

F&B's Small Craft Section

Quintrex 455 Hornet Wildfisher Evaluation - Part 2

Last month we launched the first leg of our Two Part Review of the performance of the new F&B project boat 'Nomad' and provided some initial impressions of the boat from it's maiden voyage to Weipa.

For those not yet familiar with this new F&B Project, the vessel is a Quintrex 455 Wildfisher powered by a new 60hp Yamaha 4-stroke outboard. The boat and motor are supported by a specially modified Redco trailer.

So far in this series we've looked in detail at the Quintrex hull and figured out what it is that makes it such a good hull to deploy in a variety of fishing situations. As we've learned, this 4.5m tinnie was just at

home 10 miles offshore from Weipa as it was up a 5 metre wide feeder creek catching barra. This month we'll look at the motor selection, prop trials, performance data and the internal layout features.

Motor Choices Quintrex recommend that this boat is ideally suited to a 50hp motor, with 70hp listed as the maximum.

Now, with 2 guys on board sharing a tackle box and going home for lunch, a 50hp would probably be just right. Once you put 3 guys, fishing gear and an esky, not to mention an electric and 2x130A/H batteries into the boat, a 60hp would be the absolute minimum you would ever want to consider. In fact, I would suggest that the optimum power for this boat would be an 80hp Yamaha 4-stroke. I've already done a lot of hours in the boat and have spent a lot of time considering the correct motor selection and I am convinced that an 80hp would be spot-on.

When we were in Weipa with the boat fully loaded for a day's fishing, the GPS was giving us 26 or 27 knots top speed with the 60hp motor. That's all good and well, but on flat water this hull should be doing at least 35-40 knots. When fishing a big river system a fast boat will often help you work the tides much better.

For example, you can fish the first of the run out at the mouth and then race up the top of the river to get the run out further upstream. There is reason for the speed, I'm not just a speed freak!

So, let's say that we went for the 80hp or 100hp Yamaha at about 166kg compared to the 60hp at around 110kg, what would that mean? Well, I suspect that Quintrex have made a maximum motor recommendation not based on



(Note : The structure over the outboard is a non-standard, specially made camera platform - PW)

Quintrex 455 Hornet Wildfisher

performance, but based on weight on the transom, and transom height. I would be concerned that at the current transom height the extra weight would be slightly dangerous with 3 guys wandering around the boat. I am going to be questioning Quintrex in the near future to discover why their transom is so low.

However, let's not forget that the motor fitted to this boat is more than acceptable. The Yamaha 60hp 4 stroke is a superb engine, which, like all Yamaha 4 strokes is strangely quiet. You can sit next to an engine doing 6000 rpm and conduct a conversation at normal levels - amazing stuff.

I'm not even going to attempt to explain why this motor is so quiet, or what it is that goes on under that silver cowling that makes it such a joy to use. But the Yamaha engineers have done something to produce undoubtedly the quietest and most vibration free 60hp engine on the market. The fact that we only had to fill up the Quinnie every second day was also a nice bonus, especially considering the distances we did each day. But you can check the fuel figures for that info in a later

Rear view of storage areas, plus battery box and small live bait tank on port side. Note Damon's level side decks and the (relatively) low transom cutaway; it needs the 25"XL option.



issue.

I must be honest here and say that compared to the 50hp Honda on my previous tinnie, the Yamaha is much smoother running at idle, but the noise level is reasonably similar. Although at idle I would again say that the Yamaha is slightly quieter than the Honda, but going at speed it is all very similar. Fuel figures are difficult to compare as the boats are so drastically different.

With the correct prop on the boat, the Yamaha provided incredible acceleration for a boat this big and heavy, and the acceleration was noticeable all the way through the rev range. This meant that you could work the boat very nicely in rough conditions to get the best ride out of the hull.

Overall, the 60hp Yamaha is probably the best engine for this boat as it stands. But when Quintrex lift their rating, it won't be a difficult decision for me to whack an 80hp on the back.

Internal Layout The internal layout in this boat is very interesting, and it is probably worth going over each area of the boat one at a time and discussing the reasoning behind each item.

Fuel Tank The underfloor fuel tank is located amidships and has a capacity of 68 useable litres. There is storage space for a further 23 litre tub under the rear casting deck. The boat is set up with breathers on the port and starboard aft corners, which allows the tank to be filled quite quickly - a very nice touch.

I would, however, suggest that on a hull as capable and inherently

seaworthy as this, a larger underfloor tank would have been more suitable, especially considering my feelings about this hull with an 80hp motor. But having said that, the boat has a capacity of 90 odd litres between the tanks, and we never managed to use more than 40 litres on any single day's fishing. And believe me, we covered a lot of water to use 40 litres. So maybe for 99% of users, the 70 l underfloor tank is more than adequate.

The fuel tank is fitted with one of those "you beaut" fuel tank gauges that they make especially for boats. You know, the ones that never work and help you to run out of fuel-the same sort all manufacturers put on everything that floats under 30ft.

Sarcasm aside, I am yet to find a manufactured fuel tank gauge that will keep working on a trailer boat. The only "gauge" I've ever seen that works is a 6ft length of wooden dowel with markings on it. Only problem on this boat is that you can't poke a stick straight down into the fuel tank.

Underfloor Storage and Casting Deck Setup

This is a huge feature of the 455 Wildfisher, and really the reason most people buy the boat. The accompanying pictures tell a lot about the huge amount of storage under the decks, and about the deck arrangement on the boat. But they don't tell what a joy it was to use.

Starting at the bow, we have a raised forward section to the casting deck, with anchor storage underneath. This section has two fold open hatches. Being slightly raised from the rest of the casting deck this was an ideal position from which to operate the foot pedal on the Minn Kota electric. This forward platform was actually big enough to allow one person to stand up there and sort of get out of the way of the other angler using the casting deck. It basically means that the useable length of the boat has been extended - which means less hooks in people from a careless mate standing too close.

The rear casting deck has 2 hatches which fold open to reveal similarly large storage compartments. The hatch for the starboard compartment only opens upon removal of the helm seat, which is less than ideal in my book, but actually worked to a degree. The life jackets and other long term storage items can be put in here and simply