



DARWIN BLUEWATER CHARTERS NEWSLETTER

Barra Bonanza!

If you've ever wanted to catch a barra or two then this year's stint at Bathurst Island would have left you feeling gobsmacked! Over the course of seven trips we have released over ten thousand legal sized barramundi! I know it sounds hard to believe but it's true. The aquaculture farm inside Port Hurd had *another* big breakout of fish early in the new year—great for us recreational fishos but not so good for investors who have now decided to close the farm after the remaining fish are sent to market.

24 crabs! Some of the punters even got sick of eating them by the end of their trips which is very unusual.



Naomi from fishing duties to go and help Mal's folks start the cleanup after they were hit severely by Cyclone Larry. Matt hails from Melbourne and has been fishing the territory on a regular basis for the last ten years. He finally decided it was time to stop paying to catch fish and come up to work as a fishing guide. He's caught more metre barra than he's had hot breakfasts so he must know what he's doing! Matt will be coming to the Kimberley with us and may stay on for longer—he just came back from Melbourne for a quick stint and is already starting to talk of Darwin like it's his home so who knows.



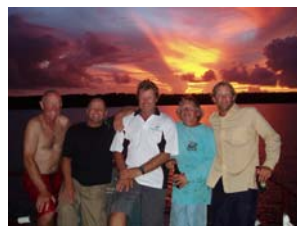
We also had a few of interesting by-catches including a couple of crocs which drowned themselves in the crab pots and a white bellied sea eagle which took a lure from the surface during a practice cast. Luckily we were able to release the bird completely unharmed (and we got some awesome video footage of this).

It has been a lot harder to NOT catch a barra than to catch one—every inch of water seemed to have a 65cm big mouth swimming in it. Lure choice became a very simple process involving selecting the oldest lure in the box and leaving it on until it fell apart! It's been a once in a lifetime experience for all those who had the chance to fish there. Opportunities like these will not come along again until the next fish farm has a monster breakout of thousands of tonnes of fish.

There was a pretty good supply of threadfin salmon on a couple of trips—Mal still gets a glazed look in his eyes when he mentions the morning where the salmon were schooling like tuna along one of the beaches out the front! And the jewfish kept us occupied on some evenings with a number of 120cm plus fish caught at our secret spot number 6258.

Along with the barra there was a plentiful supply of big mud crabs. The biggest haul in one tide was

Matt Evans is a new addition to the team, called in to release



Our new website is now up and running so make sure you all go and check it out at www.darwinbluewater.com.au. There's heaps of stuff there to have a look at including all the record catches from our boats, past and present, a pretty awesome 3D tour of the boat, plenty of photos, charts and updates plus some links to some pretty cool sites of interest. Most of you will find a mug shot of yourselves on the site somewhere too so check it out and let us know what you think. We'd really appreciate the feedback.



Darwin Bluewater Charters specializes in...

- > Extended charters to remote locations including the mighty Kimberley region
- > Spectacular bluewater fishing
- > Barramundi seafaris
- > Small groups—6-7 people
- > Great fun times and lots of laughs!



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Brad's first Sailfish & Naomi's first Black Marlin



In just a couple of hours we managed to tag nine sails ...



Cylinder #5 liner

Broome Billfish Classic

Once again the Yamaha Broome Billfish Classic was a pearler but this year there were even more fish to be had. The team from Hyland C managed to finish a very respectable 4th and also won Champion Visiting Boat for the second time with 18 sails and 1 marlin tagged. To say we were proud of ourselves is an understatement!

This year we had one new addition to the team, Brad Clarke, who was a sailfish virgin until the second day of the comp. He's now quite

chuffed with himself after snagging (literally) a total of seven sails for the team. Naomi caught her first marlin of 30kg, nearly had a tag in another and Mal nearly fell off the roof when he saw a 100kg model swim up under our baits!

The last day of the comp is one we'll never forget. We had to travel quite a way north to get to some grounds that were teeming with billfish like shoals of bait. In just a couple of hours we managed to tag nine sails before we ran out of

tags, bait and had to head home anyway to get all our tag cards in on time. There were sails swimming in the wake like a school of dolphins, we had at least 3 triple hook ups and a quadruple hook up at one stage, Mal had about 3 coronaries and Matt thought all his christmasses had come at once! It was billfishing at its best!

Well done to the Broome Fishing Club - they put on a marvellous show again and we can't wait to get back for more next year.

