

October 2019

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President's Message

Yay!

Another bass season has started and most of us are champing at the bit to chase a few Aussie Bass. The drought looks like playing a part on how this season shapes up. So far, after the first month of the season, the jury is still out. It just means we need to get on water to find out for ourselves!

October means BassCatch! I hope members will get together for BassCatch and enjoy the camping and story-telling that goes with this event. Shaws Farm will be our location as has been the case for the last few years. As before, we have special permission to camp there and we should make good use of it. The carp fishing can be pretty good there too!

SNAPPER ACTION

By Jason

I'm always keen to try new types of fishing. Chasing new species or just chasing favourites in new locations are some of the things I look forward to most when on the water. A good mate of mine has spent many years chasing snapper around Sydney and in several locations down the NSW south coast. I've caught plenty of small snapper up to about 40cm but these had usually come as bycatch in lower estuaries or when chasing mullet. I did target them a few years back a couple of times off the rocks at Kurnell and landed a few smaller fish up to 40cm but never anything better than that. The fact that I'd never caught a decent one or even made an attempt to frustrated me. The main reasons I'd never made a serious attempt were that I get horrendously sea sick and also my boat is not safe to take beyond the heads unless conditions are ideal. Back in May my mate kept at me about how good this time of year can be for inshore reds. He himself had not been out and due to family circumstances and was unlikely to in the near future. I knew that many clued-in anglers still did very well on good reds in close to some of Sydney's major headlands. After a bit of advice on what to look for I made a plan and waited for the right set of conditions.

Thankfully I didn't have to wait long. The dawn run from the ramp out to the Kurnell headland was only 15mins over beautiful glassed out seas. Before casting I spent quite a bit of time sounding around just to familiarise myself with some of the bottom structure and also to search for bait. I'd read and heard plenty of times that if there are good schools of bait that reds won't be far away. This particular area was about 14m deep with quite a steep drop into 23m and a mix of sand and broken rock on the bottom. I tied a 3/8oz Jighead with 110mm squidgy Flickbait to my 17lb leader and let fly with the first cast. To my disbelief it was taken before it hit the bottom and I soon had a nice snapper of 44cm in the net. What a start! That session yielded only three more with one other similar sized fish and two that were undersize. I definitely counted this first session a success! I had spent a good amount of



time looking around and found several other areas that demanded attention. With confidence high I began to plan a follow up session.

Within days I was back out and again spent the first half an hour or so locating the bait in an area I had sounded last time but did not fish. The sounder lit up with bait ball after bait ball and I was certain the reds would be willing. However, after

2.5hours of casting for a lone 39cm bream from 12m of water I was stumped and decided to head in.

My brother was very keen to get amongst some snapper action and less than a month later the stars aligned where free time met up with a great set of conditions. This was to be our first afternoon session and despite last session's poor result I was keen to focus on that area again simply because of the amount of bait that had been holding there. I found the bait but this time it was holding in 9m of water very close to the rocks. I used the electric to position the boat and we began casting lightly weighted (1/6oz and 1/4oz) 5 and 6inch plastic Stickbaits into the gentle wash and along the contour line where the bait was holding. It was only a matter of minutes until my brother hooked up a nice little snapper in the high 30s. This fish had taken the lure high in the column soon after it had splashed down. It was soon followed by another similar sized fish to my brother, before I hooked something a bit more serious. Again, the lure had been taken very aggressively in mid water. This fish was shaking its head violently as snapper are famous for and was taking line at will in short but powerful bursts. Unfortunately, the hook pulled about a minute into the battle and with little experience at the snapper game we were both left wondering just how good a fish that had been. Thankfully we didn't have to wait long as I hooked another good fish which felt very similar to the previous one. Thankfully this time the hook held and a beautiful lit up snapper slid into view and straight into the net. While far from a giant, it went 54cm on the brag mat and did wonders for the confidence.





