

# REEL TALK

Surfcasting and Angling Club of WA Inc  
May 2020

Is this the new normal ????





## Surf Casting and Angling Club of WA (Inc.)

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### **Acknowledgement of Donors**

*The club gratefully acknowledges the support from companies, organisations, club members and families for the donations towards our Presentation night.*

### **Club Members:**

Mal Head, Peter Osborne, John Curtis,

Bob Henderson, Alan Jones, Pat McKeown

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***Thank you for your valued support.***

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PO Box 2834, Malaga WA 6944



## **SCAC Life Members**

George Holman, Eric Parker, Ian Cook, Bob Henderson, Terry Fuller, Mal Head, Peter Osborne

**Deceased life members:** Vic Davis, Doug Edward, Lloyd Dunn, Dudley Brown, Noel Knight, Les Shand, Ron Kildahl, Bob Klein, Jim Strong

## President's report May 2020



I hope all members are well and coping with the social distancing, As of Monday 27th April some restrictions have been eased which will allow us to have groups up to 10 as long as we still keep the 1.5m distance from each other.

It seems the Western Australian government have done the right thing and our spread is now quite low, let's all keep up the good work and try to stop the spread of this virus.

A big thanks to all our health care workers for a great job in very dangerous conditions, They are not done yet so we all need to continue to follow the restrictions and advice given, They are recommending everyone to get a Flu shot this year, Let's all book in for our Flu shot ASAP if you have not had one yet.

As for Club activities we will be working through some ideas in the next few days for getting back to Casting and Fishing which keep us within the current social distancing and current government rules, Our meetings at this stage are still on hold.

*Martin Wearmouth; President*

### A few thoughts and statistics:

#### **Influenza deaths (J09-J11) - number and age-specific death rate by sex, 2017 (a)(b)**

Influenza deaths (J09-J11)	No. of Male deaths	No. of Female deaths	Total	Rate of Males	Rate of Females	Total
0-44 Years	10	11	21	0.1	0.2	0.1
45 Years - 64 Years	33	25	58	1.1	0.8	1.0
65 Years - 69 Years	30	24	54	5.1	4.0	4.5
70 Years - 74 Years	39	25	64	8.3	5.1	6.7
75 Years - 79 Years	45	55	100	14.0	15.5	14.8
80 Years - 84 Years	93	105	198	44.3	40.5	42.2
85 Years - 89 Years	111	161	272	89.1	88.3	88.6
90 Years - 94 Years	97	215	312	195.4	225.5	215.2
95 Years - 115 Years or more	53	123	176	454.7	409.9	422.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>1,255</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>5.1</b>

As at 3:00pm on 27 April 2020, there have been 6,720 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Australia. There have been 9 new cases since 3:00pm yesterday.

Of the 6,720 confirmed cases in Australia, 83 have died and 5,586 have been reported as recovered from COVID-19. More than 517,000 tests have been conducted across Australia.

Location	Confirmed cases*
Australian Capital Territory	106
New South Wales	3,004
Northern Territory	27
Queensland	1,033
South Australia	438
Tasmania	214
Victoria	1,349
Western Australia	549
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,720</b>

# Cautious easing of restrictions thanks to WA's COVID-19 progress

Sunday, 26 April 2020

Indoor and outdoor gatherings for up to 10 people will be allowed including weddings, outdoor personal training, and open house or display village inspections

Easing of some of WA's stage 3 restrictions effective Monday, April 27 2020

Changes follow the encouraging and successful response to the pandemic in WA

Allows families and friends to interact more freely, with good social distancing

Premier Mark McGowan and Health Minister Roger Cook have announced some of Western Australia's stage 3 restrictions will be relaxed effective Monday, 27 April 2020 to ensure families and friends can stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The changes, based on health advice, will mean indoor and outdoor non-work gatherings will be relaxed to enable for up to 10 persons, lifted from the two person only limit, following continued low number of new cases and the encouraging response to COVID-19 in WA.

