

Borumba TAG-A-TOGA Fishing for Knowledge

60 anglers converged on Lake Borumba near Imbil Qld for the sixth annual TAG-A-TOGA event on 6-7th March for a lot of fun and to gain a better understanding of the resident Saratoga population.

Rather than a normal fishing competition, this event offers a more relaxed environment which focuses heavily on everyone enjoying themselves rather than who wins. There are a lot of great prizes given away for hidden treasures and lucky door prizes with only a few reserved for those who catch fish. This helps to promote the teams sharing tactics on what is working, which results in more captures and therefore more data collected so we have a greater understanding of these important fish in Qld impoundments.

The event is limited to 20 boats plus sponsors to ensure consistent results and to prevent putting too much pressure on the Saratoga population. This year, the 20 spots were filled within a couple hours, showing just how popular TAGATOGA has become. Meals are provided throughout the weekend and the roast meal on Saturday night had nearly 90 attendees which involved a fancy dress to enhance the social aspect.



As part of a continuous improvement program, this year we have started to collect a lot more information than previous years. Items such as what lure / bait, time of capture, and what terrain each fish was caught in were all recorded. Over time, as we build this data bank, it will be shared with entrants and help fine tune angler's skills to have better success chasing these mighty fish, Brendan Moore from Kingaroy Sportfishing Club advised.

Although they possess very poor eating qualities, Saratoga are renowned for their willingness to take both lures and flies and their acrobatic performances once hooked, which has made them a premier freshwater sports fish. The prehistoric heads of Saratoga have upward facing eyes making them a target for surface presentations, however their hard bony mouths make hooking and landing them challenging.

"The Tag-A-Toga event is part of a long term citizen science plan with an aim of collecting data on population, growth and growth rate dynamics of Saratoga in Lake Borumba." Shaun Manthey the secretary of Kingaroy Sportfishing Club explained.

"The fishing was also successful with a total of 95 Saratoga caught making this the most successful event by far. All of these fish were released and tagged with QLD Sportfishers pink tags. This will allow us to learn more about these ancient looking creatures. Due to the social aspect, successful methods and secret spots are shared amongst the teams throughout the event, which results in more fish being caught and therefore more data captured. "It's great to see people unlocking the secrets in landing these great fish" Shaun said.



The event focuses on capture, tagging, data collection and safe handling and release of the Saratoga. Before the event, a briefing is held to ensure anglers are up to date with correct handling and recording procedures. A tag is attached to the fish with a unique identifying number. If the fish is recaptured at a later date the tag can be reported online to www.ansaq.com.au. The information will record movement and growth between captures.

Although it's an event rather than a competition, we did have some great trophies created by

Crinkle Creek Garden Art for the champion team. This year, team "The Ballacre Boaties" caught 2.1mtrs of Saratoga per team member (total of 14 fish) which is a fantastic effort in just their second year at the event. Their name will also be placed on the Alex "Flick" Robertson memorial shield. The annual shield is named after the local Kingaroy identity who was one of the founding fathers of the Kingaroy Club and sadly passed away a few years ago.



The longest Saratoga captured during the weekend was a magnificent 800mm model caught by Tayla Kidd which happens to be her first ever Saratoga, proving that fortune favours the brave. Fish of this size are very crafty and landing one of these are a testament to the anglers ability. This was also backed up with a 790mm model caught on lure by Steward Hansen.

Kingaroy SFC is affiliated with Queensland Sportfishers which is made up of many like-minded clubs through Australian National Sportfishing Association (ANSA). Adam Royle, President of Qld Sportfishers said, "It is extremely satisfying to see member clubs run great events that incorporate both sport, social and conservation science elements into the mix".



"Kingaroy Sportfishing club is one of a number of our affiliated clubs who have developed a club specific Recreational Fishery Monitoring Plan and are now implementing fishery data collection and tagging to achieve their monitoring goals" Adam said.

"Credit goes to both Kingaroy Sportfishing Club and the anglers who fished the event for having fun and contributing to a greater understanding of a highly regarded sportfish.

A captured size range of 320mm to that of 800mm proved that there was a good self-sufficient breeding process under way within the area as well as the larger size range proving their living conditions were well suited to their lifestyle and general health. "If you haven't been to Borumba dam, do yourself a favour, it's a picturesque dam that's full of fish, thanks to the great work of the dedicated local stocking group" Vice President Bob Dover stated.

"86 Non-target species, predominately Australian Bass and Golden Perch were also encountered, and data recorded before being returned to the water ready to fight another day.

Shaun thanked all participants who travelled and the staff at Borumba Deer Park for the venue and hospitality. Garmin Australia, BCF Kingaroy, Crinkle Creek Garden Art, Australian Freshwater Fishing Charters, Kingaroy Mitre 10, Fraser Coast Fishing and Camping, SMAK Lures all sponsored this event and made it the success it was.

With a new data set, the event will continue at Borumba Dam for the next few years, however with fish captures on the rise, at some stage in the future, anglers will only record the data, rather than tag them. Qld Sportfisher monitoring plans are set up only to tag enough fish to gain sufficient information on the local population. The club will now turn their attention on setting a date for next year and securing the



relevant permits. Bob Dover hinted, “Along with a lot of positive feedback, we also have some ideas to make the event even more successful next year”.

The Kingaroy Sportfishing Club offers its members an opportunity for mateship, education and skills development in a family friendly environment. **To learn more about fishing in the South Burnett or to become involved, contact them via their Facebook page.**



Ends

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The QLD Sportfishers (Australian National Sportfishing Association Queensland Branch) is a not for profit organisation made up of affiliated clubs and members who promote sport, conservation and integrity in angling.