That session proved to be our best so far with 7 nice fish up to 54cm landed in the fading afternoon light. We had also pulled the hooks on two other solid fish and I was thoroughly dusted twice by much bigger fish. One of these in particular had smashed the lure and taken 30 or 40m of line in its first blistering run. It stopped to briefly shake its head before taking off on another long run which found reef. This session had absolutely whetted our appetite for more. Unfortunately, back surgery brought most fishing expeditions to an abrupt halt soon after this. However, as soon as I'm able I will definitely be doing more exploring of the waters in close to my home patch at Kurnell. I know of fish over the old fashioned 20lb mark caught from this area in the last couple of years and I'm determined to increase that new PB.

Cheers, Jason.

LANE COVE RIVER OUTING

By Milton

Our August Lane Cove day turned out a cracker for some whilst others struggled a little. Tham fished with Brian in his boat and Zac soloed on his kayak. I passed, not fussed about getting up early on a cold mid-August morning with south westerlies predicted in the afternoon. I did go down to join the guys for lunch and boiled the billy so we could enjoy a hot cuppa whilst discussing the mornings catch.



Tham's first WhatsApp post at 7.14am was: so far one bite, minus one Cranka Crab, not a good start, then at 9.50 another post holding a 57cm Flattie, so things were improving. Jason showed the boys his Bream fishing skills and caught a mega fish, absolutely massive, whilst Brian was boat chauffeuring for the morning, ducking lures and didn't experience much action.

Jason's comments: a great morning out with Steve and Al, also nice to fish from Steve's new machine. We had pretty consistent action through until about midday. Final tally was about 12 lizards to 60cm (and several lost), a nice Jew in the high 50's for Al, a nice Whiting, and five Bream with the best 40cm to the fork and 44 to the tip.



Alan lost the biggest Flattie of the day at the boat and it was a beauty, needless to say he let fly with a few expletives. Most Flatties were big.

Zac ended up being the only kayaker, but I think he probably struggled due to lack of experience being his first time on the Lane Cove. At least he got a tow back to the ramp before lunch. Thanks for coming Zac, next year we might have to get you into a boat to enjoy some company and some salt water fishing help.

Steve's report: We launched early at Burns Bay in the Anglapro 440, I had Jason and Al on board today. Initially we cruised around a bit at the mouth of Burns Bay before heading up the river. A few bends up we found good concentrations of bait on the sounder, with fish marks around them. I was fairly confident there were some Jewies in there, and sure enough after sounding over a school of bait and casting out behind the boat, Al landed a nice jewfish.

Between the three of us we pulled in a dozen or so good-sized flathead from around the bait, although no bream. Perhaps the Jewies were scaring them off!

Later on, we cruised back down below the bridge and started fishing boat hulls. I cast along the hull of a small yacht, and as the fly passed under the keel, I saw the fly line rapidly tightening. I struck with some force and came up tight on a nice bream, which we soon landed.

The wind was blowing a little bit at this stage making casting and positioning the boat a little challenging. Despite that, Jason made an impressive cast with a small blade, landing it mere centimeters from the bow of a yacht that must have been 50 meters away from us. As soon as it dropped to the bottom, Jason came up tight on a big fish. When it came to the boat and into the net, we realized the true size of it, a 44cm bream. I had not seen a Bream that big before up close, it was a truly impressive beast!





We landed a couple of other Bream on the hulls before heading back to the boat ramp for a nice lunch with the boys. Jason headed off after lunch, but Al and I persisted for the afternoon session. We went further up the river this time to see if any Bream had moved into the upper reaches, but we came up blank until just before knock off time, when I got a nice Trevally of around 40cm late in the day.

All in all, it was a great day, great company, and great to see everyone catch some good fish!

Burns Bay boat ramp is a good spot to launch, if there's soccer on the adjoining fields parking can be difficult, but in most cases, we are there before it starts. The ramp is rarely busy and the bay is very sheltered from strong winds. Also, a great spot to launch a kayak and there's lots of moored boats to fish.

Thanks boys, Milton.

LAKE ST CLAIR CLUB WEEKEND

Milton's Report: Everyone arrived on Friday keen as mustard to mix it with some of the big Bass in this great location. The lake is down to just under 50% capacity, although it didn't look as bad as we expected. The water was that wonderful blue with a gentle north easterly wafting across the surface. After setting up camp and having a bite to eat we hit the water for an afternoon session. There were three boats, Steve's, Barry's and mine whilst Tham had his kayak. From memory I managed to land the first fish for our trip and that turned out to be a Yellowbelly, not huge probably mid 300's, but it gave a good account of itself on a 1-3kg spin rod.



