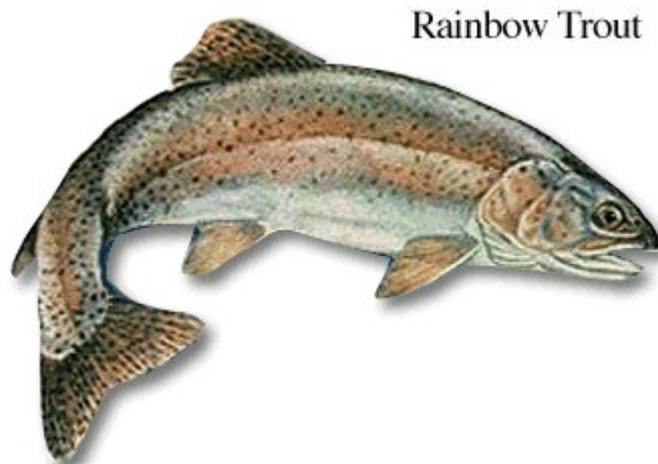
Executive Director of Fisheries Victoria, Travis Dowling said, “amongst the presentations will be topics ranging from spawning success in 12 wild trout rivers, trout movement in the Delatite River from the acoustic tracking project, and measuring the contribution stocked trout have made to anglers catches in two rivers.” Whilst almost all this research was conducted in rivers of the north-east, many of the findings will be applicable to the trout streams of Gippsland.

The conference will also feature a key note address from Dr Dan Dauwalter of Trout Unlimited, which is an American group committed to better trout and salmon fisheries. Mr Dowling said this conference has been funded by fishing licence fees and the State Governments ‘Target One Million’ plan for recreational fishing, which aims to get more Victorians fishing.

People unable to attend the conference will be able to watch presentations online a few weeks later.

Editor

I am hoping that there may be a reader who is going to this important conference, and who could provide a written report for publication in Around the Jetties. The findings on trout in the North East may well be applicable to local trout streams.



Rainbow Trout

Don Cunningham's Bemm River Report



Good angling can be had in the lake, and one of the most productive areas has been around the Mahoganies. Bobs Bay has been another area providing shelter and good bags of black bream. The bream are taking sandworm, but undersized bream have to be moved away from.

Finding shelter from the wind is important, and some bream have been taken from the bank by walking into the West end of the lake. This area has always been worth a try when the Westerly winds are bad. Gum boots or waders are a big help because the area is muddy. Even though the water is very shallow, Bream are coming into the shallows to feed along the edges, and I recommend you to fish your way along. You often move onto the fish by using this method. The beaches have started to fire up, with good reports of salmon coming in. Pilchards and Poppers are working well.

Editor

We may have a full report on the moves to provide fishing platforms and river access in next months publication. Considerable work and effort is being undertaken on this project by Fisheries Victoria and the Bemm River Angling

Club. Readers will recall this project was aimed at providing access for anglers to the river and in particular aged and handicapped anglers.

Thanks to Don for this report and best wishes in the “Great Perch Search” to the Bemm River Team

Cost of Removing Nicholson Dam an Estimated \$9 million



I was staggered to learn that the estimated cost of removing the decommissioned Nicholson dam was currently \$9 million. The original cost of building the dam in 1974 was \$873,000. I was surprised at the figure for removal as some four years ago, when this newsletter raised the issue of removal, a figure of \$3 million was suggested as the cost.

I am informed that in recent years, there have been investigations into potentially removing the dam wall subject to funding coming available but attempts to find funding have so far been unsuccessful. Now East Gippsland Water and the East Gippsland catchment Management Authority are currently examining more

cost effective removal options with a view to again seeking funding. At this stage, the dam is maintained by East Gippsland Water.

Dean Boyd who provided this information stated, “development of cost effective options to remove the dam will involve complex ecological assessments which will take some time. At this stage, it is expected the future direction for the dam will clarify over the next twelve months or so.

Editor

My thanks to Dean Boyd, Executive Manager Infrastructure, East Gippsland Water for providing this information so readily. The dam was constructed by the Lakes Entrance Waterworks Trust and was formally decommissioned in 2011. I would hope that within the next twelve months options for removal would be made public. I have some difficulty in understanding how a public authority can walk away from a decommissioned structure that has an adverse effect on a river and fish movements. **Somebody must be responsible for restoring the Nicholson River to its condition prior to this structure being built.**

A letter to Minister Lisa Neville from local member Tim Bull dated April 3rd on this topic has had no reply other than an acknowledgement from her Chief of Staff (17/4/2015) “that a response from the Minister will be forthcoming shortly.”

Items in Brief

Yelloweye Mullet in the Gippsland Lakes

An intriguing fact is that in the period 1981/2 to 1990/91 the average catch of Yelloweye mullet in commercial nets was **93 tonnes** per annum, with the biggest catch **157 tonnes** in 1999/9. The commercial catch of Yelloweye mullet has dramatically dropped, and in the period 2005/6 to 2012/13, the average annual catch was a mere **18 tonnes**. This is just another of the fish of the Gippsland Lakes that is in dramatic decline.

Statewide Recreational Round Table

It is now nine weeks since the last Recreational Roundtable meeting held on the 5th June, and yet the summary of that meeting has not been made available to recreational anglers by the publication of the forum summary on the website of Fisheries Victoria. This is despite the fact that Fisheries Victoria is providing secretarial assistance to the Chairman to produce the summaries. It should be remembered that over a year ago this publication made both Fisheries Victoria and the Chairman aware that summaries of meetings were not being placed on the website, and this meant that forum contents and discussion were not available to anglers generally. Currently two problems exist, namely the continuing delays in providing the summaries, and the lack of detail in the summaries. This latter concern has been taken up with Fisheries and hopefully more details in the summaries will be forthcoming. Whilst this is critical of the reporting of the forums, it reflects the importance of the reports emanating from these.

