



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT – August 2021

A couple of days ago while sitting at the computer, a meme popped up on the screen as they do from time-to-time. It displayed a Christmas/ festive season photo with text reading (with the “F-bomb” deleted) “That’s it! Let’s put up the Christmas tree and call it a f@#%&\*+ year!”

For mine, the meme aptly described not only the events of 2021 to date, but also of 2020, when the presence of COVID 19 in the community forced both a reaction and response to it by Governments that have impacted on our personal movements, our activities, our social life and dare I say it, our freedom(s).

Whilst history will judge how, as a society, we have responded to the pandemic, the lockdowns and restrictions have certainly impacted on what we have been able to do and achieve as a collective of members of the Illawarra Fly Fishers’ Club over the past year. Club meetings and casting days have been cancelled, trips away and other social events have been cancelled and for the second straight year, the Annual General Meeting has needed to be postponed.

Despite all the doom and gloom over the past two or three months in particular whilst restrictions have been in place, it may not be apparent that there is a physical club presence. On the contrary, the Illawarra Fly Fishers’ Club and its management committee continues to function behind the scenes to ensure that when we do arrive at the end of the COVID tunnel, we are in a position to quickly take up where we abruptly left off in June of this year. The management committee continues to meet via ZOOM each month to discuss not only the necessary business, financial and social affairs that are on foot, but also the club’s statutory obligations that demand attention. Although we may not be able to physically meet, the club’s management and financial affairs still require addressing on an ongoing basis.

It has always been my view that management meetings should not be a “closed .shop”, a clique of members or some such and as such, I extend an invitation to all members to attend and actively participate at physical monthly committee meetings when we are again able to do so, or at ZOOM meetings. It is only through input from the membership and an exchange of differing ideas that the club will continue to grow and offer a meaningful and entertaining club meeting and social programme to its members.

Given the inability to meet over the past few months and late last year, communication has been the key in keeping the IFFC membership aware of club news and developments as and when they occur. With Robin Bannell unable to continue being newsletter editor late last year due to work commitments, I prepared and issued a number of “COVID 19 Bulletins” over the 2020 Christmas period that included, amongst other things, fly fishing articles I thought were interesting, club news, a few jokes and other items of interest in order to keep the Illawarra Fly Fishers’ Club messaging alive and active. However the best news of all was in February of this year when David Connon took a step forward when everyone else took two steps back and he ended up as the new newsletter editor. Jokes aside and to his credit, David rallied to the call for a new newsletter editor and I am sure that everyone has noticed the quality of production and content that David has imparted in each and every issue since taking up the post. Indeed, not only has the quality of the new

“Fly Lines” been complimented internally by Illawarra Fly Fishers Club members, but similar compliments have been forwarded by a number of representatives of other fly fishing clubs to which “Fly Lines” is distributed. My heart-felt thanks to David for volunteering to act as newsletter editor and for his service to Illawarra Fly Fishers’ Club.

David is always on the lookout for photos, trip reports, memes, cartoons or interesting articles to include in the newsletter, so if you have anything that may be of interest to members, please forward it on to David.

Our planned trips have also taken a hit over the past twelve months due to the impacts of COVID restrictions. The trip to Swansea to fish the Australian Salmon run in the channel in July was unfortunately cancelled due to restrictions on travel and this was a great disappointment to those who were to attend as the fishing can range from pretty average to sensational. One must feel for the operators of the Blacksmiths Beach Caravan Park where we were staying (and all other small businesses) who manage the park on a commission basis for the local Council. When cancelling our accommodation I asked the representative how the travel restrictions were affecting business at the park, to which she responded with a sobering “We’re stuffed”!

On a positive note the trip to Jindabyne in May went ahead although the fishing was reportedly tough.

A day trip to Shoalhaven Heads in March saw a good turnout of members chasing Flathead in the channel formed between the river and the ocean by flood waters, but again, the fish were hard to find and not all that co-operative. Peter Henderson scored a few as did Gary Batey and Michael Parkinson’s also did the trick as it constantly does.



*Michael Parkinson – Shoalhaven Heads*

Other activities that were unfortunately cancelled throughout the year were Peter Morse’s presentation at the August club meeting and his casting workshop a week or so later, participation in the Lakeside Fly Fishing Club’s “President’s Challenge” casting competition and participation in the Council of Freshwater Anglers’ Meet at Wallerawang. Fortuitously

COVID restrictions eased around Christmas time and while we were unable to hold our annual Christmas dinner and presentation at Collegians Football Club in Wollongong, we were able to come together and hold an informal Christmas luncheon at Collegians Figtree. Luckily the weather was absolutely glorious for the day and the meal for the thirty or so attendees was excellent. My thanks to Michael Parkinson for his organisation of the event and his continued contact with Collegians representatives at a time when COVID issues were well and truly afoot.



