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Front Cover: Saltaire Charters with a Monster GT

FISHING PORT DOUGLAS .COM

By Adam Boone

Here we go with my first official article as Skipper of the Fishing Port Douglas charter boat - wish me luck !!

It has been a solid month or so of dodging the bad weather and making the most when it has been good. With conditions changing every few days we found ourselves alternating between estuary and coastal trips.

We'll start with our calm water charters and as you could imagine it was a challenge at times with the amount of fresh in the system. For example I've been residing in Newell Beach and a resident living there recorded a whopping 756mm of rain in a 24hr period at one stage. I believe Port Douglas recorded 450mm in the same period. Under these conditions the fishing was tough to say the least. There were moments however when the water returned to some normality and we started to see better returns. Grunter, cod, jacks, sweetlips, small emperors and fingermark kept our clients well occupied. We've been using a lot of live bait recently and the far upper reaches have been a good source to obtain these. There was plenty of mud herring and of course mullet which accounted for our better fish.

There was a couple of interesting things going on including the high death rate of big blubber jellyfish. There has been plenty of them along the coast lately and I suspect they have entered the estuary on the bigger tides and ended up way upstream. On the

outgoing tide a lot found themselves intertwined between the mangrove roots and died. Interestingly I spotted a mud crab barely 10cm across the shell in the shallows dragging himself a massive jelly fish which would have been 20 times his weight. Obviously they have a liking for them.

The coastal fishing has been very interesting especially the days following a heavy rain. We had to watch over our shoulders constantly to the north where the bulk of the bad weather would be coming from. I found the fishing really peaked 2-3 days once we had a break in the weather. A lot of bait has been flushed out of our major rivers and consequently ended a few mile offshore. The water looked dirty on top but this was just the fresh. Down below was a different story and we found the fish quite receptive. Large mouth nannygai, cod and bar cheek trout were the most common catches.

We had quite a few teenage boys on charter this month from down south and they love their fishing. They really appreciated the change in scenery and the opportunity to catch something other than redfin and flathead. Their angling skills were of a high standard and they tended to produce the best results.

CONTINUED PAGE 8.....



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Well what can I say, this weather has been insane and not what we wanted for our end to the year and the start of the new one. The wind and rain have been relentless, and just when it looks like clearing up, boom, more rain.

On the other hand it is the wet season and we do need the rain so we can't really complain. It's the time of the year where the tourists in town start to clear out, some businesses close the doors for a few weeks to take holidays and plan some renovations. I am not one to sit around and do nothing during the quiet season so I have been busy exploring some new fishing grounds, helping out on different boats and planning for this coming year.

The first couple of weeks saw me flying down to Townsville and jumping on a research vessel. I was luckily enough to join the Australian Institute of Marine Science on a research mission to partake in 24 hour water sampling, researching Micro Plastics and working on Reef Current data. It was all new to me and was pretty exciting. We were based on a reef out of Townsville called John Brewer and spent the next 10 days checking for micro plastics in coral, fish and Anemones. We also conducted 24 hour water sampling using water niskins and other means by traveling to marked locations and getting the samples. Most afternoons saw big schools of Longtail Tuna busting up and had me thinking, if only I brought a rod along. All in all was something different for me and will be good to see the results down the track. These guys love

what they do and are super passionate about the reef and are doing a great job finding solutions for our future systems.

When I got back in the second week of January we started up the charter trips again. It wasn't all doom and gloom with the weather as some days the river produced some great fish. Mangrove jacks were the target species most days and some sessions saw us landing half a dozen along with some decent Cod and other scary and ugly things.

When we got the chance we would shoot out to have a jig on the local wrecks. There are a few marked on the chart and there are some great ones that are not. These wrecks hold plenty of Trevally, Nannygai, Cobia and other great fighting fish.