Everyone should continue to practise appropriate social distancing and stay home except for: shopping for what you need, such as food or other necessary supplies; medical or health care needs, including compassionate requirements; exercise, including outdoor personal training without shared equipment; training or university study, where remote learning is unavailable; childcare or school; work; non-contact recreational activities such as private picnics in the park, fishing, boating, hiking and camping - all in compliance with travel restrictions and the 10-person rule; home opens and display village openings, with appropriate record keeping and hygiene practices in place, and in compliance with the 10-person rule. A maximum of 10 people will be allowed at weddings, funerals, outdoor personal training (no shared equipment), home opens and display village inspections as part of these changes.

The two person only restriction was initially implemented from March 30 for a month with the intention to review the situation fortnightly to see if measures could be adjusted.

The new 10-person rule aligns WA with South Australia. The two-person rule was adopted in WA, going further than what was recommended at the time in a bid to curb the spread of COVID-19.

If a single household has more than 10 people, that household remains exempt from this new rule.

All public playgrounds, skate parks and outdoor gym equipment are to remain closed.

All other restrictions will remain in place for now, in a bid to manage social distancing and better protect Western Australians.

Restaurants, cafés, food vans, food courts and road houses remain restricted to takeaway and home delivery.

These decisions are based on the best medical advice in the country and as outlined by National Cabinet restrictions could be in place for six months, but subject to regular review.

WA is in a State of Emergency and various restrictions are enforceable by fines of up to \$50,000 for individuals and \$250,000 for businesses. Police Officers also have the power to issue \$1,000 on-the-spot fines.

## A brighter horizon with recfishing firmly back on the agenda

Dear Member

We were delighted and excited by the Premier's announcement over the long weekend that recfishing is now a supported recreational activity once again. That means so long as we all practise social distancing and good common sense behaviours at the boat ramp, we can all go and wet a line again with the Government's full support.

Clearly as far as COVID-19 is concerned, we are not out of the woods yet and while fishing is a recommended activity once again, we do need to keep in mind social distancing needs to be maintained unless with members of your household. That's 1.5m apart or one person per 4m<sup>2</sup> so think about how that might work on your boat and continue to avoid crowding at land-based fishing platforms like jetties. Please also continue to be patient and give others plenty of space at boat ramps.

This is great news for the wider community as a whole with fishing providing a much-needed break and a good boost for people's well-being at this challenging time. It's also a good opportunity to check in on your fishing mates now that permitted gatherings have been increased from two people up to 10 - as we all know how important time on the water and a good conversation can be for mental health. And of course, for those doing it tough financially, as many West Aussies are now, fishing provides the opportunity to put a healthy meal on the table as well.

We have pushed hard to ensure recfishing does not fall off the agenda and to have fishing singled out by the Premier as a recommended recreational activity shows how important our lifestyle is viewed by the Government. Getting you and your kids off the couch and out and about in your region by the waterside is not only a great option to get some fresh air, but it will also help boost the tackle industry and local businesses that benefit from the \$2.4 billion that recfishers spend on fishing every year.

While regional travel restrictions remain in place, [click here for a map](#) to help you plan where you can go fishing in your region.

As we have spoken about previously, we are working closely with the State Government on a recfishing stimulus package that will help fast-track a range of initiatives to make fishing even better in WA while providing an economic boost to the State and the regions. [Here's a reminder of how we're keeping the boat powering forward.](#)

So let's get out there and fish for our mental health and well-being, but let's also continue to be responsible and continue to play our part in preventing the spread of the virus in our community. Thanks for doing the right thing, stay safe and we hope to bring you more positive news in future updates.

With the 2019/20 competition year coming to a close at the end of April it was great to see some open competition entries from March top up the list. As we all heard from the trip report Martin & co had some great success down at Poison Creek with some great fishing, the highlight from a size perspective being a monster Skippy that was released and I have estimated being 4.1kg, check back to the March Reel Talk for a photo of this monster, this also qualified as a species for Grandmaster badge taking Martin to 3 species. This is probably a Skippy of a lifetime and Martin will do well to top that but I'm sure there is another trip being planned to this area when the current travel bans are lifted so hopefully we get to see a few more of these jumbo Skippy in years to come.

