



Hunter Valley Fly Fishing Club.com.au

2017 Dec Newsletter

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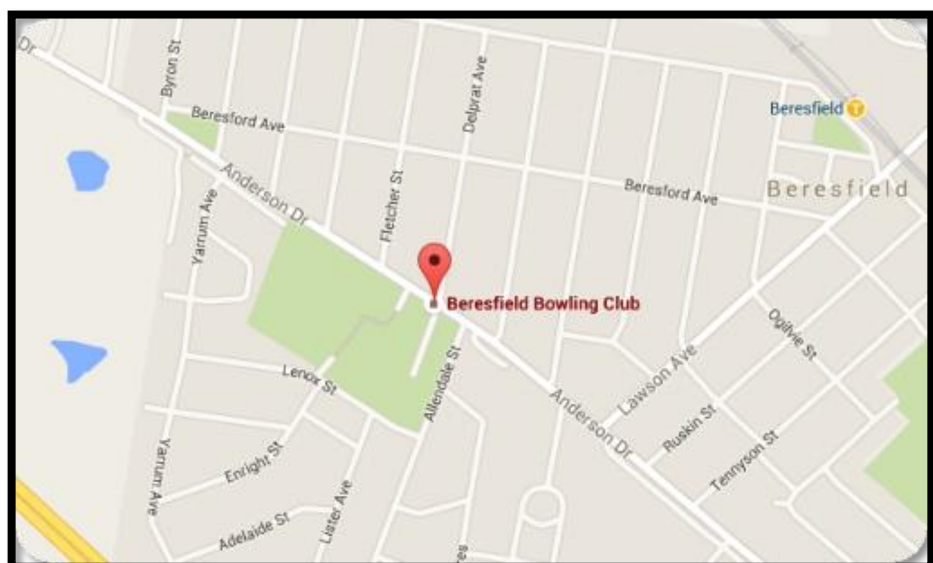
Jeff Yates

Noel King

Rob Probert

Hunter Valley Fly Fishing Club meets on
the first Wednesday of each month at:-

Beresfield Bowling Club
Anderson Drive
Bersefield
At 6.30pm



Editor's comments

Jeff Yates



Its Christmas again, as if you need reminding, with the barrage of advertising, the commercial sector don't want you to forget. It is also a great time to be fishing. The yellowbelly love the humid, warm days with a high barometer, the cod are fresh from their love making and have only food on their minds; but I will probably target trout at Lithgow as I head over to Kandos for a week to have Christmas with my Dad. The Thompson Creek trout are on mudeyes at the moment and if you haven't experienced the large supercharged trout from that waterway, then you haven't lived. Just need a packed lunch and a good headlamp to get to the back of the dam.

Our overseas member, Matt Jordan, has sent through a great report of a fly fishing trip to southern Texas. I'm not sure if he had as much fun fishing as I had reading his informative report, but I look forward to further installments in the future as he comes to grips with the Texas fish.

Darren reports on the progress of the bass stocking program, and as usual keeping us all abreast of our clubs activities.

Until the new year.....

Travel safely and tight lines



MERRY FISHMAS

President's Report



G'day members,
Welcome all to the last Newsletter of the year.
Good news was delivered at December's meeting. Lawrence notified us of the club's successful application for this year's grant from Glen Corp which greatly contributes towards our annual stocking of Bass in St Clair. For those that may not be aware, after losing his job last year, Lawrence started his own business as an electrician working around the local areas as well as making regular work sojourns to Lithgow. Despite his hectic work schedule, Lawrence still managed to work through the exhaustive application form required to apply for this year's grant. I would like to acknowledge Lawrence's efforts and congratulate him on a job well done. Your efforts are greatly appreciated, thank you very much.

One-time member Matt Jordan is currently working/studying in the US Lone Star state at the University of Texas. Enjoy Matt's ramblings on his fly fishing exploits abroad. Matt makes reference to a Bass falling for a Senko Worm rig and says for fly purists to "shield your eyes". But good news for the fly purists, I found a pattern called the Wacky Wobbler that shows how to tie a Senko Worm Fly.