*Al Fresco Christmas Luncheon, December 2020*



As could be expected, our casting days were held as and when they were able and not only did COVID play a part in participation and the results, but also did the weather. Nonetheless, my thanks to Peter Fragiaco for co-ordinating casting each and every month and committing to setting up the casting rings for the accuracy event, the distance event markers, taking records, adjudicating some robust discussion as to whether a cast was in the ring or out and preparing a report of the annual results. Peter's report follows. Congratulations to Barry Gentle for taking out both the accuracy and distance casting events for the 2020/ 2021 season.

Despite us not being able to hold a number of monthly meetings due to COVID, when we were able our fly tying competition was well supported by members tying flies that included a Twilight Beauty, Mutant Clouser, Duracell and Plume Fly; in fact due to COVID, competition was reduced to only four flies! Congratulations to Barry Gentle who again took out the annual gong and to Peter Henderson and Michael Parkinson who tied for equal second. My thanks to our stalwart fly tying co-ordinator Kim Prehn for again selecting flies for the year, chasing people for their flies each meeting night and for recording the evening's results.

Although we have experienced lock downs for a significant part of the club year, members have still taken the opportunity to get out onto the water, cast a fly and catch a fish; some of those fish have been recorded on the "Largest Fish Register" of which a copy follows. My thanks to those anglers who have supplied details of their catches and to Phil O'Brien for again co-ordinating the Register and providing an overview which also follows. There have been some tremendous catches over the club year, both in freshwater and in the salt and I throw down the gauntlet and challenge you to better this year's results.

On the business side of the club, we continue to maintain a healthy membership of seventy five which is an astonishing number given that the Illawarra Fly Fishers' Club is a specialist social club based in a regional area. While we are able to pat ourselves on the back for having such healthy numbers, Illawarra Fly Fishers' Club needs you for it to exist and continue into the future. No matter the COVID issues of late and their impact on club activities, could I ask that you consider re-joining for the 2021/ 2022 club year to continue your association with what I consider to be a great fly fishing club and a great bunch of people and fly fisher folk.

**YOUR CLUB**



A healthy membership also leads to a healthy balance sheet and the club is fortunate to be able to meet its financial commitments as and when they fall due. My thanks to Barry Gentle for again being Treasurer for the past year, for providing clear, concise monthly reports and for keeping us “in the black”. My thanks also to Paul Dwyer for auditing the financial records in order that the club satisfies its statutory requirements. A copy of the club’s end-of-year financial accounts is freely available for review should a member wish to do so.

Success of any endeavour is dependent upon a number of factors including, but not limited to, effective management, planning and teamwork. As President of the Illawarra Fly Fishers’ Club, I am in the enviable position of being part of a management committee that comprises a number of committed members who are prepared to not only give up their own time in order to ensure the success and longevity of the club, but to provide a meeting and social programme that is meaningful and entertaining for all of its members. By any metric, I consider that your management committee has once again proven to have successfully fulfilled that aim over the past club year as best as it has been possible given the COVID issues with which we have been confronted this past year.

In addition to those committee members mentioned previously, to the following committee members I offer my sincere thanks for your participation on the management committee and for your continued service and involvement over the 2020/ 2021 club year:

- Vice President, Chris Harding - always there and always offering advice and commentary;
- Librarian, Gary Batey, for lugging the club’s library books and magazines to and from the store room each club meeting;
- Raffles Co-ordinator, Malcolm Lowe for arranging the monthly club meeting raffles and prizes and extracting everyone’s hard earned from them to buy raffle tickets;
- Web Master and Public Officer, Gary Hickson for maintaining the club’s web site and submitting statutory documentation when required; and
- the phantoms, Julian Watson and Joe Manzano, for co-ordinating the club’s Facebook page and Instagram accounts respectfully.

Whilst my thanks are extended to all committee members for their service, my special thanks must go our Secretary, Michael Parkinson, who, due to COVID, has taken on a

broader mantle than the Secretary position. Michael has arranged and chaired the committee's monthly ZOOM meetings, has liaised with Collegians Club at numerous times throughout the various phases of the COVID restrictions to confirm availability of the auditorium in its Charlotte Street building, has organised the Christmas luncheon, undertaken many other behind the scenes tasks as well as undertaking the role of Secretary.

To our guest speakers including Brett Clarke from BWC flies and our own members including Ben Carden, who spoke on his first experiences with competition fly fishing, thank you for taking the time to give your presentations to Illawarra Fly Fishers' Club.