With things starting to quiet down, it's a great time to get out and do some exploring. I don't understand the people that fish the same coastal marks all the time and catch the same thing every time, and a lot of undersized undersized fish. There is great fishing to be found and honestly not too far Port. I like to use the Navionics as you can learn a lot from the chart. When exploring I tend to follow the contour lines and see where they go.

I recently found some great rubble patches not far from Port just by having a look around. As soon as we out baits down we had triple hook ups of Nannygai in only 19m of water. They were not monster fish but good size around 55cm.

CONTINUED PAGE 8....



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The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

Well, well, well The month of January proved to be one of the quietest I've seen in a very, very long time. On the back of a very poor December it has been a very disappointing month or two. The sometimes poor weather is partly to blame but there was plenty of good mixed in amongst it. I seriously point the finger at the media reporting down south that the Far Nth for the most was cyclone ridden and basically a wash out. For us living up here we all know that this was far from the truth. All you have to do is talk to anyone in local business and we are all feeling the effects of such irresponsible reporting. We all experienced in some form or manner people cancelling holidays left right and centre and people making alternative holiday choices having followed the media reports. In what should have been one of our peak periods, we only saw a fraction of normal trade. The spiral effects will be heavily felt across the entire board for months to come. I don't know how it could be done but a collective class action against the major media culprits doesn't sound so silly.

We had a bit of a run in charters early in the month then it literally dried up by the second week. We then had a little streak towards the end of the month.

Anyway onto the fishing and I must say up front that it has been the best summer fishing I have seen in a long time. Maybe a slight decrease in water temperature maybe a factor but whatever the reason it has been exceptional and numbers and quality of fish have been equal to that of the cooler months. It was a real pity that there weren't more people around to experience it.

The start of January saw a mixed bag of fruit coming back to the docks with no real species dominating the catches. Trout, large and small mouth nannygai, spangles, moses perch and a few spanish seem to be the main species dotted in the log book. As mentioned numbers of fish were above average for this time of the year.

Our biggest day for the month was on the 24th January with a mixed crew of punters. The fishing went the next level this day and the log book registered over 40 fish for the day. Trout, red emperor, cod, jobfish, gold spot trevally, spangles and the nannygai duo were all quite active. The best large mouth

measured 910mm and would easily have been 10kg, possibly a bit more. The gold spot trevally were all around the 7-8kg range and the other species were solid fish

Just to prove how out of sorts things are some of the small mouth nannygai were fully roed up and something I've never seen before at this time of year. Their supposed spawn was a few months ago. We also caught a couple of spotted mackerel and we all know that they are a winter fish - weird. These two lots of indifferent catches just prove that you never know what will turn up in these waters.

We will remain open for business for most of February to try and make up for lost ground before going on the slip towards the end of the month. ■



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Gearing Up for Barra Season

By Dylan Case - Nautical Marine

Barramundi season 2019 opens at midday on the 1st of February, and many anglers will be hitting the rivers and coastal waters in search of these spectacular fish. Assuming the weather holds out, we should be in for a good few months of barra fishing to kick start the year. After a well needed break in fishing pressure through their breeding season, barra should be out in numbers along beaches, rocky headlands and throughout our rivers. There's plenty of ways to go about your barra fishing in February and throughout the open season.

Rainfall plays a massive part in the coastal ecosystems, particularly through the wet months. The enormous downfall we have had recently has definitely thrown a little spanner in the works for the opening weekend! However, these large deluges early in the year can kick a bit of life in the systems once everything settles down. Prawns along the beaches are a good example of this, and you will often encounter good runs along these local beaches after heavy rainfall. Barra will follow these pockets of prawns along beaches, so if you come across some with the cast net, don't be afraid to send a few out on a rod. High tides in calmer weather are my favourite times to fish the beaches. A great way to use live prawns is to put 2 or 3 on a 5/0 octopus hook under a short float. Alternatively, prawn imitations like the Ecodda live shrimp are great options for your luring enthusiasts. Of course, other species will follow these prawns, so your catches won't be limited to barra. Expect to see a few good catches along these beaches over the next month or so!