As the afternoon passed other fish were caught too as per the reports by the guys below. Brian and I fished together, Alan fished with Barry Cole, Jason fished with Steve whilst Tham did his own thing by kayak, although he did fish in my boat on one occasion.



Accommodation wise Brian towed his Cub camper and I set up my stretcher on the hard floor, very comfortable and affectionately known as Motel Shanley. Barry Cole towed his boat up from the south coast with his Landcruiser ute which has a comfortable slide on camper attached to the tray, whilst the other guys pitched tents.

Happy hour and some cooking were generally done beside the Cub camper. It was great sharing the daily events, the fish landed and lost, enjoying a beer or a glass of red with dips and cheese each night at camp. Nothing like good company, a few beverages and sitting around enjoying a laugh or two.

The weather was better than forecast and the only hiccups were a big north westerly blow on Sunday mid-morning to late afternoon and heavy rain on Sunday night. The nights were pleasant, not too cold so all in all it was pretty good as Lake St Clair can throw up horrendous storms in the afternoon.

Brian and I were late risers each morning and in retrospect we missed the best time to fish, from first light to late morning the conditions were very good. Oh well next time we'll make a bigger effort. Steve and Jason were gone by 5-30am, off the water for brunch then if conditions suited fished almost till dark. Oh, to be young again. When there's no decent moon the lake is very dark and it's impossible to find your way back to the ramp unless you have electronic navigation aids. Also, you can't see the snags and trees unless you have a quality spot light, so great care must be taken. Another issue is there's no mobile phone reception so you can't call if you get into trouble. And, in the warmer months you must keep an eye to the west and get off the water before any storm hits.



In a nutshell Brian and I fished Friday afternoon, Saturday morning and afternoon and Sunday morning. Brian fished with Steve on Sunday afternoon once the wind dropped and they encountered the heavy rain whilst still on the water. Our results were for me one Yellowbelly and one Bass, for Alan two Bass to 390 and for Brian six to 373, but the highlight for Brian was catching a 365 on fly with Steve Peach on Sunday around dusk. Barry managed six Bass to 365.

Steve's Report: My first trip to fish Lake St Clair with Bass Sydney turned out to be an epic weekend of fishing. I almost always fish in rivers and creeks so my impoundment bass experience is a bit limited. Luckily for me I was fishing mostly with Jason who is an excellent lure fisherman, and we managed to crack a bit of a pattern on the Bass after a little while. Pretty much as soon as we pulled out from the boat ramp, we started seeing good numbers of fish on the sounder, and as we continued, we realised that there were fish almost everywhere! But, after trying numerous presentations to them we also discovered that most of these fish were not feeding. We had to find fish that wanted to eat! There were lots of fish suspended in 15-20 feet of water, particularly over the old creek bed, but they would not bite on anything we threw at them. So, we began targeting the shallower banks and it was there that we found a good pattern. The dam was apparently lower than it usually is, and there were no visible weed beds on the surface - it was a matter of searching and trying to find weedy banks on the sounder. We thought we could identify it on the side scan, and when it started coming up on our lures and flies, we knew that we were in the zone. The feeding fish up on the weedy banks were from

about 12 feet of water right up to the edge, but mostly they would just feed along a comfortable contour line a little way off the bank. So, we cruised along with the electric very slowly, casting diagonally ahead of the boat. The key to getting the bite was to fish super slow and subtle, just a couple of very short slow strips of the fly and a long pause in between. The bite would sometimes come right at the front of the boat, and when it did come it was often violent.

There was also a fantastic evening rise with Bass feeding everywhere all around the boat on something very small that we could not detect. I did manage to tempt a few fish on the cicada fly on the first night, but it became apparent that the best way to target these fish was with small very shallow running flies fished slowly. Jason did well with a very small unweighted soft plastic, and for the keeled worm hook fly was great. Brian fished with me on Sunday evening and landed his first fly caught Bass on one of those flies, a beautiful fish around 37cm – that was a highlight of the trip for me!