Please note that the Club Calendar has some ideas for outings with dates yet to be advised. The first outing for the year is fly tying at the Blackburn's on the 20th January, tying saltwater flies for the Hawks Nest outing and reveling in the sumptuous spread Lawrence and Cherie prepares.

Well the year has almost drawn to an end. Thanks to all the club members for your patronage throughout the year and I look forward to fishing with you all in 2018. I would like to wish you all and your families a Very Merry Christmas and a Safe, Prosperous and Happy New Year.

Scruffy flies and big fish.

Darren Foster
President, HVFFC 2017/18

2018 calendar



Month	Date	Venue/Event	Trip Master	Contact Number
January	20 th	Saltwater Fly Tying with Lawrence & Cherie	Lawrence B.	0432989797
February	07 th	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
February	16 th , 17 th , 18 th	Hawks Nest - Saltwater	Tom Jones	0406662713
February				
March	07 th	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
March	10 th	Forster Fly Muster – Day Trip	Darren	0413392774
March				
April	04 th	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
April	TBA	Windamere?	Chris Moloney	0422144382
April				
May	02 nd	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
May				
May				
June	06 th	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
June	TBA	Lake St Clair - Bass		
June				
July	04 th	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
July	TBA	Lake St Clair - Bass		
July				
August	01 st	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
August	10 th , 11 th , 12 th	Swansea Salmon Slam		
August	TBA	RISE Film Festival – Bero Bowlo	Darren	0413392774
September	05 th	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
September	TBA	Hastings	Lawrence	0432989797
October	3 rd	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
October				
November	TBA	Club AGM Meeting @ 5.30pm	All	
November				
December	5 th	Club Meeting at Bero Bowlo	All	
December	TBA	Christmas Dinner	Lawrence/Cherie	



BEATING MY OWN DRUM

Matt Jordan

Everything's bigger in Texas: the trucks, the hats, the BBQ, the burritos, the guns, and the fish. Ok, so that last one may not be strictly true, but there certainly are fish to be caught in the lone-star state, and some of them don't mind eating flies. Although I technically moved to Austin Texas to take a research job at the university, the idea of expanding my angling horizons was never too far from my mind, and so it was that I hopped a plane with the bare minimum of essentials from home, including 3 conventional reels, an 8wt fly rod, three fly reel spools, two boxes of flies and a tying vice, bound for foreign fishy horizons.



Fly purists shield your eyes! A largemouth that fell to a Senko worm worked on the bottom.

Austin itself presents reasonable fishing options for an inland city, with the Colorado river wending its way through the middle of town and several rivers within a short drive. The primary target in these waters is bass (of the phony American type), with populations of largemouth, Guadalupe, striped, and white bass available in most rivers. There are also good populations of catfish, and sunfish, which I suspect would make for good

sport on a 4wt or lighter. My efforts in town have been focused on Lady Bird Lake, a dammed section of the Colorado river right in the middle of downtown, which holds clever urban bass in reasonable numbers. At the time of writing I'm yet to crack a Texas bass on fly, though I've recently discovered they don't mind eating soft plastics, and have been busy tying up some worm and crayfish patterns, so watch this space!

In the course of perusing the fly fishing options on offer in Texas, one non-bass species kept cropping up: redbfish. Technically known as red drum, these fish are the only member of the genus *Sciaenops* and belong to the same family as jewfish (*Sciaenidae*). A hard fighting and good eating fish, reds have been on the angling radar for a while, but their popularity as a fly fishing target has exploded in recent years, and I must say, with good reason. After a couple of weeks of humming and haring, I decided to bite the bullet, head to the salt, and make the most of being in a great foreign land.

Having set my sights on the target, the next question was where to go. There seems to be two options in this part of the country, fishing for juvenile fish (up to about 60 cm) in Laguna Madre in Southwest Texas, or jumping the border to fish the Louisiana marshes for bull red (over about 70cm). In the end, the (relative) proximity and state pride of Laguna Madre won out, and I hired a car, booked a guide, tied some flies (the Borski slider is purportedly a solid option), and made plans for a weekend road-trip.