Martin also entered a Salmon of just over 4kg and a Blue Spot Flathead of 860g

Geoff Raftis was back up at one of his Jurien spots prior to regional travel bans and did really well on some good bags of Tailor, his biggest individual weighing 1.85kg

During the competitions, the February event held at Preston Beach was popular and it was great to see several generations of the Wessels family no doubt making memories to cherish with David, Oliver and Grace Wessels all adding to their species badge. In March Ron Thomas added a Skippy to his Master's badge, Ron had probably already qualified for this but it wasn't recorded previously

As I write this we are close to the end of April which wraps up another competition year, please keep in mind from the first of May all open competition entries are vacant so if you happen to be out fishing following the social distancing guidelines and catch something that qualifies please send me through some info. I'm sure in the coming weeks or months we will see some restrictions lifted letting us out and able to hopefully travel up or down the coast to our favourite spots.

## **Open fishing competition 2019/20**

The Open Competition is for fish caught between 1 May 2019 and 30 April 2020, other than on Club gazetted Field days, but not in any other AAA affiliated club event on the same dates. Entries for the Open competition close **30 days after capture**. See Competition Rules Section 4.

<b>Section</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>Minimum weight</b>	<b>Entry</b>
1	Most meritorious capture	None	To be awarded by Committee
2	Best shark	4.5 kg	5kg Justin Rose, Dirk Hartog Island, Jan 2020
3	Best mulloway	5 kg	11kg Justin Rose, Dirk Hartog island, Jan 2020
4	Best salmon	3.5kg	4.06 kg Martin Wearmouth, Poison Creek, March 2020
5	Best flathead	0.5 kg	0.86kg Martin Wearmouth, Poison Creek March 2020
6	Best tailor	1.5 kg	1.84kg Geoff Raftis, Jurien Bay, March 2020
7	Best samson fish	5 kg	
8	Best fish on single handed rod maximum 4kg line class (Bait)	Legal size	0.15kg King George Whiting, Darcy Tomlinson, Walpole November 2019
9	Best pink snapper	2 kg	4.5kg Justin Rose, Dirk Hartog Island Jan 2020
10	Best tarwhine	0.5 kg	
11	Best mackerel	4 kg	7kg Justin Rose, Dirk Hartog Island Jan 2020
12	Best skipjack trevally (southern)	1 kg	4.1kg Martin Wearmouth, Poison Creek March 2020
13	Best trevally (northern)	2 kg	
14	Best snook or pike	0.5 kg	
15	Best black or yellow finned bream	0.6 kg	
16	Best scale fish other than sections 3-15	2 kg	Bald Chin Groper 4.3kg, Justin Rose, Dirk Hartog Island Jan 2020
17	Best fish caught on fly rod.	Legal size	
18	Best fish caught using a soft plastic or hard body lure on a single handed rod (4kg line max.)	Legal size	Red Fin Perch 474g, Darcy Tomlinson, Dec 19



# FEATHERS

by John Curtis

Feathers have been with fishermen as long as we've had lure fishing, which is about the same length of time Man has had boats - some thousands of years. This last century we've seen increasing acceptance of perhaps the ultimate refinement of feather-fishing - the traditional trout fly.

So popular is that sport that many rare and colourful birds have ended adorning a trout's mouth. There are few hunters more determined than a fly-tier in pursuit of exactly the right fur or feather.

Beyond that we've seen a resurgence of interest in the saltwater feather jig. The most widely accepted has been the lead-head jig with white or red feathers, widely used as a troll lure, but also the only truly successful lure developed for mullet spinning.

Big mullet have always been a tempting target for lure fishermen, and they're generally recognised as a borderline lure proposition. Some species are harder to get on lures than others. It seems that feather jigs have a delicate and unknowable added quality which can make sense to fish with a keener sense of smell or taste than their more avaricious or predatory neighbours.

I found that out the hard way. Threadfin salmon are about as shifty as mullet at taking lures - sometimes they will, often they won't. I was delighted to discover during a trip up north that I was out-fished by a slip of a girl who was smart enough to use feathers while I used a popper. Up till then, that popper had been my ace-in-the-hole on salmon, but it was clearly out-fished.