But most of my fish were caught on the mylar body worm hook rabbit strip fly that I have been working on for a while, I'm pleased to say it was a great success on the Bass!

So the final tally was pretty much a cricket score. From my boat alone we landed 65 bass, all over 30cm except for one or two fish. Five fish were over 40cm, most were mid to high 30's. Jason got 32 fish on lures, Brian got two on lure and one on fly, and I got 30 bass all on fly, including a 43cm and 41cm fork length. I had three or four fish pop the 8lb leader clean on the strike, no idea how big they were. I also got totally bricked in snags about five times by big fish who broke me off on the branches. That was certainly one EPIC weekend, and I will be back there again without a doubt!

Tham's Report: I was kinda looking forward to my first trip to Lake St Clair (LSC) in over 20yrs. My first ever trip will always be burnt into my mind for two events. One, leaving the Yellowbelly biting their heads off coz we got sick of catching them and wanted to catch a bass! The other memory is of the terrifying storm that blew up and levelled most things on the campground. My tent was destroyed a few minutes after I had just set it up! In 2019, I was heartened by the discovery it is a really good bass fishery in the winter months. YouTube has many videos of winter Bass fishing on St Clair.

For this club trip, I was the only yak-fisho attending. It's tough being the only yak-fisho among a group that consisted of 3 other boats. Milton took his boat, as did Peachy and Barry Cole. Like I said, I was heartened by the YouTube videos as many of them are of yak-fishing LSC.

Like everyone else on this trip, I took Friday off on Leave as well as the Monday. However, closer to the date, the weather forecast wasn't looking great, especially for a yak-fisho, so I had decided to leave on Sunday, not Monday.

Getting to the LSC campground by around lunch time saw me put up my tent, with my new camp stretcher. Quite comfy the new stretcher! The others had all beaten me there and some went out on their boats fishing. I was ready to fish by mid-arvo and I put in the big Native Watercraft pedal yak. I headed south from the boat ramp and it turned out to be the wrong direction. I went through quite a bit of distance before ending up hitting a bank of sunken trees across the bay from the northern side of the campground. It happened just like the YouTube vids – a SSC cast next to a sunken, dead tree was boofed and I landed a fat, healthy, strong Bass of around 30cm FL. That was it though. I had no other hits. Late arvo there I saw Bass rising everywhere but they will not be tempted by any lure. This was to repeat the next arvo as well. Quite frustrating! I was off the mark with one fish.



The next day saw Peachy & Jason launch around 0530h while I and the rest of the crew stayed in bed a bit longer. I was on the water by around 7-ish. I didn't head "downstream" this time and went "upstream" instead, going up the Carrow Brook arm. From my "research" on YouTube, I thought I would be mainly fishing 2 ways – SSC in the trees and slow rolling SP's over weed beds. I had a lot of problems finding weed beds but did target points with this technique.

Anyway, it was pretty slow for the first couple of hours then I caught up with Peachy & Jason who had caught a few. Up to this point, I had replaced my first SP, a 3" Slider Bass grub on 1/8th oz jig head with a smaller jig head and a Slimswimz. I finally got a hit and dropped fish on the Slimswimz. Another change saw that replaced with a blade. At first, I went with a small, bream-sized blade before I decided to change to a 1/4 oz blade, my fave size for flathead. Peachy & Jason were working some fish they found on their sounder and I was about 50m front them when I finally landed a nice Bass of around low-30's. I got a second, better fish a couple of minutes later. I ended up with 3 bass to 39cm in about 15mins. The blade, while effective, was quite damaging to the fish as they were swallowing it deep. I

got a 4th Bass then on the way back to the campground, I land another Bass, all five bass on the 1/4 oz blade...until I lost that to a snag.

By this stage I had two yak sessions and covered a fair bit of territory. My legs had had enough! On Sat arvo, Milton invited me on to his nice boat and we & Brian went out for the late arvo session. I landed a 400mm yellowbelly on a small blade while Milton landed a fine Bass on a chatterbait. My yella slammed the little blade hard!