Birth of a Borski Slider

Laguna Madre is a hypersaline lake formed between the Texas coast and Padre Island around 3000 years ago. With an average depth of 3', the warm shallow waters make it an attractive breeding ground for all manner of creatures, including fish, migratory waterfowl, and drunken college students on spring break. In addition to redfish, other angling targets include

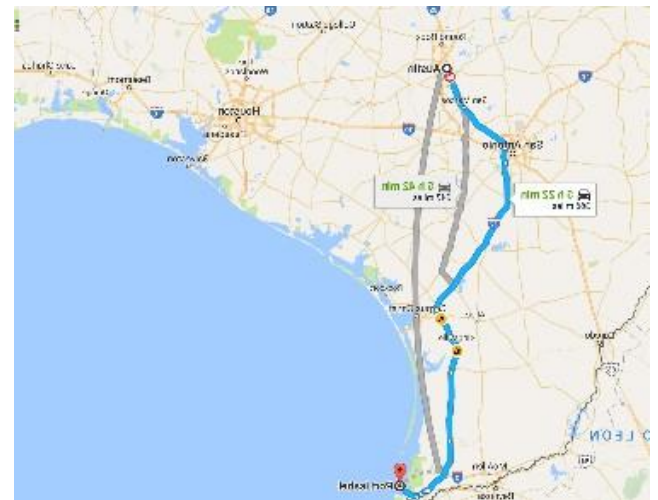


Sunrise over the lagoon

black drum, seatrout, ladyfish, and the occasional juvenile tarpon. The ocean side offers larger redfish, snapper (not the same as the ones we have at home) and a better shot at a tarpon, though low visibility and a lot more water between fish makes flyfishing the ocean side a tougher prospect.

After an hour and a half wait for my hire car I hit the highway. Having not

driven at all for almost 6 months, and not having driven on the right side of



the road in 9 months, I was a little nervous. Fortunately I had 5 and a half hours of driving to get re-acclimated to road tripping, with the dulcet tunes of country music, Mexican accordion, and fire-and-brimstone radio preachers to keep me company. As an aside, if you're interested in seeing the scenery between Central Texas and South Texas I suggest you just drive an hour out of Austin and imagine there are a few more palm trees, you'll have the same experience and save yourself a 10 hour round trip.

Pulling into the basic but clean motel that was to be my base for the trip, I had time for a quick beer at the restaurant, a shower, and a last-minute gear check before bed. The weapon of choice for this trip was my TFO BVK 8wt loaded with a floating line on a cheap Wildfish reel that had no business being this close to the ocean. Knots and hook-points were tested, flies were lovingly appraised, and fishy dreams were had to the soothing hum of a V8 air-conditioner.

The next morning I drove over to South Padre Island, the vast lagoon stretching away to North. Arriving at the boat ramp I met up with Eric Glass who was to be my guide for the day, a

quiet (by American standards) and amicable Texan who's been fishing the lagoon for around 20 years. After quick introductions and some reassurances that my dodgy casting would be enough to get me onto some fish, we headed out into the predawn glow.

Despite its lack of depth, Laguna Madre is a big body of water, and we motored for a solid 45 minutes before Eric decided it was worth having a cast. Drifting over the first flat of the morning it was evident just what a productive ecosystem the lake is, in addition to the scores of sheepshead and ladyfish milling about (plentiful but not desirable), the lake bottom was a veritable moonscape of divots and hollows, testament to the small invertebrates which support this food chain. I was fishing a Borski slider I had tied (I actually think this could be a good pattern for Aussie bass, some field testing could be in order), and although I can't say it matched the hatch of anything in particular, it did look damn fishy. We spotted a few redfish tailing, but after 10 minutes of them snubbing my fly and spooking, Eric made the call to move on, he assured me that until we knew it was going to be a tough day we were better off looking for more accommodating fish. The next spot was more of the same, a few redfish and black drum cruising around, but none showing much inclination to take a haphazardly chucked fly, and so we moved on.