A Tale of Woe

Our poor old (26years) main engine decided she couldn't take any more after we arrived at the King George River on our way to Broome. Mal went to fire her up and keep moving down the Kimberley coast after a day's exploration at the falls but she wouldn't go! After a couple of tense hours we realized there was nothing we could do and had to break the news to our punters that we were going to be delayed for a while.

How do you get help of a mechanical nature 250 nautical miles from civilization? Well, it starts with a couple hundred dollars worth of satellite phone calls and ends with a chartered plane and chopper flying in our mechanic with a squillion parts and tools that will hopefully do the job!

John, our travelling mechanic, managed to get us going again and we made it the further 500nm to Broome, fished the comp and then he returned to do a full rebuild! There were many dramas along the way - parts not turning up, wrong parts turning up, bits not fitting where they should etc, etc. The poor old girl was in a



Matt & John hard at work

couple of knots out of a new one as well as greater fuel efficiency. It will be interesting to see what he comes up with over the next 18 months.

For those with a mechanical brain, we were leaking water through cylinder 5 into the sump (at a rate of 15 litres a day) due to electrolysis in the block and cylinder liners. Quite a big and messy job to repair especially without the convenience of a marina berth.

Mal has now decided that he wants a boat with sails (he thinks it might be cheaper) which gave us all a laugh especially when we found him in the crew cabin with a pile of sheets and needle and thread! Ahhh.... The joys of boat ownership!

pretty sorry state of affairs and will probably be replaced at the end of next year so as to avoid any further problems. Mal's hoping to get another

From the Galley

Instead of a recipe we thought a few of our best galley tips might be appropriate to help you get the best taste sensations out of your seafood.

Some of the basics...

- Never thaw frozen seafood quickly by putting it in fresh water. This will destroy the natural salty flavours and the texture of the seafood.
- When freezing seafood, especially fish fillets, try to leave the skin on as this will help to retain the natural moisture of the fillet. Remove the skin just prior to cooking.
- For fillets of reef fish or barra, re-



move the bones before cooking as there is usually only a few in the

region of the rib cage. Feel for the bones and cut a triangular section of flesh out of the fillet. It is better to lose a small portion of flesh than to eat bones!

- Try not to overcook your seafood. For most fillets ten minutes of cooking (whether BBQ, pan, oven or grill) is more than enough. As soon as you can poke a knife through the fillet without resistance it is done. For prawns and the like only a couple of minutes is required. As soon as they are opaque all the way through they are done.

Two of our best kept secrets...

- McCormicks Simply Seafood range take the hassle out of creating great seafood dishes. Our all time favourite is the Tempura. Those of you who have tasted Mal's spe-



cialty will understand why. Oven Easy is also another ripper which can be used on the BBQ just as effectively as in the oven.

- In the asian section of the supermarket look for Valcom Laksa. It comes in a 440gm can and tastes fantastic. All you have to do is add noodles, seafood and a couple of your favourite veggies such as mushrooms and tomatoes and you have an instant laksa that is as good as any you can get.

Kimberley Adventures

Talk about adventure—this year *Hyland C* has done it all! We departed Darwin with fine seas and keen anglers all set for a 12 day cruise to Broome. Luckily we made it across the "Blownapart" (aka Joseph Bonaparte Gulf) before the wind picked up too much and there were sighs across the board as we pulled into a glassy Koolama Bay at the mouth of the King George River. All were ready to see the sights one only experiences in the Kimberley so we set off on an expedition to the 100m high waterfalls at the head of the river.

We had a great climb to the top (even those who were astute enough—to realize that quality

walking shoes might *not* actually include thongs!) and really enjoyed the splendour of seeing so much water splashing over the falls (more than Mal has ever seen). "The Crack" was a highlight—you can imagine the jokes—although no-one was keen enough to jump into the freezing cold waters for some reason!

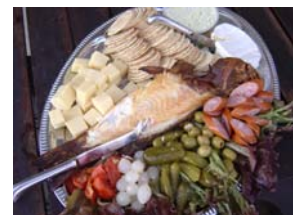
Our attempt to depart the King George was unfortunately hampered for a few days when we had our little breakdown. However, the wind decided to blow hard at over 30 knots the whole time which left us with little other options anyway and finally we departed to explore deeper into the Kimberley coast.

Despite the wind we had some awesome fishing and spectacular anchorages. The Admiralty Gulf and Bonaparte Archipelago provided some Kimberley-sized coral trout, mackerel, queenfish, trevally and black lip oysters in abundance which were consumed in a frenzy by all on board. The non-oyster eaters even ate oysters!!! They must be good!

