

Part Two: Darwin To Broome

Whilst in Darwin, our 13 days in the Cullen Bay Marina were spent preparing the boat for the next six week trip.

We completed shopping chores, repairs and maintenance, a full clean of the interior and exterior, and we spent 3 days of R & R with the kids doing what they wanted to. This included going to the Darwin library for two days where there are many activities for the kids, including puzzles, games, books, computers, crafts, train sets, doll houses and more. They also went to the park and McDonalds, just to round off their assimilation back into the real world.

At night time, the adults attended Darwin's famous Mindl markets. These are deservedly famous for great entertainment in the form of buskers, and unique crafts including crocodile skins and skulls. The food is another important factor at these markets, with about 30 different stalls, each offering a different (French, Chinese, Viet, Thai, India, etc) culinary delight.



The remarkable story of a well travelled family from Melbourne who took the 'sea change' concept to heart. They took off on a sea-going fishing adventure of remarkable proportions. Together with their two little kids, and a bunch of friends, Steve & Louise Yeoman fished - and fished - from one side of Australia to another in a voyage of epic proportions. This month, we join them as they steam around the top from Darwin down to Broome, via the magnificent Kimberley.

Story & Most Pics By Louise Yeoman

Kimberley Crossing

We left Darwin on June 27 at 11am, after 2 hours refuelling *Steel Haven's* 1350 litre fuel tank supplying the twin 180 hp Ford diesels. We used 3132 litres of diesel between Townsville and Darwin, so we had a good idea of what we needed to get down to Broome.

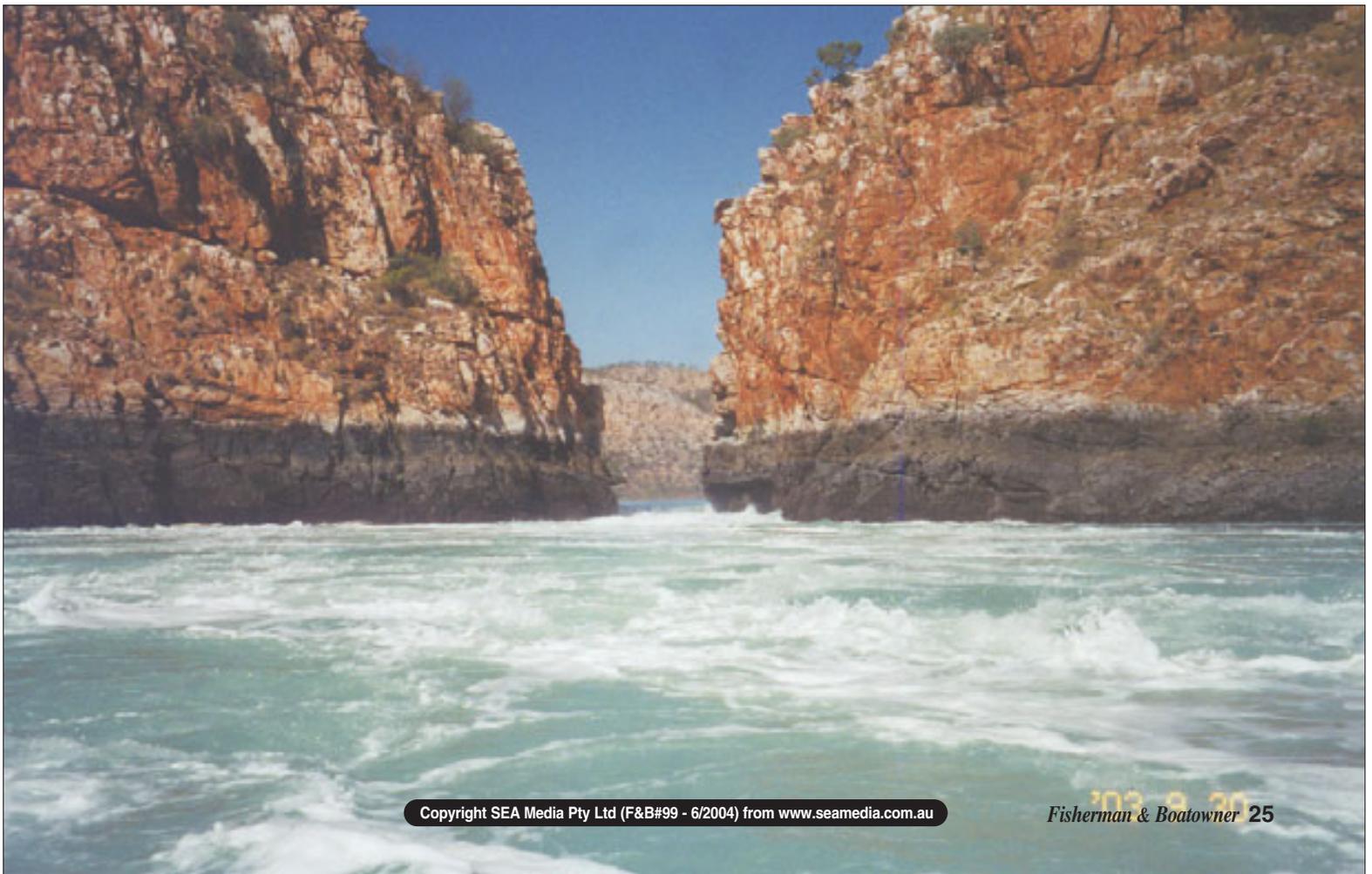
This time, we were also taking 400 litres of outboard fuel for the two tinnies, and had arranged to collect more fuel at a remote holiday camp in the Kimberley. We also had extra fuel drums tied onto the bow of *Steel Haven* for this leg.

