

Monaro Acclimatisation Society Inc

President's Report 2023

As I reflect back on the substantial number of President's Reports I have given, I note that the year preceding this report is underpinned by the best fishing season I have experienced during my time as President of the MAS. We have seen an abundance of water and the fish have responded accordingly. Rivers and lakes have featured positive reports from happy anglers, and I hope that all MAS members have been able to get out and enjoy the fruits of our stocking labours and the significant natural recruitment we have seen across our fishing region.

Our stocking program proceeded as normal this year, but funding for improvements to the Gaden Hatchery visitors centre, hatching shed and staff accommodation has been approved and this means that next year's allocation will need to be modified due to the disruption of the working environment while the project is completed. Rod and I will continue to work with the hatchery and branches to make the most of what will be a limited production run of fish for next season.

To prepare the hatchery for the work a substantial number of the large adult display fish and brood stock were released into a number of waterways. Some of these fish were close to 10kg.

While there has been a lot going on as well as the fishing, I am pleased to note that for many of the projects the MAS is involved in have progressed to a point where they are showing real promise and significant headway has been made.

This past season saw more trial runs of sub-adult rainbow trout stocking in Eucumbene and Jindabyne. Stocking occurred in March 2022 and January 2023. Again, the stocking was carried out with the help of MAS and non-MAS volunteers. 10,000 for Eucumbene and 20,000 for Jindabyne at each stocking were loaded into bins and transported by boats across the lakes. Being able to call upon dedicated trout anglers who may not belong to the MAS has been a great help in being able to scatter these fish across the lakes. I thank all the volunteers who have assisted and it is pleasing to note that after each event I get more enquiries from anglers who would like to help the MAS.

For those members who wonder if these sub-adults are making an impact on the fishing in the lakes, I can offer my personal experience to date. Each of these stocked sub-adults is tagged with a coded wire tag placed in the nose cavity.

This coded wire tag (CWT) is about the thickness of a human hair and 1mm long and they cannot be detected by anglers, but they can be detected by a portable CWT detector. I was able to get one of these detectors last year and I have used it on every Eucumbene rainbow I have caught to date. My results reveal that these sub-adults are about 10% of my catch to date, so they are surviving and they are reaching impressive sizes. Now my catch does mean much in terms of a general fishery but it does give me faith that what we are doing is having a positive impact.

While my time at Jindabyne has been much less, the reports from last year's rainbow spawning run and this year's fishing results coming from that lake indicates that we might be seeing the rainbow population in that lake improving significantly.

It was also pleasing to see that 1500 of these sub-adults were also released into Googong Dam in late January this year. That stocking complimented a smaller release of larger adults in late 2022.

Late last year we saw another Trout Cod stocking event in the Goodradigbee River. Unlike past years where these stockings were conducted in secret, I approached DPI and as a result the MAS was invited to the event as were the Traditional Owners of the Goodradigbee country. Bringing back native fish is important and there may be an opportunity in the not-too-distant future where a trout fisher on the Goodradigbee will be pleasantly surprised.

Our good friends at Buckenderra Holiday Village held their annual Buckenderra Challenge. Again, this catch, photo and release competition was very well attended and again proceeds from the event were donated to the MAS. I would like to thank Jana and Josh for their continued support of the MAS and the \$3,450 donated from the competition is very much appreciated.

On 29 November 2022 I attended a meeting with DPI, Snowy Hydro, and Wedge Consultants. Wedge presented their concept plan for the trout grow-out facility to be built at Gaden which will allow the hatchery to up-scale the production of sub-adult fish. While the last MAS concept for the water supply to the facility was a pipe line from Lake Jindabyne, the plan presented at this meeting offered a recirculating system as the consultants preferred option. As it was explained to me, while there are water temperature issues with the Thredbo River, it has never ceased to flow and picking up water from a deeper hole and pumping it into the hatchery through a chiller unit is cheaper, will require less maintenance and is in line with best hatchery practice. As an aside, about a week after this meeting I read a report from Japan where the Japanese are

building a series of land-based tuna rearing ponds based on a recirculating system.

Our relationship with DPI NSW Fisheries continues to be very strong. While I have not covered all the issues we raise with Fisheries in this report, I do note that on every matter we have received a considered and genuine reply and in each instance we have been able to achieve a result that has been in line with our request. I am sure there will come a time when we disagree, but the good will that has been built to date will ensure that our strong partnership will prevail. I would like to thank Jim Harnwell and his team for the time and effort they have invested in us and the issues we bring to the table.

In 2022 I applied to the Recreational Fishing Trust on behalf of the MAS for \$30,000 funding to allow us to carry-out some track maintenance on tracks leading to popular fishing spots on Eucumbene, Jindabyne and our reserve at Paddy's Corner. Just before Christmas I was advised that our application was successful and we are now just waiting for the paperwork. When we get the funds we will be doing this in conjunction with Snowy Hydro who have agreed to go 50 / 50 with us on the project.

While I am talking about working with Snowy Hydro, I became aware of a potentially serious incident that occurred on the foreshore of Eucumbene near Middlingbank just after Christmas. An angler was trying to scale a newly erected and tightly strung netting and barb wire fence when he fell and suffered a serious injury which required him to be hospitalised. Now none of us are getting any younger and I bet we all scale fences, so what to do? I reached out to Snowy Hydro, and we are now in the process of getting some quotes through DPI for the supply of suitable stiles to assist anglers in getting over fences. This will initially be only for the offending fence at Middlingbank but it could develop into a bigger project if successful.

It is pleasing to note that the Adaminaby Branch finally received their funding for the boat ramp extension at Old Adaminaby. I note that it has taken over two years to get to this point and now with a high lake it will be some time before the work can be carried out. I congratulate Adaminaby Branch on its work in this project and I am sure anglers visiting in the future will welcome the extension when it is completed.

I would like to thank the Executive of the MAS who provide significant support to me and keep the wheel greased.

To Rod Whiteway thank you for keeping the secretarial functions and stocking process on track.

To Kerry Pfeiffer for taking on the role of Treasurer. He has brought us on-line and I am confident our financial capability will be much improved. Also for his role in keeping us abreast of the wild horses issue still unresolved in the Kosciuszko National Park.

To John Killip for keeping the website going.

To Bill Blair for representing us at NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers meetings and his work with DPI on the Angler Access website.

None of us know what the next season holds, so we should make the most of it while we can. La Nina will not last, and the predictions already suggest that next season may not be as wet as this one. But it just goes to show what happens when we have a little water, the fish respond and everything looks rosy. I hope for another la Nina year, but if not, anglers who fish in this region can rest assured that the MAS will continue to be a pro-active organisation vesting its time and energy into improving our Snowy / Monaro fishery. I wish you all well for the rest of this fishing season.

Steve Samuels

President

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4 February 2023