Last, but certainly not least, on behalf of the Illawarra Fly Fishers' Club I would like to thank and gratefully acknowledge the support from:

- Collegians Rugby League Football Club for providing, at no cost, the use of the auditorium in its Charlotte Street building in order that we are able to conduct our monthly meetings and in addition, for providing vouchers for use within the club that are used as raffle prizes;
- the Compleat Angler, Sydney and in particular its Manager Adam Kearns, for donations of gift vouchers (used as raffle prizes) and discounts to IFFC members; and
- the Alpine Angler, Cooma, Highcountry Outfitters, Jindabyne and BWC Flies for providing discounts to IFFC members.

Success and longevity of the Illawarra Fly Fishers' Club is also dependent upon the membership proper and I take this opportunity to thank **you** for being a member. Nonetheless, a club is not a club unless there is participation by the membership in its activities and hence I ask that you consider participating in whatever capacity in what the Illawarra Fly Fishers' Club does, be it attendance at a club meeting or casting day, attendance at a day or weekend trip, tying a fly for the monthly fly tying competition, submitting a fish catch for the "Largest Fish" register, writing an article for "Fly Lines", submitting a photo for inclusion on the club's web site/ Facebook page or Instagram account, making a presentation on a particular fly fishing topic or volunteering for a management committee position. Participation doesn't take much, but it generates interest in the club, develops friendship(s) and friendly competition and develops a club enthusiasm or culture.

My aim and that of the management committee is to ensure that this club provides you with the necessary tools, skills, information and enthusiasm to enjoy your time on the water, thereby increasing your skill set and subsequently, your fly fishing success. I trust that the Illawarra Fly Fishers' Club has achieved these aims for you, even in these difficult COVID times.

Neil Nelson  
August 2021

Encl.



I'm gonna go on a fishing trip with the boys this weekend

Oh really?



Not on my watch

**COVID-19**

**Alert Level 4**

Unite against COVID-19



## **LARGEST FISH REGISTER FOR 2020/2021**

Our club fishing year ends each year in August. Results are recorded throughout the club year, reflecting only catches made in season where applicable and in NSW.

The impact of another year of Covid 19 uncertainty has had a significant impact, aside from the obvious, on club participation and actual fishing.

Local, interstate and overseas fishing stories have been few and far between. As an example, my usual fly fishing escapes this last club year saw most planned trips to Hervey Bay, Weipa, Exmouth, Christmas Island and Jindabyne cancelled.

A couple of members did capture a Covid free window to fish New Zealand in April/ May; they did use up all of their brownie points.

Several members, myself included, are still waiting for either refunds or credits from airlines and travel agents.

Ray Ellis, however, did manage to add considerable kilometres to his camper, fishing dams in NSW, a competition in Queensland and then reaching as far North as Normanton.

So how did we go?

13 Species were registered, with Ray Ellis landing 4 of these. His 77 cm carp from Wyangala Dam and a football shaped 61 cm Yellowbelly from Split Rock proved that persistence does pay off.

Roger Woodward's 55 cm Brown Trout and Gary Batey's 54 cm Rainbow, both from the Eucumbene, topped the Trout list.

The bar however, was set high by Mike Parkinson's 72 cm flathead on 6 lb line, caught on his go to fly, a very sparse chartreuse over white Clouser.

Also high on the list was Mal Lowe's 47 cm Bass, a nice sized fish but of note, it was caught on his own fly pattern, a "Mal's Mongrel". Mal is keeping the tie a secret!

Peter Henderson did fuel up the outboard to head off to the Kiama FAD to land a 70 cm Mahi Mahi on a "Game Changer" fly.

Finally and also high on the list of unusual catches was Barry Gentle's 47 cm Silver Perch from the Shoalhaven River! Barry even has the photos to prove the catch.

Hopefully in the near future we will all be able to return to our normal fishing options locally, interstate and internationally.

Regards,

Phil O'Brien

## Largest Fish Register - 2020/ 2021 Season

Species	Fly Fisher	Length (cm) Weight (kgs)	Fly/ Hook Size	Tippet (lbs)	Location.
<i>Australian Bass</i>	<i>Mal Lowe</i>	47	<i>Mal's Mongrel</i>	15	<i>Shoalhaven River</i>
<i>Bream</i>	<i>Barry Gentle</i>	34	<i>#6 BC Raw Prawn</i>	6	<i>Tuross River</i>
<i>Brown Trout</i>	<i>Roger Woodward</i>	55	<i>Egg Fly</i>	6	<i>Denison</i>
<i>Carp</i>	<i>Ray Ellis</i>	77	<i>Brown Nymph</i>	14	<i>Wyangala Dam</i>
<i>Estuary Perch</i>	<i>Ray Ellis</i>	28.3	<i>Ray's Epoxy Shrimp</i>	20	<i>Broughton Creek</i>
<i>Flathead</i>	<i>Mike Parkinson</i>	72	<i>Chartreuse Clouser</i>	6	<i>Simpsons Creek, Brunswick Heads</i>
<i>Luderick</i>	<i>Alan Griffiths</i>	38.5	<i># 8 Weed Fly</i>	12	<i>Bass Point</i>
<i>Mahi Mahi (Dolphin Fish)</i>	<i>Peter Henderson</i>	70	<i>Game Changer</i>	6	<i>Kiama FAD</i>
<i>Murray Cod</i>	<i>Ray Ellis</i>	54	<i>White and Grizzly Bar Deceiver</i>	20	<i>Split Rock Dam</i>
<i>Rainbow Trout</i>	<i>Gary Batey</i>	54	<i>Feathered Black Mudeye</i>	6	<i>Eucumbene River</i>
<i>Silver Perch</i>	<i>Barry Gentle</i>	47	<i>Brett Clark Foamie</i>	10	<i>Shoalhaven River</i>
<i>Silver Trevally</i>	<i>Mike Parkinson</i>	35	<i>Chartreuse Clouser</i>	6	<i>Mummaga Lagoon, Dalmeny</i>
<i>Yellowbelly</i>	<i>Ray Ellis</i>	61	<i>White and Grizzly Bar Deceiver</i>	20	<i>Split Rock Dam</i>