When the wind is up, the beaches aren't as pleasant, and usually don't produce as well

as calmer weather. In windier conditions, the rivers are generally a better option. River mouths are the highways for many species within our coastal systems, with large numbers of fish passing in and out with tides and other driving factors. This is certainly the case for barramundi, including the trophy sized specimens. You can target these fish with both bait and lures effectively, though I do the vast majority of mine with lures. It is useful to have a range of lures, from paddle tailed soft plastics around 6" (150mm) and over, to shallow divers and hard bodied swimbaits. Pre-rigged soft plastics like the Molix Shad 140 and 185 are a favourite choice of mine! The mouths are best fished once the rivers settle down a bit from this recent rainfall. Fresh bait is also a winner, with live sardines and mullet on a running sinker being the most popular set up. Match the hook and sinker size to your bait and you will be set.

Tackle for barra is always a hotly debated subject, but there is not really a single set up that is ideal for every scenario. Of course, rods and reel combos are a matter of personal preference and should be selected as such. Baitcasting rods have generally been the number 1 choice for barra over the years, particularly when luring.



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This sort of set up is probably ideal for casting hard bodied lures at snags or other points. Personally, I prefer spinning gear, as a lot of my barra fishing involves vibe and soft plastic work, but baitcast combos work just as well. I use only 3 combos regularly for barra: two spinning combos, and one specialist swimbait baitcasting combo.

I use the 2 spinning combos (6-12lb and 10-20lb) mostly for vibing and general soft plastic work. The swimbait combo is a set up I have specifically for throwing the biggest lures, soft or hard, and is definitely a valuable asset. One of the most important features of your barra set up is the leader. Often overlooked, your leader is the part of the set up which is always in contact with the fish. Stories of people getting "gill raked" by giant barra are rife throughout most fishing groups, though this is usually not the cause of the breakage. While often incorrectly attributed to the razor-sharp bony protrusion on the gill plate, most leader failures are the result of the sandpaper like mouth of the barramundi grinding through the line. A large amount of barramundi fishermen use leader that is too light, and many fish are lost as such.

For smaller fish (below around 80cm), a monofilament leader of at least 50lb or a fluorocarbon of at least 40lb is required. For those large fish, you'd want to beef that up to at least 80lb monofilament or 60lb fluorocarbon, and don't be afraid to go higher again (~100lb) if you are truly in pursuit of the giants. The strength of your main line is also important, though probably less so than the leader. Fish heavier braid around snaggy areas for extra abrasion resistance, or when likely to encounter large fish to increase the overall shock strength of your rig.

Of course, barra are a great table fish (when smaller), and there's nothing wrong with taking one home for a feed. However, bigger breeding fish (90cm+) should be released where possible, to ensure our local systems continue to produce great fish over the coming years. Look after fish that are being released by not holding them up by the jaw and return them to the water as quick as possible. We have all the gear you need for barra season here at Nautical Marine Sales and are always happy to offer some free advice! Enjoy our beautiful waterways and good luck for the coming season! ■



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FISHING PORT DOUGLAS Cont....

On one particular trip we had Michael Auldust on charter with his family. Michael was the former editor of the huge Fishing Monthly Victoria magazine. He found himself tangling with a fish you don't often see, especially along the coast, and if you do they aren't overly big. However his Trigger Fish was of epic proportions and the set of fangs were on it were capable of decapitating a finger or two.

In between charter work I've spent quite a bit of extra time doing exploratory trips discovering new places to take clients and trying a few different things. I think it is necessary to be very adaptable at this time of year when the weather doesn't know if it's Arthur or Martha.

This coming month see's some handy bookings already including our prize winner from Sth Australia for the 3 night accommodation package with two days of fishing included. Hopefully we stay high and dry for the duration. ■




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EXCEED SPORTFISHING Cont...