By the time we reached spot number three I was starting to worry that redfish might be a little more discerning than I had been led to believe. This spot had masses of black drum cruising in pods of 4 or 5, heads down sifting through the silt. Although black drum are a viable fly target, their small mouths and head-down attitude when feeding means that casts have

to be accurate and predictive of their trajectory, but more on that later. As the black drum began to thin out we started to spot some more redfish, and although I was yet to see one up close, it was getting easier to differentiate my target from the other species it shares the flats with. A few minutes into our drift Eric calmly alerted me to the presence of a medium sized red slowly cruising towards the boat. Entirely too many false casts later I landed the fly about foot in front of the fish, gave it a short strip, and watched in surprise as the fish turned and inhaled it. Through my shock I managed to remember to strike, and the fish took off. Without any real structure on the flats, one can afford to let the fish take line until it can be fought from the reel. It also appears that they're not all that adept at throwing a hook, so once they're hooked you can relax a bit and enjoy the fight (not that I knew that at this point). The fight was spirited, but not amazing, some strong runs and changes of direction, but nothing like trying to haul an Aussie salmon in against a stiff current. After a few minutes of playing the fish and grinning maniacally, a healthy little redfish came to the side of the boat and obligingly let us lift it in. In fact, these must be the most polite fish in the ocean, they have no spines and go completely still while you unhook and photograph them, before taking off like a rocket when released.

Following that boost in confidence, things started to get a little easier, plus I was learning to recognise redfish and anticipate where my fly needed to be. The next fish to come to hand was an apparently rare spotless individual. Thereafter followed a few more fish around the 50-60cm mark, some of which found their way into the esky.



Top, First blood and squeaky clean

After a few more fish on the Borski I decided to see whether redfish like bass vampires, after all, it is vaguely shrimp looking. The fish were interested, and I got a few strikes (including from the largest fish I sighted), but for some reason the hook didn't stick. Eric suggested that the large eyes and relatively small hook were causing the vampire to bounce out of the fish's mouth, in any case, I switched to crab pattern and left the vampire with Eric for more field testing.

Starting the drift again I decided to have a crack at the black drum, given their feeding habits, I figured they might be more receptive to a crab pattern twitched under their nose. Through some miracle of wind speed, current and luck I landed the fly about an inch in front of a feeding drum,

gave it a twitch, and without missing a beat the fish slurped it down. Now I've never tried to fight a small piece of farm machinery on an 8wt before, but I imagine it's a similar experience to trying to land a black drum. The fish sat sideways in the current and chugged along in low gear while I tried to winch it in, still, once it came to the boat it was also remarkably polite.



Like a tasty piscine bulldozer

From here it was more redfish, which were also more than happy to eat the crab pattern. I also got a strike from a nice seatrout, but the hook didn't stick. Another half a dozen fish or so later the cloud cover was becoming more consistent, making sight casting much harder, so we pulled up stumps and tried targeting seatrout in faster flowing water. Apparently this is hot or cold fishing, there's either a school there or there's not, so after 10 minutes with no interest on a deep Clouser we decided to head back towards the ramp with one more stop on the way.





Previous page extra spots and one spot, average achiever



Ankle deep on a heron

About halfway back we stopped off at a couple of low sand islands. As well typically harbouring some larger fish, these islands offered a slightly different style of fishing in targeting fish feeding in the weedy island fringes, and so is

slightly less reliant on the sun to spot fish. The fish we came across were indeed on average larger than those on the flats, but also less numerous and more spooky, often taking off before we poled into casting range. Nevertheless, we eventually found a slightly stupider redfish to close out the day on.



A look that says “this is fun, but I’m almost sick of catching fish now”

So with a bag of fish, minor sunburn, and sore casting arm, we headed back to the ramp, my fly-fishing itch satisfied for the time being. If anyone finds themselves in that part of the world I strongly recommend the services of Eric Glass, he was knowledgeable, passionate, and willing to pole me around all day (and it was a long day) without ever picking up a rod himself. He also ties his own flies for clients to use if you're less hell-bent on catching fish on one of your own flies, as well as filleting the fish that I brought home. On a side note, I also suggest checking out Los Tortugos back in Port Isabell for some extremely fresh gulf seafood for dinner, but you will probably need some basic Spanish if you want to do more than just point at the menu and smile.

