

What does your organisation do?

- Canberra Anglers Association - actually a club of individual anglers, the 'association' reflects the language of when we were formed in 1945. We are the oldest fishing club in the ACT. Whilst there is a high focus on fly fishing for trout, we do encourage angling in all its forms and the protection of this activity.
- The CAA has an active angling program of fishing trips most months, virtual monthly fly tying sessions and a social/education get-together each month with internal or external guest speakers.
- One of the highlights of the year is when CAA conducts an annual, free, fly casting instructional program in the Parliamentary Triangle over three Sunday mornings during September each year. It's a great opportunity to receive free fly-casting instruction from club members, including some certified fly casting instructors (e.g. <http://capitalflycasting.com/>)
- The club seeks to keep members, and the angling public, informed on angling issues via our website (including news blog) and Facebook page.
- We promote treating the environment (flora and fauna) with respect...yes even carp, being safe whilst fishing, eg snakes and wading in high water, ethics and protocol on/around the water – land access, fences, interfacing with other anglers
- We reflect on the human health aspects of participating in fishing – good exercise, and healthy food if you choose to eat your fish. Reflect on fact that many fishers enjoy a day on the water or wading up a river even if they don't catch anything. You could reflect on the mindfulness value of fly fishing – the rhythm, hand eye coordination, placing the fly, reading the river, thinking like a fish, plus all the other things you observe while on the water.
- We encourage diversity within our fishing fraternity.
- Fishing is a very affordable activity. You don't have to start with high end equipment. You can even start fly fishing with a combination kit for a few hundred dollars that will provide an opportunity to catch even the largest trout.

How has angling in this region of Australia changed over the past 5-10 years?

- ACT stopped stocking trout and focused on native fish stocking. Native fishing stocking has been great and we have seen some real benefits in our local lakes. We would encourage trout stocking in appropriate areas as fishing for trout is still the preference for most fly fishers.
- From an environmental perspective the change in weather/climate has impacted on the quality of angling in the region. The recent droughts have badly effected on streams, only to have floods make access to streams problematic and survival of some fish challenging. Snowy lakes suffered a huge decline a few years ago, but have come back strongly this year. During the hotter times of year, targeting of carp as a sports fish is a great option.
- From a social perspective, there has been a huge uptake in the ACT region of recreational angling. The unfortunate consequence is that many of these new entrants are unaware of some of the protocols and indeed laws related to angling. Crowding into popular fishing spots (for instance the spawning run on the Eucumbene) has on occasions introduced an element of anti-social behaviour. Many take beyond their catch limit, and indeed are unaware that spawning trout are poor quality on the table. Some newcomers are even unaware of the NSW requirement for fishing 'licences', catch and size limits.

Since the introduction of fish population sustainability measures (e.g. National Carp Control Plan), is it expected that the future Canberra public will be able to enjoy fishing locally?

- The CAA doesn't have a formal opinion on the NCCP. We do understand that it will be challenging to implement but we do encourage it as Carp do a lot of damage to the waterways. Whilst Carp are with us, we will target them because they are certainly a challenge to catch on fly and can be good fighters. They also provide a good fishing target species during the hot summer months when it would be stressful for our traditional target fish the trout.

What places in the region could anglers go to and not worry about damaging the local environment, but catch decent-sized and edible fish?

Respectful of land access, clean up rubbish

- It's really important that any users familiarise themselves with the open and closed fishing season, and prohibited fishing rivers - <https://www.environment.act.gov.au/nature-conservation/fish/recreational-fishing-in-the-act/recreational-fishing-in-the-act-factsheet-english>
- The Canberra lakes are a great place to fish and are so handy to many different areas of Canberra. The lakes offer a variety of great sporting fish including the beautiful Murray Cod, golden perch, redfin (English perch) and Carp. I have personally caught all three types of fish and they are great fun. The lake holds some really large fish with Murray Cod greater than 1 meter. You can fish all methods – fly, bait and lure. All are good fun. The local lakes have good stocks of natives (cod and golden perch) which grow to significant sizes.
- WRT edible fish – all the fish in the local region can be eaten. Prior to eating any fish we recommend the fishers check water quality where they are catching the fish. While carp do predominate, many folk are aware of how to cook this maligned fish. DPI NSW have even published a cook book. Some people even comment that Redfin are the best freshwater table fish. People should be aware that there are bag and size limits for Murray Cod, Golden Perch and Trout. Obviously trout can be eaten. The club promotes catch and release but also respects fishers desire to take home a catch for a well-earned meal.
- We also have some great rivers around Canberra with the Murrumbidgee being the main. The best thing is to visit the fishing tackle shops to get the best and latest advice – Boss Outdoors and Tackleworld in Fyshwick are great sources of information.
- Googong Dam is a fabulous fishery, especially if you have a kayak or electric powered boat.
- Canberra is surrounded by some of the best trout water in Australia with the Snowies only two hours away. There are a variety of rivers, creeks and lakes. Lake Eucumbene is the highest water level it's been for many years and is providing some fantastic fishing at the moment with many access points available to the public. But before hitting the water, anglers are reminded of their obligation to familiarise themselves with local fishing regulations including licence requirements, fish size and bag limits and closed fishing seasons. The NSW DPI Fisheries have an 'Angler Access Website' (Google the term) gives guidance on access points.

Are there any fishing spots in the region that are underutilised and should be appreciated more?

- The Canberra lakes as discussed above.
- It is worth mentioning that the late Bryan Pratt (<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6002764/tributes-flow-for-canberra-fishing-icon-bryan-pratt-after-his-death/>) was a thought leader for fishing in the Canberra region and was instrumental in opening up Googong Dam for recreational fishing. The CAA would encourage the ACT Government to consider opening some of the other dams, for example Cotter Dam, for recreational fishing and reintroducing stocking of trout in suitable ACT waterways. We understand the dams hold excellent trout. We believe there are concerns about providing access to town water reservoirs, but this concern has been successfully managed in many other regions. The Club believes that promoting the ACT as region with great trout and native fishery would certainly attract visitors to the ACT rather than just driving through it on the way to the Snowy Mountains.