

# Worth its weight in trout

Eighteen months since their first excursion, members of the **Bait Wasters** are totally hooked on their little group, 'Skipper John' tells **Jessica Goulburn.**

"Good fishermen fish in any weather" says Skipper John, so come rain, hail or shine, the Bait Wasters Fishing Club heads out every month for a relaxing spot of fishing.

The Bait Wasters of the Probus Club of Ballarat South started some 18 months ago, and now around a dozen members on average attend each fishing trip. "We reached 28 at one outing," John says. "It depends where we go." Some outings are mornings, some are an all day adventure, but members agree, no matter where the fishing group meets, it's sure to be great fun.

With females averaging at least half of the attendees, John recalls watching some of the less experienced ladies struggle to put bait on their hooks. The women actually catch the fish though. "I'm stoked, really happy about it," says John. "I don't get to fish with a lot of ladies and there are a lot of keen ones. And they enjoy it!"

John has approximately 60 years of fishing experience under his belt and relishes the opportunity to guide fellow Probus members. "A lot of these people haven't fished before. They just need a little bit of guidance and I've been lucky enough to give them some," John explains.

Lucky too with the weather. John equates a fisherman to a golfer – able to continue in any form of weather. He, however, has arranged excellent weather for all outings thus far.

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After the catch (when they catch) the group fires up the hot smoker and prepares a feed. With the ladies joining in on the fun, John says the men often request sweets for morning or afternoon tea to finish off their



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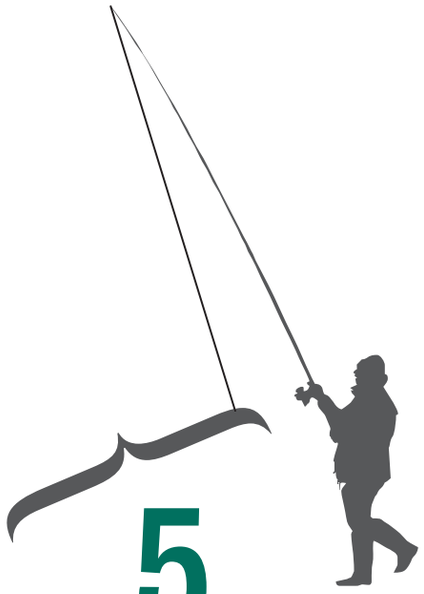

Ballarat South's Bait Wasters meet at Lake Wendouree each month to feed the fish and hopefully catch a feed for themselves.

meal. "One of the chaps gives one of the ladies orders," he says. "He tells her: 'If you're coming fishing with us, don't forget to bring a slice'."

The end of the long drought has brought the fishing opportunities closer to members, with water filling the local lake and clearing the weeds. The Probus Club of Ballarat South was one of the first groups to take advantage of the large fish population now established in Lake Wendouree, and Bait Wasters' very own 'Gilligan', otherwise known as Kelvin, was the first to catch a fish in the newly filled lake. It means that fishing adventures are a lot closer to home, and much easier to come by, right in the heart of Ballarat.

While John initially campaigned for the fishing group to be named Fish Feeders, he now claims that Bait Wasters is far more fitting. The theory is that if there's no catch, the bait has been wasted and, according to the Skipper, this happens often.

It has been said that fishing is not a matter of life or death, it is much more serious than that. For the enthusiastic Bait Wasters, a day feeding fish is a relaxing adventure with humour, good company and some good grub to wrap up the day. ••



# 5 PRO TIPS

1. Buy the best reels and rods you can afford, and make sure they suit what you want to catch and the conditions.
2. Never stand in the same place for too long. Walk the beach, shift to different rocks or move to the other side of the lake.
3. Fish the tides. Fish move with the tide so make sure you do too.
4. Use fresh bait, and try using burley. It attracts fish, holds them in the area and triggers a more aggressive feeding response. Burley can be home-made from yesterday's bread and tinned cat food or tuna oil.
5. Patience is key. Take your time and you'll be rewarded.

Scotty Lyons operates Southern Sydney Fishing Tours with day-trips, deep sea fishing and a fishing school. To contact Scotty or for more information, visit the Southern Sydney Fishing Tours website.
**W:** www.fishingsydney.com.au

Ready to cook your catch? Turn to page 57 for our barbecued silver perch recipe. »



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