Other ball-tearer fishing sessions saw big Andy calling for 300lb fencing wire when he couldn't stop an unseen something-or-other and the deckies were begging to be let out again after all the action on one particular sunset session!



Kimberley Black Lip Oysters



Smoked coral trout platter

Other ball-tearer fishing sessions saw big Andy calling for 300lb fencing wire...



Sampson Inlet



Top of the King George Falls



As I've mentioned, we had a great time fishing for sails after we reached Broome and then had much fun repairing the engine before we departed for home on the 3rd of August.



On the way home we discovered many new and wonderful places including the magnificent Hunter River with it's spectacular falls—a walk to test the abilities of the rockclimber in all of us! A stop at Silver Gull Creek had us experiencing Kimberley hospitality at it's best with Marion and Phil, a couple of Yachties who have been squatting there—in style—for the past 15 years. A swim in their 32 degree spring fed pool was a highlight, especially with the window to enjoy the view from.

We managed to catch a barra or two which is no mean feat in the middle of the dry season and found the motherload of tuna, trevally, queenfish and mackerel in a massive tide rip not far from an island or two.



By the time we made it back to the King George we were amazed to see water still flowing over the falls and really enjoyed another climb and look around at the top. Crossing the "Blownapart" this time around was one of the best crossings we've had anywhere and upon arriving at the Little Moyle the boats were deployed to find dinner. Mal & Gnomes put their deckie to shame (as they should) and brought home all the goldie fillets required for a big tasty feast. A quick fish up the river the next morning produced some quality barra and mud crabs to keep everyone smiling before the last leg back into Cullen Bay.

It was nice to be home but the magic of the Kimberley stays with you for a lifetime. A few days recovery and we're back into it again with many memories and dreams of the journeys yet to come.

Skippers Tales

Well....where do I start?...The first half of season 2006 had it all. Perhaps the biggest news was the acquisition of our Kimberley Fishing Tour Operators License. This has opened up a whole new world of charter fishing destinations for us.

The good ship was lifted out of the water in Feb for it's periodic Hull Survey and a bum scrub and paint job. Pouring rain soon put stop to the painting so that was re-scheduled for June. Then strong winds, big seas and rain squalls challenged us on almost every trip to Bathurst Island, but luckily we were catching in excess of 1500 barra a week once we got there, along with mud crabs, also in plague proportions.

Just when we thought the Dry season was upon us, in late April Cyclone Monica threw a spanner in the works. Testiment to the quality of fishing

at Barra Base though, we continued to catch bucket-loads of barra all the way through to mid June.

The Kimberley tested our metal in more ways than one, but once again, good things don't come easy, and through all the hurdles of bad weather and breakdowns, we still had an awesome time fishing and exploring this part of our world.

The Broome Sailfish Comp was a cracker, and the sight of 50 sailfish racing down the swells in our wake, jostling for position to be the ones to nail every bait and teaser we could throw at them, was worth all the hardships we had been through in getting ourselves and our boat to Broome.

Everyone's favourite deckie, Antony, even managed to go the whole trip without dropping a rod over the side. He's

a qualified coxswain now so hang on tight if you're out fishing with him when you next come up.

Speaking of hanging on, Naomi can now also be formally let loose at the wheel (joystick) of Hyland-C as she has just completed her Master 5 skipper's ticket.

Looking ahead, we have a very busy end to our year with half a dozen charters over to Barra Base and the remainder of trips heading for the North coast of Melville Island.

Next year is shaping up as another busy one with a steady flow of bookings already locked away, so if you want a good tide week in 2007 don't leave it too long.

See you when you're next on board...

M. J. Malles

Happy Fishing!

Darwin Bluewater Charters
Always raising the bar.

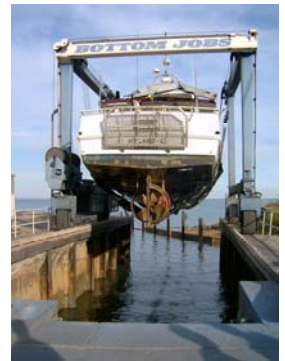
Last Chance to get your quotes in to Fish Finder for the Jake the Parrot competition... There's a great prize pack to win.

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Don't forget to check out our new website... darwinbluewater.com.au



Mal is presented with his very own Jimmy Buffet surfboard by Phil Smith during our recent margarita party