We motored for 23 hours across the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf (128 mile), stopping briefly to view 30 Pilot whales feeding near a calm reef. We were very lucky with the weather. The seas were glassed-out, which made the trip much more comfortable.

We awoke or rather arrived (who can sleep while driving at night) at 5am to witness the



Ken, Cooper and Louise confronting the whirlpools and “horizontal falls” created by the regions incredible tidal range(s) - this is surely one of the most spectacular natural wonders boating families can experience in Australia. Oh - and yes, they did make it through ! And continued on to fight many fine sportfish in what must surely be the ‘trip of a lifetime’.



The Kimberley Coast is spectacular and remote, with many exceptional natural features. **Below:** This is the tidal run-off from Montgomery Reef - it's totally covered by water at mid to high tide. **Right:** The rugged grandeur of the exposed orange gorges of King George River near the northern (Darwin) end of the Kimberley.



reflection of the sunrise on the magnificent cliff face, outside the Berkeley River entrance. *Ahhhh - we were back in the Kimberley!*

A feeling of warmth, excitement and achievement filled us as another dream was fulfilled. A dream which we thought would take many more years to come true.

After sounding the river entrance with the tinny to ensure a safe navigation through the mouth, *Steel Haven* was on her way. We all crowded the flybridge to view the magnificent towering gorge, running the entire length of the river.

We anchored and took the two tinnies off to explore the river. All of the usual big waterfalls were now only a drizzle, as it had not been a Big Wet season. We were hoping to fill *Steel Haven* with water, but that was not possible.

After motoring 10 mile upstream, we came to the end, the top of the river. After a small hike over some large rock boulders, we were rewarded with small salt water rock pools where we stripped off, and cooled down. We carefully chose our swimming holes due to the presence of salt water crocodiles. We were sure to climb high,

and surround ourselves with large rocks. Steve and Cooper found a small fresh waterfall in which they had a very cold shower. Cooper explained the force of the water was like golf balls hitting you.

Along the river, we had a fish, and put the two crab pots in the water. An assortment of fish was caught, including a barramundi by Cooper, assisted by Dad. We feasted on mouth watering mud crabs, and barramundi fillets for dinner while surrounded by a 40 metre cliff which was glowing gold with the sun going down.

Another beautiful end to a superb, memorable day.

After a calm night, we departed at 7am to continue west about to the King George River. Why leave such a great place? "Because the next place is meant to be better, and we only have 6 weeks to explore as much as possible."

We arrived at King George River after manoeuvring through the sand bars at low tide. The scenery was similar to the Berkeley River, and the waterfalls were also all dried up, which meant we still could not have a long shower, or fill up our water tanks. Oh well, we still had good tucker, and a perfect spot for a good night's rest.