I won't bore you with details of the drive home, except to say that I stopped at the cultural mecca that is Buckee's, essentially the best and worst of Texas wrapped up and served as a truck stop.

Lucky "taco" is the same in English and Spanish.

I also stopped at both a Basspro and Cabellas and spent too much time and money, but I'm sure you can all relate to that affliction.



A gift for any occasion, powerful, yet feminine

Retired flies, little worse for wear



All in all an enjoyable trip, and I'm glad I made the effort to get down there, they may not be Florida tarpon, but Texas redfish are definitely not to be snubbed. The lagoon is quite beautiful, and it was also nice remembering what the ocean smells like. As well as the memories and a commemorative Buccee's T-shirt, I now have a freezer of some of the best fish I have ever eaten.

Maybe I should see how the Louisiana fish compare, in the interests of thoroughness...



Redfish, final form



BASS RELEASE

Darren Foster



Here are some interesting facts:

- *Bass need approximately 1/3 salt content for spawning*
- *The eggs need the salt content to develop and grow*
- *Newly hatched fry can tolerate very low salt content*
- *Four week old fry can tolerate full fresh water*

I finally managed to get in contact with Glenn from Searle Aquaculture, seems he's been very busy fulfilling orders for Silver Perch. They have had no rain with most of the falls further north.

Glen and I first talked about the possibility of mid-November for the release but as it turned out they would have been very tiny. Glenn has informed me that there is currently an abundance of food in the ponds and the fingerlings are going to be a good size. He will be sending the samples to fisheries early next week but doesn't expect to get the test results until after Christmas or in the new year. At this stage we are looking at releasing the fingerlings around mid-January 2018.

I will keep you all informed as more news develops. These pictures are of the 2016-17 release.



SNOWY MOUNTAINS FISHING 2017





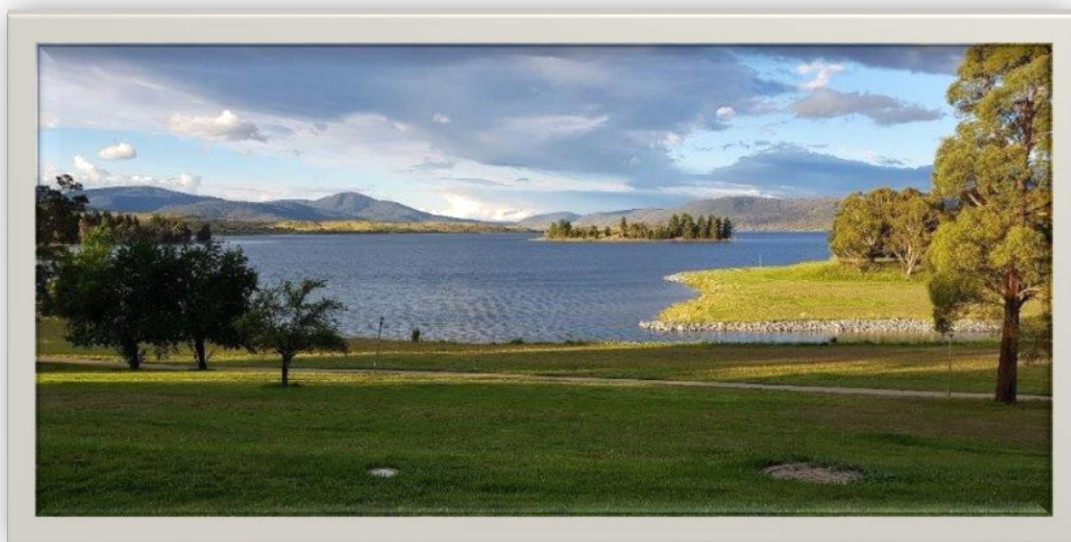
Fishy Pics



Lovely little Jindabyne rainbow



Scape Pics



Jindabyne at its best

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*Tie flyer extraordinaire, check out Paul's website
for your favourite fly*