## CASTING COMPETITION RESULTS AND REPORT

Peter Fragiacomio

Below are the casting results for 2021. Surprisingly there were seven months in which fly casting competition was held in 2021 despite Covid-19 restrictions and prevailing weather conditions (August, September, November, February, March, May and June), so a total of 84 points were up for grabs.

Monthly results are based on 6 points for accuracy and 6 for distance - 3 points for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 for second and 1 point for third - a total of 12 points for each month. There were a couple of instances where multiple people tied and in one month, no distance casting was held, so overall annual points total 81.

The cumulative results for the **accuracy** event are as follows:

- First - Barry Gentle (12 points)
- Second - Neil Nelson (11 points)
- Third - Michael Parkinson (7 points)

The cumulative results for the **distance** event are as follows:

- First - Barry Gentle (10 points)
- Second - Neil Nelson (7 points)
- Third - Peter Henderson (6 points)

When points for accuracy and distance are combined, the overall place holders for the year are:

- First - Barry Gentle (22 points)
- Second - Neil Nelson (18 points)
- Third - Peter Henderson (9 points)

The table below details the annual results:

<b>CASTER</b>	<b>ACCURACY</b>	<b>DISTANCE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Barry Gentle	12	10	22
Neil Nelson	11	7	18
Peter Henderson	3	6	9
Michael Parkinson	7	0	7
Peter Fragiacomio	3	2	5
Mitch Thornton	2	2	4
Nigel Pennington	4	0	4
Chris Harding	2	2	4
Kurt Edwards	0	3	3
Steve Swan	0	2	2
Robin Bannell	1	0	1
Dave Connon	0	1	1
Leo Harding	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>81</b>

Monthly place results are detailed in the table below:

### A. 1st Place Results - Each Month

	Accuracy (Score Out of 51)	Distance (Best Cast on the Day)
August	Neil Nelson - score 42	Neil Nelson - 27m
September	Barry Gentle - score 32	Barry Gentle - 26m
November	Neil Nelson - score 39	Kurt Edwards - 25m
February	Barry Gentle - score 34	Peter Henderson - 31.5m
March	Barry Gentle - score 35	Peter Henderson - 26.5m
May	Michael Parkinson - score 21	<i>No Distance Held</i>
June	Barry Gentle - score 26	Barry Gentle - 32m

### B. Place Results - Each Month

Month	Accuracy			Distance		
	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
<b>August</b>	Neil Nelson	Peter Fragiacomio	Robin Bannell	Neil Nelson	Peter Fragiacomio	Dave Connon
<b>September</b>	Barry Gentle	Neil Nelson	Leo Harding	Barry Gentle	Chris Harding	Neil Nelson
<b>October</b>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>
<b>November</b>	Neil Nelson	Michael Parkinson	Peter Fragiacomio	Kurt Edwards	Steve Swan	Neil Nelson
<b>February</b>	Barry Gentle	Neil Nelson & Nigel Pennington	Peter Henderson	Peter Henderson	Barry Gentle	Neil Nelson
<b>March</b>	Barry Gentle	Peter Henderson	Neil Nelson & Michael Parkinson	Peter Henderson	Barry Gentle	Neil Nelson
<b>April</b>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>
<b>May</b>	Michael Parkinson	Nigel Pennington	Chris Harding	<i>No Distance Held</i>	<i>No Distance Held</i>	<i>No Distance Held</i>
<b>June</b>	Barry Gentle	Mitch Thornton	Michael Parkinson	Barry Gentle	Mitch Thornton	Chris Harding
<b>July</b>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>	<i>No Casting</i>

The highest casting score was 42 by Neil Nelson in August 2020 and the longest cast was 32 metres by Barry Gentle in June 2021).