

Champion of Fish Habitat - Kym Manning



Name: Kym Manning

From: Barmera, SA

Job: Tackle store owner (11 years)

Loves: Fishing & fundraising

Kym's story starts 5 years ago when he joined the 'Save Lake Bonney Group'. The group was concerned with the state of Lake Bonney Riverland which had become infested with European carp. Kym decided the best way to reduce carp numbers in the lake was to fish them out. Kym and his friend Matthew Littledyke, came up with the idea of holding a carp fishing competition. The first SA Carp Frenzy Fishing Competition was born.

Working at the local tackle store Kym had access to a network of contacts to help get the competition up and running. He was amazed at the generosity in his community and their eagerness to donate prizes for the event.

"Peoples generosity never ceases to amaze me. Local businesses donated a prize pool worth more than \$7,000 that included everything from accommodation packages to swags." Kym said.

An impressive 450 competitors showed up for the first SA Carp Frenzy Competition. With an entry fee of \$15/head, almost \$7,000 was raised. The money went towards projects aimed at improving the lake such as riparian planting. A fox baiting program was also funded to prevent the local freshwater turtle population from being decimated. On top of this, over 1,000 carp had been fished from the lake during the competition.



Now in its fifth year, the Carp Frenzy Competition has raised more than \$40,000. All money has been put straight back into the community, going towards worthy causes. Last year (2016) in only 9 hours of fishing in the competition, 16,650 carp were caught!

"They're very unexpected and quite amazing figures — we haven't even hit 2,000 before. The carp were like flies.... there were just so many of them" Kym said.

The dead carp are certainly not wasted. They are sent straight to the Charlie Carp processing plant to be converted into fertilizer. Kym outlines 3 other major benefits of the Carp Frenzy Comp;

"Not only are carp removed from the lake and funds are raised for charity, but the competition attracts plenty of visitors to our town. Recent estimates are that up to 60% of competitors come from outside the Barmera area."



Left: Fun times at the Carp Frenzy



Right: Carp destined for the fertilizer factory.

Along with carp eradication, Kym is focussed on improving habitat for native fish like Murray cod and callop (golden perch). Kym uses his experience from his days as a builder to construct fish hotels. These structures provide important habitat for fish.

“The SA Carp Frenzy funded the first 30 hotels we built, then we got wise and applied for a \$20,000 grant from Recfish SA, which was accepted.”



Above: Many locals have offered their vessels to get the hotels out into the lake.

These days Kym and his volunteers make the hotels from rough cut timber limbs donated by a local tree lopper.

“Sometimes people just want trees removed from their property and are happy to donate them to our cause. We choose limbs that are roughly the right diameter. No machining involved, they are just cut to length. We construct the hotels with green limbs because they sink straight to the bottom of the lake....perfect!”

Kym and his crew are able to build 8 hotels in 2 hours. To date they have deployed over 80 hotels into the lake with plans for many more.

“It is nice to know we are providing a place for our native fish to live as well as removing competitors like carp.”

Kym’s story is one of great inspiration. It shows how a single idea can grow into something so big.

“When I first started I didn’t know how to go about it or who to contact. But over the years we have made many valuable contacts that have helped us along the way. My advice to anyone who wants to do something similar is just to get out there and make a start. You might be surprised at the support people are willing to offer.”



Resource links;

[ABC Carp Frenzy Story](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/SACarpFrenzy/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TopCatch/>

[YouTube](#)



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