Bass Stocking in Mitchell and Tambo Rivers

In 2014/15, 10,000 Australian bass will be stocked in the Mitchell River in the area from Angusvale to the junction of the Dargo River. It is suggested the stocking is to compensate for previous brood fish collections from the Mitchell River. The Tambo will also receive 10,000 Australian bass to be stocked in the area Bruthen to junction with the Haunted Stream. This stocking is said to enhance Australian bass stocks in the Tambo River. It needs to be remembered that these fish will leave the safety of the rivers to enter the Gippsland lakes to spawn and in doing so they will have to avoid the nets of commercial fishermen.

Ports and Harbours Survey

I received this week (5th August) notification of a survey from Gippsland Ports in which they are attempting to gather as much information as practical from boat users and the public about boating safety, environmental impacts, infrastructure and behaviour for the Gippsland Lakes. This survey closes on the 28th August, which gives the public a very short period to obtain surveys, answer them, and return them. The survey will be available from Gippsland ports website-

www.gippslandports.vic.gov.au

If required hard copies can be obtained by contacting Gippsland Ports **5150 0500**

Seals Cause Havoc

I heard on ABC Rural News that commercial fishermen in the Coorong's of South Australia are facing difficulties due to the large number of New Zealand fur seals that are interfering with nets to such an extent that fishermen cannot retrieve fish from the nets. It was suggested that the area is now home to hundreds of seals and that a number of commercial fishermen were seeking compensation or a buyout from the South Australian Government. The point was made that years ago when the fur of the seals was valuable they were hunted to almost a point of extinction, however today they are protected and numbers have grown until they are now posing as a major problem for fishermen. Is this a similar story to cormorants in the Gippsland Lakes and tributaries?

Boating Safety and Facilities Program

The Hon. Luke Donellan, Minister for Ports has announced \$8 million for the Boating Safety and Facilities Program for 2015/16. Community groups, search and rescue organisations, local waterway authorities and

committees of management are invited to apply for funding. The program is funded by revenue received from vessel registration fees. The aim of the program is to make boating safer and more accessible to all Victorians. A copy of the program information booklet and application forms can be downloaded from the Departments website at

www.economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/bsfp

Alternatively you can contact the Grants Administration team on 1800 337 222 or by emailing

boating.grants@ecodev.vic.gov.au **Applications will close on the 16th September 2015.**

Vision From the Past -Salmon on the Coast

Wonboyn used to be the best salmon place on the coast. You could go down to the headland and as far as the eye can see, a mile each way of the entrance was just a brown mass. You couldn't estimate at what there used to be. The salmon used to go in there and I have seen that many go in with a running tide, they all couldn't get out. It's hard to believe they could not get away and they just died in their thousands on the sandbanks. We had dead fish for months afterwards. Each year they would turn up there to the week, and it would finish up, it was something to do with their spawning. The salmon gradually died away because they were killed in such great numbers.

Source Kitchener Allen Mallacoota Commercial Fisherman "Casting the Net" Tim Lee & Jill Ellis
Trout Cod Fishery Opens At Beechworth

Lake Tyers Opens

Lake Tyers opened late on Saturday night the 7th of August after a period of 2-3 weeks with the estuary on the verge of breaking out only lacking the wind and the seas to provide the initial break. I spoke to Ken Judd of the East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and asked him if the opening was a natural breakout or was human intervention involved. Ken said he was unable to say specifically, however he hoped it had been a natural breakout. We will probably never know however according to the Lake Tyers weather website there were no strong winds on that Saturday night.

It has been announced that a fishing platform will be built a Fisherman's Landing on Lake Tyers. This I believe will be built where the old jetty was located and will provide a facility for bank anglers. In addition with the opening of Lake Tyers, work can now start on the building of the second launching ramp adjacent to the current No2 ramp.



Jetty at No 2 Ramp, Lake Tyers before and after the lake opened to the sea.

Trout Cod Fishery Opens at Beechworth

As indicated in Issue 91 the opening of a trout cod season in Lake Sambell and Lake Kerford at Beechworth, was being considered by Fisheries Victoria. In a Media release (14th August) the Andrews Government has announced the opening of the Beechworth Lakes to trout cod fishing. To sustain the fishery a bag limit of one cod per day, with fish being between 40 and 50cms. This is a very limited fishery, however 45,000 trout cod fingerlings have been released into the lakes since 2008. It is hoped that this will be the commencement of further trout cod fisheries, and the Ovens River, which has a sustainable trout cod population, might be another fishery opened in the future.

It is worth remembering that trout cod and Macquarie perch inhabited the streams of East Gippsland prior to the First World War, and these same species were found in large numbers in the streams of the North East. Perhaps this is the start of a recovery of the native fisheries of Victoria.

Late News Item

Seastars Found in Gippsland Lakes

Two Northern Pacific Sea Stars have been found in the Gippsland lakes according to the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning who is undertaking an investigation to determine the location



and extent of the population. The seastars were found by Friends of Beware Reef divers Alan and Michael Wilkins.

“The Northern Seastar is an exotic marine pest that has the potential to eat native marine creatures. In particular the seastar can consume native shellfish which are an important part of the food chain.” The seastar is found in Port Phillip Bay where it has done considerable damage.

Thanks to Ross Scott for alerting us to this pest and also the photos showing evidence of increased salinity in the lakes causing dieback of shoreline vegetation along Mc Lennan Straight, Gippsland Lakes.



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Good Health and Good fishing - Lynton Barr