Never one to ignore a lesson, I persisted with the feathers and started doing some more detailed research work. I knew a few characters had always persisted with casting feather lures around mangrove creeks for barramundi, and heard enough other rumours to become very, very interested.

One of the worst mistakes you can make on lures is to write off a method simply because it's been around a while. People get sucked in on the accelerated pace of change to a point where if something doesn't change quickly enough, they drop it anyway. That has virtually happened with feathers, and I don't mind much - because it has left open to yours truly a fabulously productive and practical lure fish don't very often see.

Looking at lures, I recalled some of the other lessons I'd been given by good fly fishermen. A big saltwater fly has a lovely, gliding action in the water, something you just don't get with a lead-head jig. How would it go - a feather lure of a weight which sank only slowly, and which could be worked from the rod tip at slow baitcaster retrieve speeds?

I tried it on a couple of necessarily solitary trips, and had my answer. Murder. Sheer, delightful murder, and even without a weed guard system it could be cast much closer to or right into cover, working out slowly with a distinctive and obviously enticing action. Depending on size of the jig, it's about as versatile a lure as any I know. Fresh or saltwater, big fish or small, rough snags or open water.

The initial key to success was a commercial plastic head feather jig - a relatively expensive item in relation to the common lead heads - known in some places in this country as "evil-eye". But a couple of those showed me all I needed to know. They're a lure easily manufactured at home, and such factors as weight are determined by the material used in the head. You can either cast your own lead-heads or fabricate them from a sinker - a long bean sinker can be cut in half and quickly filed to make two heads. Feathers can be dyed with the colour of your choice, though in my experience the natural colours - as they come from the fowl or whatever - are good enough for practical use.

Durability of the lure is enhanced by bracing the outside of the feathers with a skirt of tough plastic or fabric. Delightfully, the lures are durable unless exposed to some of the fanged villainy of mackerel or tailor, against which even steel will take a beating.

If you'll recall some of the opposition to feathers, it was originally held they didn't last long and got chewed up too fast. That sounds much more like praise than condemnation, but it also was applied when feathers were a popular choice on tailor. However, in terms of relative toughness, feathers will catch quite a string of estuary fish and still stay in business. Species such as bream don't fret them much at all.

It's typical of fishermen that the same guy who criticises feathers for lack of durability will still be pushing for soft plastics, which are after all replaceable. Well, feathers last many times longer than soft plastics and

are also replaceable. With any kind of ingenuity at all, a fisherman can find a free source of feathers. Even if he must buy them, they're cheaper than plastic and don't have to be melted or moulded.

The feather role which fascinates me is that of casting them from spin sticks or baitcasters, but trolling them is also an art form. When a warm-water current swept down the coast, many small marlin fell to feather lures, and it was gratifying to note their sheer effectiveness makes them suitable for what is generally known in game-fishing circles as a better live bait proposition.

Trolling has in fact been the traditional role of feathers. They're a non-twisting lure when rigged straight, which means they'll tolerate speed trolling. To adjust them for depth, you use either a heavier lead head (I've seen them up to 450 g) or a lighter one. Using a plastic or hardwood head, you have a surface skipping lure, and if you shape the head you have a popper. Flexibility of design and principle is so great they fit anything from bream to the biggest pelagics.

Anglers have sold themselves short on feathers by not carrying their thinking past the basic lead-head troll lure. By simply using modern materials such as plastic heads; shaping the heads to vary depth or action; adding a weed guard to the hook, we have an inexpensive, versatile and perhaps supremely effective lure. My own most recent kick has come from using a weed guard hook on a plastic head feather lure. It's heavy enough to cast well from a baitcaster over practical fishing distances. With the weed guard, you can fish it slow and deep around weed beds and snags, overhanging trees and vines. You can take chances with it that are just not on with conventional lures, and I can catch fish on it that are just not on with other lures. Structurally, its simplicity keeps you in business even after the feathers start wearing down. Most senior fishermen still around can recall seeing fish being caught on the merest stub of feathers after the lure was chewed down.

