

# West Kunderang Recreational Retreat



## Bass Fishing



Fishing in the upper reaches of the river we now know as the Macleay has taken place for thousands of years. Freshwater fish species provided an abundant and accessible food source to the Aboriginal people of the area, and later to the Europeans who settled there.

Today, native freshwater fish populations are severely depleted and can no longer offer a sustainable food source. However, if treated with respect and managed well, they can continue to provide us with pleasure and excitement through recreational fishing.

The upper Macleay offers a haven where populations of some native fish remain healthy (among other factors this is also a result of the lack of fishing pressure they experience). In particular, that feisty predator, the Australian Bass *Macquaria novemaculeata*, is reasonably abundant in the upper Macleay.

"West Kunderang" offers excellent fishing for this species, but it is important to remember that it is so good because we are fishing in a rare haven. Two golden rules should therefore apply:

- 1. Respect the population by depleting it as little as possible.**
- 2. Protect the environment which provides their habitat.**

If these rules are kept, "West Kunderang" and the upper Macleay will continue to ensure that our grandchildren are able to experience the joy and excitement of fishing for one of the world's great freshwater sportsfish.

**Some guides to keeping the rules would be:**

*Practice catch and release where possible. This includes:*

- Closing the barbs and your hooks to ensure easy release with minimum damage.
- Handling the fish gently and with wet hands to ensure survival after release.
- Taking time to revive the fish if required (don't just throw it back in) by moving the fish gently back and forth in the water until it revives.
- Bass are a good table fish and provided a valuable food source to Aboriginal people and early settlers but please remember that there aren't many left. So if you must eat a Bass, choose a small one (e.g. around 25 cm) as they are often males. The fish you should definitely try to avoid killing are females, usually the larger fish. If you are lucky enough to hook a really big Bass, it's probably a breeding female. These fish can provide us with the fish stocks of the future, please avoid killing them if possible.

*Practice minimal impact fishing. This includes:*

- Avoiding damage to vegetation and bank structure when accessing the water.
- Retrieving lost fishing line/lures.
- Taking rubbish away with you.





## FISHING TIPS:

- Australian Bass can grow up to 4 kg. A line class between 4 to 6 kg is usual.
- Bass are fiercely territorial and voracious predators. A well placed lure will usually receive a strike. This is often territorial rather than feeding behaviour and the fish may not hook up on the first strike. Keep trying.
- Anywhere bank-side vegetation adjoins deeper water with plenty of feature is a good place to start placing lures. Also, dead trees, boulders or other features, either near the bank or in open water.
- Lures are the most exciting way to fish for Bass. Deep diving lures in the 3-4 cm length are effective.
- Bass will feed on the surface in open, shallow water towards and during dark. This is the most exciting time to fish for them. Dusk/night fishing for Bass is probably one of the world's great fishing experiences. Use a surface lure, such as a fizzer or popper. Throw out and allow it to sit for a few seconds then commence a start/stop retrieve, letting the lure sit for a few seconds each time. Hang on tight and be ready for a spectacular surface strike.
- Bass are protected under State Fisheries legislation and a bag limit of 2 per person per day, with 4 in possession at any one time, applies if you still want to keep them for the table. Only one of these fish can be over 35 cm. You can catch and release as many as you like.
- You will also need a Freshwater Fishing License. This can be obtained from Cindy on arrival at "West Kunderang".

---

## ENJOY YOUR FISHING AT "WEST KUNDERANG" PLEASE CATCH AND RELEASE

Leaflet produced with assistance of  
NSW National Parks & Wildlife.