A good sounder and transducer also helps. I run 2 Simrad units. 1 x 12in Simrad evo3 and a 9in Simrad evo3. Both are linked together and I run a 1kw through hull transducer. I also have the latest Simrad 3d structure scan at my disposal. With these units I can be running at 26 knots and still even pick up Wonky holes with no drama. These units have a great feature which allows me to scroll back through the screen and drop a mark right on top on what I went over. I mark a lot of spots whilst traveling then the next time I'm heading in that direction I have a good look around. It's amazing what you can find if you spend the time looking around. If you have a hang and don't pull anything up doesn't mean there is nothing there. Sometimes the fish are just not interested but you can see on the sounder that it would hold fish at some point in the day. Also you don't need to find big structure to find big fish. A lot of times Reds and Nanny's may not show up on the sounder or they may only have the slightest bite. Spend the time to look around and give it a good crack.

This year we are going to specialise in the Light Tackle Marlin. We will be running full day marlin charters down to the Wide Grounds between Port and Cairns. These

little fish can put on a great show and it's not uncommon to get multiple fish a day. Our sponsor Pure Fishing have provided us with some great new gear and it's going to be a great season. The typical fish are around the 10-20kg range and are perfect fun on the 10kg trolling outfits or the light spin gear. These fish can get a bit bigger and I do know of one fella who fought a fish around 100kg with just him and his wife for over a hour. In the end the leader chaffed through however that day they caught another 4 small blacks.

So if you would like to catch your first Marlin or have some friends coming up who you think would like to try this, give us a call and we can arrange a day to suit your needs. Exceed Sportfishing Port Douglas, The next Generation of Charter boats. ■

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Four Mile Fires Again

By Dave Dormer

Last month I eluded to the fantastic fishing that had been occurring down on our icon Four Mile Beach during the December period. Well I am glad to say that this run of good fishing continued into the first couple of weeks in January. Those heavy rains we experienced over the Christmas and New Year bared fruit not long after.

Once again the beach was loaded with bait as far as the eye could see. Again those calm early mornings with a rising tide was the best time to witness this phenomena as the shallow waters were alive with activity. You really have to see it for yourself to truly appreciate the enormity of what I'm saying. It was an angler's smorgasbord with big schools of fish smashing through the hapless shoals of bait which ever way you looked. To be honest it was a task to settle on one patch of water and fully concentrate on it because out of the corner of your eye there was constant movement distracting your vision.

I decided to sit on a section of beach which has proven me well time and time again and wouldn't be tempted to chase or follow the external noise elsewhere. Casting away alternating between surface poppers and jelly prawn imitations it was only a matter of time before my rod would be bending and line would be stripped back through my hand and loaded onto the reel. The tarpon were genuinely thick and I caught several as they moved through in schools. They were mainly

between 2-3kg in size. Once they went past the Gt brigade would move in and they literally take over with their bully mentality. Even though they were only about 1.5kg in size they go hard and are really good value.

I did manage a couple of different fish which you don't catch every day with the first being a nice saltwater barra. It danced around in the shallows and showed plenty of gusto. Its silver chrome flanks were mesmerising as they flashed through skinny water and it was a very rewarding catch - which was then released.

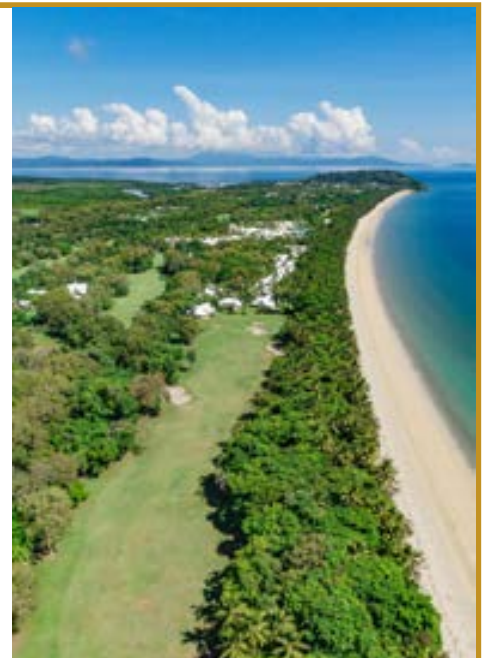
My next amazing catch was a giant herring, a rare catch indeed. They are up there with a must catch fish on a fly rod. They have tremendous pulling power, but at lightening speed. This fish had me down to my fly line backing before I was able to gain control and persuade it gradually back to the beach. It was by far the most challenging fish to land. With more rain anticipated for the area, Four Mile Beach I believe will be in for an absolute treat for weeks and weeks to come when the conditions are right. ■