Looking for reasons for the credibility gap that still exists on feathers, despite their record, there's one field where they don't exactly shine - distance casting. They're good enough to allow a 56 g to 112 g lure to be cast from a sidecast or spin reel far enough to fish mullet in white-water washes, but they're not really good for distance. To put it crudely, the feather lure is so designed that it is cast virtually butt-on to the breeze. I suppose if there were a way to cast the lure so it travelled head-first, distance would improve and the lure would be more popular. But it's no handicap when you're tossing the thing to a snag 10 paces in a creek. There's also the human element. All lure fishing involves understanding of some kind - rapport with the fishing. We've made many changes to fishing in recent times, and some anglers have come to assume that all fishing results depend on change and "progress". So it's an obvious trap to assume some lures are out simply because they are "old-fashioned"

Fish are old-fashioned, too. They've been around millions of years without changing much. It's obviously a mistake to limit ourselves to just one lure type in our tackle boxes, because the food and circumstances and species change as we move around with our new-found mobility in outboard boats.

But any time you open my tackle box, you'll find feathers in there among the rest - usually well-chewed feathers. The only reason they're ever absent is because they're on the line, catching fish.

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## *Birthdays for May*

Robert Pekaar 11<sup>th</sup>;

Thomas Wearmouth 29<sup>th</sup>;

Victor Tomazin 30<sup>th</sup>

*Enjoy your special day*

## Field day venues for 2020/2021

Dates	Venue	Boundaries
16 -17 May 2020	Open within your region	Open within your regional boundaries
AAA only - 30 May - 1 June Long Weekend	<b>Cancelled</b>	
13 - 14 June 2020	Open Lines down 9.00am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Open anywhere in WA
11 - 12 July 2020	Open Lines down 9.00am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Open anywhere in WA
22 - 23 August 2020	Rottneest Island and Open Local Lines down 6am Saturday Lines up 9am Monday	Rottneest and Open anywhere in WA
26 - 28 September 2020 Long Weekend	Reef Beach Bremer Bay and standard local Lines down 6am Saturday Lines up 9am Monday	Reef Beach and local as below at bottom of page
17 - 18 October 2020	Dunsborough to White Hills Lines down 9.00am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Dunsborough to White Hills and local as below at bottom of page
14 - 15 November 2020	Cervantes to Leeman Lines down 9.00am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Cervantes to Leeman and local as below at bottom of page
12 - 13 December 2020	Lancelin to Greenhead Lines down 9.00am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Lancelin to Greenhead and local as below at bottom of page
Sunday 24 January and Monday 25th January 2021 make own long weekend Australia day is Tuesday 26th	Open Lines down 6.00am Sunday Lines up 9am Tuesday	Open anywhere in WA
13 - 14 February 2021	Dunsborough to White Hills Lines down 9.00am Saturday Lines up 9am Sunday	Dunsborough to White Hills and local as below at bottom of page
27 Feb - 1 March 2021 Long Weekend	Geraldton to Kalbarri Lines down 6am Saturday Lines up 9am Monday	Geraldton to Kalbarri and local as below at bottom of page
3 April – 5 April 2021 Easter Long weekend	Bluff Creek and standard local Lines down 6am Saturday Lines up 9am Monday	Cheyne's and Bluff Creek area and local as below at bottom of page
AAA only - 24 - 26 April 2021 ANZAC day Long Weekend	Cheyne's Beach/Bluff Creek see AAA website for details	Bremer Bay to Albany
<b>Local boundaries are from Lancelin in the North to Point Peron in the South</b> Lines Down for long weekends and Rottneest – Saturday 6.00am Lines up for long weekends and Rottneest – Monday 9.00am Lines Down on Standard weekends – Saturday 9.00am Lines up on Standard weekends – Sunday 9.00am <b>Sign-on / Weigh-in times, possible fish together spots and locations to be decided at the general meeting prior to the Field Day</b>		

**Note: The Committee will keep members informed as to any updates**