That Sat arvo was also “Bust-off Day”. Brian and I both lost lures to big bust-offs. I landed a SSC absolutely perfectly in the fork of a tree. I had just enough time to close the bail arm before the SSC was smashed! I hooked up and what seemed like a second later, it came off. It had destroyed the clip I had the SSC on. Grrr! I’m not using standard clips anymore! Not long after this incident, Brian changed to a new blade that he had. I noted that it was a small, probably around the 1/8 oz weight and it was green & yellow. Two casts later he got mauled by another unstoppable fish which took him under some unseen underwater timber. That was it...Brian tried for a while to get the lure back but had to break off in the end.

Sunday morning saw me break camp then I went out on Barry Cole’s boat. This time, we went up the Fal Brook arm, something that I have never seen before. It was very windy on Sunday though and it was very difficult for Barry to control the boat. He landed a 37cm Bass early on, slow rolling a paddle tail plastic on a jig head. I finally landed a 37cm Bass on a large spinnerbait before it was too windy to continue. We were back by around 1130h and I left the campground soon after. Alan had left, and Jason was leaving after a last session with Steve. Milton & Brian and Barry stayed the extra night. So,..I was impressed with LSC. I would suggest that, if we were to go again, we should make it an August trip. Cheers, Tham,



Behind the amenities block on the upper level is a great camp kitchen with two electric BBQ's, two sinks, power, tables and benches so a great place to cook and eat if the weather is inclement. We used it on Sunday night after the rain stopped. You can camp fairly close by on an unpowered site, which is convenient. Other than that, just take your own camp kitchen stuff like Steve's on the previous page.

Some great photos by Brian.



In the photo above the two yellow bouys are set either side of the boat ramp, you can just see a car and trailer on the right. These bouys have yellow navigation lights on the top to guide you back in the dark. A great safety feature and I'm sure many boaties breathed a sigh of relief once they came into sight.

So guys, look what you all missed, a terrific weekend enjoyed by all and we must go back mid week if possible. Thanks boys,

Milton.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

By Alan Folkes

Last issue we set the scene for this column and introduced you to a little bug-munching hunter working high in our planted trees. This time we're getting down to ground level.

We talked about the need to promote vegetation at all levels and grasses are a particularly important group. Native grasses like Kangaroo Grass and Chloris were included in our plantings and we've also been successful in expanding remnant areas of Microlaena and Basket Grass through our weeding efforts. We've also experimented with scattering grass seed collected from the wider area to supplement our efforts.

I feel like we're making good progress.

But what about the Lovegrass! Anyone who's ever done any bushcare work has probably been exposed to African Lovegrass. It's a ubiquitous weed grass that we have no shortage of.

In fact, some people walking into our site may think we've been negligent because Lovegrass lines both sides of the road through our planted area.

No need to fear for our bushcare cred – this was a planned move.

We've left these weed grasses in place for a good reason. That Lovegrass is actually providing valuable eco-services until we can expand our areas of native grass sufficiently to do the same jobs.

One of these services is pretty simple in that the tall Lovegrass discourages any drivers on site from parking on top of our regen and planting areas – it also serves to keep most pedestrian traffic on the road. Another is that it controls erosion – whilst this area looks pretty flat, the track actually becomes a bit of a water channel during heavy rain and the Lovegrass puts a limit on the area subject to erosion.

The final reason gets back to our small birds. We have a few different finches on site. As a novice bird guy I've photographed Chestnut-breasted Mannikins, Double-barred Finches and Red-browed Finches on site. It's this last bird that is our Bird of the Month.

All these finches "LOVE" grass seeds and, if you don't believe that, have a close look at what's in the mouth of the bird on the right. Hopefully we'll convert him to native grasses one day.



Till next time.

QUINTREX RENEGADE 420 TS - EVINRUDE

50HP E-TEC REVIEW

After owning a secondhand Stacer 399 Proline Angler for three years with a 30HP two stroke pre-mix engine, I decided to upgrade and look for a slightly larger boat with better rough water performance, more room with either an injected two stroke or four stroke engine. I grew tired of mixing the fuel and the exhaust smoke particularly when idling along downwind. There are many excellent aluminum boats manufactured in Australia, but in the end, I decided to go with a Quintrex 420 Renegade. I'm sure this boat has turned the 4.3 aluminum boat market upside down. With an unheard of 2.06 metre beam, 3mm side and bottom sheets, twin side pockets, live bait tank, tackle box holder, rear step and rail, self-draining anchor well, carpeted floor, lots of storage space under the forward casting platform and the great riding blade hull the boat is loaded with excellent features. It's tough, stable and very dry in the rough stuff.