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Australia's Biggest Barra Comp

By Keith Graham

It is our 26th year running this popular annual event, and it is said to be the biggest prize pool by any individual tackle store in Australia.

Bransfords Barra Season Promotion is on again this year and will offer \$8,500-00 in prizes, including 3 Abu Revo / Ambassador Barra combos for the weigh in competition. This years Major Prize pool is divided into two main draws with prizes worth \$3500-00 in each.

The first prize Pot includes a Watersnake Combat electric outboard, a Daiwa Zillion reel and Black label rod combo, a Wilson VENOM 6 foot spin rod, a barra trip for two with top barra guide Will Pritchard of Fish Hunter Charters, and a bucket of Barra Classic lures. That totals \$3,500!

The second Prize Pot has a Stella 2500 spin reel and custom Samuri spin rod, a \$1,000 Bransfords Gift Voucher, a Barra trip for two with renowned guide Justin Gibbins of All Tackle Sportfishing, a Qantum Smoke HD rod and reel combo and a bucket of Rapala Barra Lures. That totals \$3,500.

To top it off Bransfords customers can win their share of 1,000 litres of Mobil fuel from Trinity Petroleum Services.

The ABU / UGLY STIK Weigh in Comp is always very popular and every Barra weighed in will receive a Bransfords Brag Matt and a Bransfords F1.11 barra lure, (limit of 1 per person). Anglers can send in their photos of barra they have released with all details to tackle@bransfords.com.au to also be in the running. Three ABU combos including the Abu Revo and Ambassador reels will be awarded for the MOST MERITORIOUS

BARRA in the Saltwater division and the Freshwater division. There will also be the Under 16 division. So that's 3 ABU combos to be won. How good is that!!!!

TO ENTER..... All customers have to do is spend \$25-00 in store, so for every \$25-00 spent they will receive an entry - i.e spend \$500-00 and they receive 10 entries in the Comp... AND there is NO LIMIT to the amount of entries during February and March with the WINNERS drawn on April 1st.

This Barra Season opener is always popular so get into Bransfords for your chance to win.....



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Reel Cooking

with Mick Hart



Yummy Blue Salmon Fish Cakes

Ingredients

- 500g pontiac potatoes, peeled, chopped
- 600g blue salmon, skin off
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 200g smoked salmon,
- Chopped 5 shallots (spring onions)
- finely chopped 1/2 lemon, rind finely grated
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped dill
- 1/2 cup plain flour
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 cups fresh white breadcrumbs
- Oil, for shallow frying



Method

1. Cook potatoes in a large pot of boiling salted water until tender.
2. Meanwhile, place the blue salmon in a steamer and steam for 8-10 minutes until cooked through (this depends on thickness of the fish). Set aside.
3. Drain potatoes then return to pan, mash with the butter until smooth. Set aside to cool. Place smoked salmon, shallots, lemon rind, parsley and dill in a large bowl. Break the blue salmon into flakes, add to the bowl with the mashed potato and stir until all ingredients are well combined, season well with salt and pepper. Use your hands to form mixture into 6 round patties, then place on a tray, covered, in fridge for 1/2 hour to chill.
4. Place flour, eggs and breadcrumbs in separate shallow dishes. Carefully dip each fishcake in the flour to lightly coat, then dip in the beaten egg and finally in the breadcrumbs. (Cakes can then be covered and stored in the refrigerator if you wish).
5. When ready to cook, use enough oil in a deep frypan to be 2cm deep and place over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, carefully fry the fishcakes in batches for 2-3 minutes each side until golden. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towel to drain. Serve the fishcakes with the tartare sauce.

