

Through the NCA's Lake User Group (LUG), an update of the stocking for November 2018 was that stocking would occur in the first week of January 2019. I used the opportunity to not only observe where the fish were going, but also as a chance for engaging the various participants on Friday the 4th.



Fish Stocking

Initial advice was that stocking was occurring at Yerrabi Pond, Lake Ginninderra, and Lake Burley Griffin, and of yellowbelly. Additionally, murray cod were also stocked in Lake Tuggeranong, and over by Isabella Plains, and a pond over near Bonython (Batten Dam?) where carp had recently been removed. This fish were all small fingerlings, so will take a few years to reach fishable size. The average size of the yellowbelly was 0.5g (2000 per kg). Unlike the Queanbeyan river stocking a few years back, no cormorants or other likely predators were spotted in the areas used.



Yellowbelly fingerlings



Murray cod

The survival rate was good, and Noel from Murray Darling Fisheries (Wagga Wagga) was quite cautious in his driving. Out of the near 60,000 fingerlings, I saw less than ten fingerlings that were dead upon release, so quite good. The locations were Yerrabi Close (that padlock near the BMX track had been changed and couldn't be accessed), Didhams Close boat ramp, Black Mountain Peninsular Boat Ramp, Tuggeranong Sea Scouts, and about halfway up the pond off Drakeford Drive.

Waterway	Stocked
Yerrabi Pond	3000 yellowbelly
Lake Ginninderra	15000 yellowbelly
Lake Burley Griffin	27300 yellowbelly
Lake Tuggeranong	5000 murray cod
Isabella Pond	About 1900 cod, 2800 yellowbelly
Batten Dam	About 100 cod, 200 yellowbelly

Native Fish Availability

Speaking with Noel, I mentioned the problem accessing fish for the NSW DPI Dollar 4 Dollar program. Noel noted there wasn't a shortage of fish, just their problem with the conditions being imposed on the hatcheries, and he said six hatcheries had voluntarily pulled out of the program. He said the Victorian conditions of the contract were fine, and it was great for their business. I noted that CRFA had some funding set aside for native fish stocking, and he reiterated that there wasn't a shortage, and even with the Victorian purchase, he has 7000 unallocated murray cod fingerlings if there is interest from Capital region clubs. His email address is mdfish@ozemail.com.au, phone 02 6922 9447, (m) 0419600 926, (f) 02 6922 9448.



Noel weighing and putting yellowbelly into his supplied buckets. Above is his rig – cod were in the tray, yellowbelly in the trailer, with the gas bottles keeping the fish aerated.

ACT Government Engagement

It was also a good chance to catch up with the relevant people involved. Having recently done a boat ramp survey for the LUG to try and improve fishing access in the next 5 years, going to Didhams Close and Black Mountain Peninsular was a good opportunity to point out their condition and lack of mooring/tie-off areas to Peter Buetel.

I also had a chat with Mark Jokumsen(?) on the fish stocking strategy, and noted that ACT are only stocking the urban lakes, not the rivers. This may be a point of interest when the carp virus is removed, as carp are in the creeks and rivers, not just the urban lakes.

The Didhams Close release was used for a press opportunity, attracting the ministers. Minister Mick Gentleman was happy for a chat, and commented that the fish released from Upper Stranger into Lower Stranger due to the contractor error, would be restocked at no cost (to the ACT government – I'm assuming it's being funded by the contractor). He was also very keen on the KHV-II virus release, and was interested to here

that recreational fishers were eager to be involved and help with fish spotting and clean-up efforts. I also noted that with some funding for trout, there was an opportunity to back-fill the carp with trout, noting their abundance and price, which he was quite keen on.

Acting Chief Minister Yvette Berry was also quite keen for a chat. She noted she keeps looking at taking her family to the Carp-Out, but often finds she is already committed, so maybe an early advice of the date may get her along. She also noted her children had just been down the coast catching a few flounder, so also interested in a bit of saltwater action. I took the opportunity to discuss some of the other community engagement and social benefits of recreational fishing, such as the Casting For Recovery, fly casting lessons, junior programs, female participation in many of the events, Gone Fishing Day, and managing habitat. I also noted the recent disbursement of funds from CRFA to support the stocking and habitat.



Lots of interest in the display tank Mark brought along

Jason Middleton

President, CRFA