I am 77 years young so it was important to have the trailer set up so I could drive off and on at the boat ramp on my own. The trailer was optioned with three sets of flippers guides and a walkway. The flipper guides are fitted to the three-main trailer cross members and guide the boat accurately right down the trailer centerline. In addition, I have fitted a spare wheel just in front of the bow on a bracket so I use this as a step up to board and leave the boat thus making launching and retrieving very easy. In fact, I haven't used the walkway so far as you don't need to muck about and winch the boat on. The flipper guides aren't expensive so I would recommend anyone considering this boat to order them. After a day on the water you just want to get the boat on the trailer as quickly as possible and of course not hold up others at the boat ramp.

I decided on a 50HP Evinrude E-Tec, which is the maximum HP rating for this boat. It's an oil & fuel injected twin cylinder motor with great low-down torque and it launches the hull onto the plane very quickly. The motor gives outstanding performance and fuel economy, and there is absolutely no evidence of oil smoke like my old boat. At 15 knots the motor consumes on average a litre every 3.5 kilometres depending on conditions and load. For me it's usually one or two up so that's pretty amazing for a twin cylinder 863cc two stroke. I decided on a tiller steer to leave more room for fishing and general accommodation. The motor also comes as standard with a stainless-steel propeller and has an internal 1.9 litre oil reservoir under the cover. Oil use is minimal as the engine computer varies the oil injection ratio depending on engine speed and service costs are lower as there's no oil or oil filter to be replaced and of course less moving parts.

My wife and I often go cruising so I leave the rods at home. We pack some lunch and spend



the day on the water. We live just two kilometres from the boat ramp at Melrose Park on the Parramatta River so our patch is Sydney Harbour and tributaries. A great expanse of water with terrific boating opportunities and lots to see if you just potter about.

I also optioned a bow mount plate, Minn Kota 55lb Terrova I-Pilot, extra seat position in the forward casting platform and paint with decals. The boat looks

amazing and the tiller steer E-Tec comes in a great metallic graphite colour as opposed to the usual off white.

When buying a new boat there are many decisions to make and you really don't know the outcome until sometime later. You are unsure how it will perform, the fuel economy and so on.



I've had my boat for a while now and decided to leave writing this review until recently so I can give you an unbiased opinion of the package. I'm delighted with the boat and motor combination, and glad I decided to talk to the guys at Hunts Marine - their experience with Quintrex goes back a long way and the outcome has exceeded my expectations both in boat performance, service expertise and dealer satisfaction.

Cheers & happy boating,

Milton 2019

Hawkesbury/Nepean



Bass Catch

19-20 OCTOBER 2019

Dear Members & Friends,

Its that time of year ! Bass Sydney's Hawkesbury-Nepean Bass Catch is on again! The dates are October 19 and 20. Camping from 2pm on Friday the 18th of October. It's always a fun occasion, so come join us and support our club and NSW Fisheries.

Please register via our website. This link is Live and ready:

<http://www.basssydney.com/index.php/bass-catch>

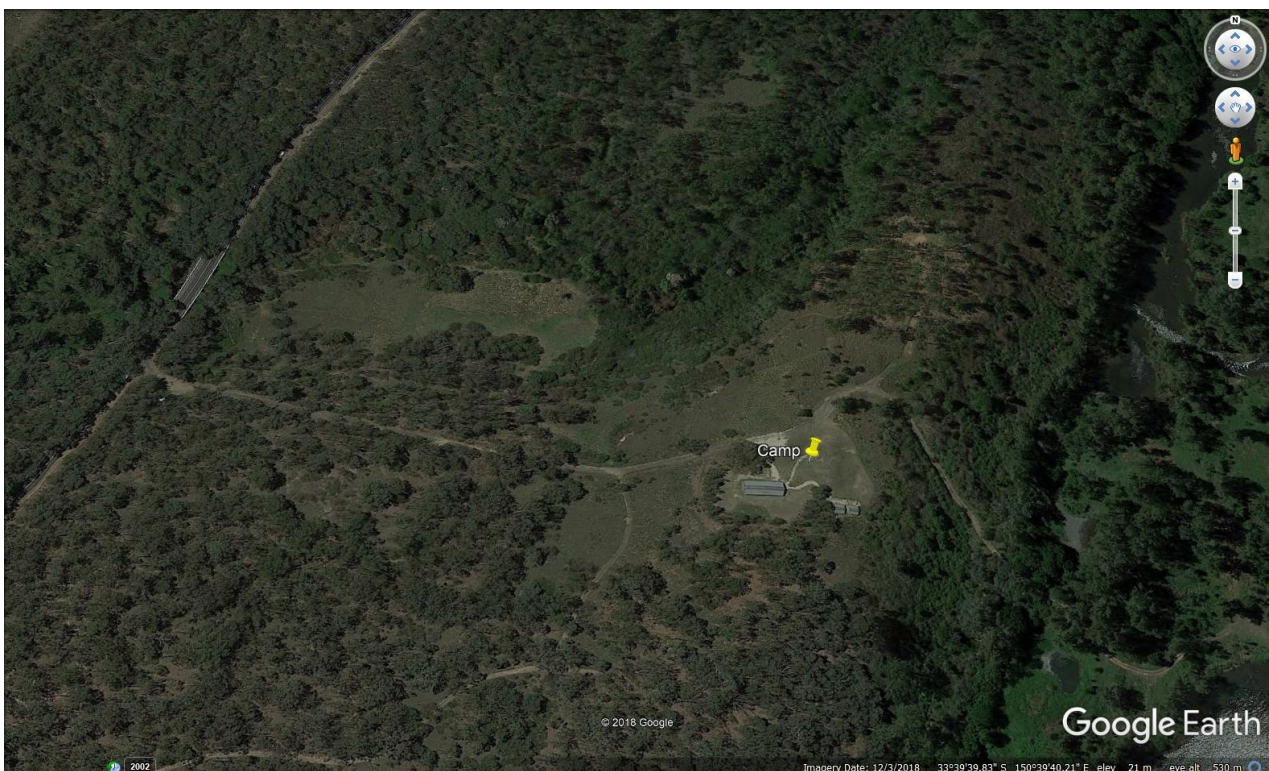
Campsite:

- Our campsite will be at Shaws Farm in Yellomundee Recreational Park, Hawkesbury Road, Hawkesbury Heights. Turn left into a clearing just after Shaws Creek and stop at the locked gate. A combo lock number will be provided upon registration. Please make sure you relock the gate behind you.
- If you wish to camp, please advise during the registration process. Details & directions will follow.
- Camping will be free of charge for those attending the Bass Catch
- Camping Friday and / or Saturday nights
- As always, camping is not mandatory.
- Food and drinks are BYO. Please bring your own camp stove, utensils and water.

- **Briefing & Catch Cards:**
- Briefing for Bass Catch newbies will be conducted during our GM at Northmead Bowling Club on Tuesday, 8/10/19 at 7.30pm in the meeting room, or at the campsite on Friday evening.

As always, Catch Cards will be issued at either the GM or at the campsite
Have a great time and I hope to see you there!

Derek Sonter , Bass Catch Officer, Bass Sydney



Shaw's Farm camping area and shelter along with toilets are shown above.
Hawkesbury Road is on the left.





Don't Forget! ...

the next meeting is at

**Northmead Bowling, Recreation & Sporting Club,
166 Windsor Rd Northmead**

in the Board Room if available.

**If not, it will be somewhere in the general club area opposite the bar
at**

7 -30pm on Tuesday 8 October 2019



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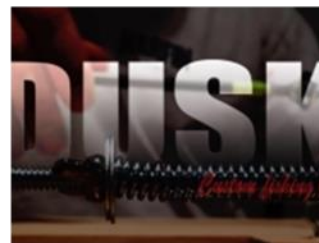
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