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By Heff



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Recently I interviewed local young angler, Ethan Scott, or known to his mates as 'Chopper', to see what a kid like him gets up to for the duration of the school holidays. As you may imagine it entailed a lot of fishing, I mean a lot of fishing.

His major triumph occurred early in the piece just following school break prior to Christmas. With his Pop, Larry visiting Port Douglas from Tasmania, he and his Dad, Matty headed down to the local Sugar Wharf for a spot of fishing in the afternoon. Ethan was keen to show his Pop how things were done in the Far Nth.

Being school holidays there was naturally a bit of extra traffic on the jetty so the boys nestled themselves in amongst the crowd. If you wind back the clock several editions ago it was Ethan with that monster 55cm mangrove jack on the front cover of this magazine and it was caught at the same location. Using peeled prawn on running sinker rigs they picked away at some smaller fish - mainly small bream and grunter. Looking along the wharf that also seemed to be the only action with others wetting a line.

The tide turned and Ethan knew this was his best chance of nailing something better. With his rod leant against the railing the boys were chatting amongst themselves when it took a bend and nearly flipped right over the top. Reflexes kicked in quickly and he grabbed it before it fell into the drink. Lifting the rod tip the rod doubled over and the reel loaded up with line peeling off before his eyes. He said that first initial run was a beauty. In fact they had to clear the jetty as he chased it down the board walk. People gladly scattered out of the way as Ethan ducked and weaved under their rods chasing down the fish. As the fish streamed up the harbour 'Chop' applied a bit more pressure on the spool and managed to halt its run, then it turned and came back to where the strike first occurred. By this stage every person on the wharf was following him like the 'Pied Piper'. He admitted he was quite nervous at this point with all the attention

and prayed the fish would stay on. The unknown fish proceeded to produce a few more searing runs in various directions before slowly tiring down. Once 'Chop' felt he had the better of the fish he walked himself down the gangway and fought the rest of the fight on the lower deck of the wharf. Soon enough a big silver flash came into sight and his heart went into overdrive. Methodically he swayed it closer to the jetty before he and Pop were able to grab the leader and hoisted it away from the water. There were cheers and applause from the those watching on and the boys themselves hollered and hooted. Ethan had superbly secured himself a whopping 54cm Grunter or also known as a Javelin Fish. It was a thumper and again another colossal catch for the public jetty.

A few weeks later 'Chop' flew down to Tasmania with his Pop and they spent days on end fishing at Bruny Island near Hobart on his 30ft yacht. Here he caught endless numbers of flathead, some baracoota and a cocky salmon. He said the conditions were very calm but naturally he struggled with the cooler temperatures. This interview took place just the night before returning to school. He had just spent the very last minutes of his school holidays fishing with his mates. ■



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Around the Local Traps

Old Cast Net Bonus

Recently at the local boat ramp we were launching the Fishing Port Douglas boat and the tide was reasonably low. In the middle of the ramp was a neglected 7ft nylon mesh cast which had been caught up on the concrete. It did appear it may have also got caught in a propeller or two from those coming and going from the ramp as it was pretty torn up. Not a good look! So I retrieved the net and was going to throw it in a nearby bin when Skipper Adam suggested to keep it and salvage the sinkers. Mmm, not a bad idea we all know they are not the cheapest bit of terminal tackle to purchase.

Now here's the question - how many bullet shaped sinkers do you think are attached to a basic standard 7ft cast net? I had my ideas and in asking others the same question their answers were quite varied.

So when the time came I sat down with a pair scissors and started to cut away



a sinker at a time. The workmanship in making a material castnet was the first thing which grabbed me and a lot of it has to be done by hand. Almost an hour later I had in front of me a pile of sinkers. I guesstimated maybe around 80 pieces, so I decided to count them. The final count came to 120 individual sinkers and to be honest I was quite astounded. If I had to purchase these sinkers individually it would have cost a pretty penny or two - I'm guessing around \$50 bucks or so. Considering one of these cast nets cost around \$70 to purchase they have to be made in a sweat shop somewhere.

So next time your cast net gets ripped beyond repair make sure you salvage the sinkers from it. Also worth keeping is the casting rope and the big swivel connecting the rope and the net itself.

Local Boat Entertainment

It never ceases to amaze me what goes on at the local boat ramp in Port Douglas. I tell you it is not a boring place to be, there's always something going on. I know patrons at the Combined Club sipping on a cold beer over-watching the ramp would get their money's worth with the carry on that takes place at times.

Just in the last month or so we had to do two rescue tows with tinnies back up the local estuary to dodgy looking yachts. The first bloke claimed someone stole the key from his ignition

on what you call a dump of a boat - seriously ! What do you do? He got towed back up to his humble abode.

The next was two clearly intoxicated blokes in what you would describe a bathtub. The vessel was half full of water with one chap sitting in the boat. The other was in the water swimming trying to tow it back up the creek in what you would call crocodile infested waters. Skipper Adam obligingly towed them back to their shack on the water.

The last amusing incident was a bloke just wearing King Gee shorts and he was completely off his rocker trying to get his 3.5m tinny onto a trailer. Being low tide the ramp was very, very slippery and as you may have guessed, multiple times he ended up on his arse with a thud. He'd bounce back up as nothing happened only to take another tumble not long after. We offered a hand only to be told 'she'll be right mate'. Where he was going to drive the boat and trailer in his car was a disturbing thought.



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Early Childhood with Bruce Belcher



Recently, while conducting my tours, I noticed a lone Seagull (Silver Gull) and its not often you'll see one here as they've adapted to scavenging from humans. (e.g. Sydney Cricket Ground, during a game). As I was describing this bird, my mind wandered back to an incident when I was very young, fanciful and adventurous. I was living with the Lardil aboriginal people on Mornington Island. So, I was adept at learning their hunting skills. I had always wanted to be able to fly. I decided to kill a Seagull, cut off it's wings and tie them to my shoulders, on my back. I crept into the handcraft store in my dad's office and stole a boomerang. In case you don't know, a boomerang, when hurled, spins in a circle like an uncontrolled propeller. As a flock of gulls approached where I stood, I hurled the weapon in front of them, bringing down two. They were only winded, so I let one go but quickly killed

the other. I must have looked silly having tied the wings to my back and started to prance around while running, being frustrated that it didn't work. I don't remember what happened after that except having regret at what I had done. Killing wildlife didn't generally bother me because it was a way of life for the aboriginal people and a source of food.

Another incident happened when I was fourteen. I often recount this story on my tours as it is appropriate to what we're talking about. As usual, I was home from boarding school, from Charters Towers and was probably feeling bored. Dad had a selection of rifles in his office, which was customary in the bush, back in those days. I selected a .22 rifle and a handful of bullets from an open dish on his desk, as you did.



Wallabies were the favourite target. While creeping through the bush looking for wallabies, I noticed a bird soaring overhead. It was a hawk. I was a crack shot so I thought I would test my accuracy and have a shot at it. I took the shot and the bird plunged down beside me. I looked down at the bird and was amazed at how beautiful it was. I remember it had noticeable bands on its chest and had yellow eyes. In hindsight and as I now conduct birdwatching tours, I've identified it as a Crested Hawk. If you've ever seen one you'll notice how beautiful it is. I remember the regret instantly, just as I did with the Seagull, but this was many years later. That was the last time I've ever used a rifle. See you next month.

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