Moving On

I absolutely love the rugged beauty of the Kimberleys. We motor past islands and rocky outcrops, and view the occasional palm or pandanna trees amongst the rocky hills and tall sandstone escarpments. The sandstone changes from a pink stone, and oxidises to a brilliant orange copper colour. At sunrise and sunset, the cliffs look like gold. At times the rocks are so eroded from the endless water flow in the wet season, that they balance upon each other defying gravity.

Ken had previously arranged to collect fuel from Faraway Bay Camp 12 months before we left Darwin. We stopped here for 2 hours to refuel. This process was fairly outdated. We had to load the 200 litre fuel drums into the tinny, with the help of an old front loader to hoist them, and move the tinny out to Steel Haven where Steve had to re-fuel using a manual hand pump.

We needed 500 litres (\$2.00 litre) of diesel, and spring-fed water was hosed in too. From then on, the desalinator would get used regularly. The owner then invited us up to the exclusive camp for a cuppa.



The camp is only accessible via plane or sea. It has a magnificent rock swimming pool, which feels as if you are swimming on the edge of the cliff. The camp caters for 12 people with 8 very basic sleeping rooms which are made out of tin roofs with flywire walls. Cost for 4 days is \$2,875 all inclusive.

Onto The Drysdale River

With the fuel and water topped up, we continued our journey around the most northern peninsula of W.A. to anchor in a creek mouth (no name). I supplied dinner with a nice barramundi, and a couple of losses because our net was not big enough to land my big barra. Jacks of all sizes were plentiful with small trevally, cod, and cuda. A couple of crocs were sighted. The barra frame in the berley bucket caused a hammerhead frenzy in the middle of the night, with the 10foot critters at the bucket and crashing into the 2 tinnies.

At daylight, the tinnies headed for the creek, to collar a barra at the rock bar entrance. Further up the creek jacks, trevally, cod, cuda and bream added to an exciting morning before returning to *Steel Haven* for a cooked

brekkie of bacon, eggs and spag on toast at 10am.

It was so peaceful and calm sitting in the tinny casting lures, while watching the sunrise across the rugged land, with the skies a brilliant array of colours. You really do not mind being up at 5.30am.

The outgoing tide had us on the move again, and then into the Drysdale River until the sandbars suggested we anchor. The standard Navman G.P.S. does not show tide info, and this information is essential in the Kimberley's having regard for the difficulties of anchoring in the large (up to 12m) tides. Fortunately, we had met up with some old friends in Darwin before we left, and they were able to download the tidal information into our computer for us.

We had an all day fishing adventure trolling all the way to the top of the Drysdale.

We were not successful with barramundi, however, other species and wildlife kept the day interesting. The crocs in this river are not afraid of visitors. Twice we were close to crocs, and they did not shy away. We stopped for lunch at the rock pools once again at the top, and while Lou did some

further rock climbing, the guys furiously cast lures at big queenies waiting at the bottom of the small waterfalls. The kids happily splashed around in the pools, all the time keeping a good eye out for crocs.

After lunch, we stopped at a deserted fishing camp set-up by a group of fisho's who get a sea plane to fly them straight into the camp. The camp was very basic, yet comfortable, with three cabins built from tree branches and fly net. Even the bed frames were made out of tree branches. The shower has to be the best outdoor wash area I have ever seen.

A man made curved rock wall, provides privacy, but has the most spectacular view of the river and sandstone cliffs. It was here I noticed another large crocodile just cruising about in the water below. We decided to sit and enjoy some tinned fruit until he moved away.

The most exciting part of the day was trolling back to *Steel Haven*. Cooper was trolling when a fish grabbed his lure and ran. The line was peeling, while Cooper hung on tight to his rod. The tinny chased the fish, while Cooper retrieved the line. At times, the rod bent so far, I am

surprised it did not snap. The fight went for about 10 minutes. Cooper handled it like a pro, and captured a barracuda bigger than him. I was more excited than him, and so proud. It was about 12kg. Fantastic.....

Another daylight start, to go with the high tide, we moved further west across Napier Broome Bay (above Kulumburru). Ken and family went fishing in one tinny, and had a ball on 5kg G.Ts and 6kg queenies.

While they were catching fish, we took the 2nd tinny to an island to explore and look for shells. We found about a dozen fresh turtle tracks, but it appeared that poachers had already been onto the beach, taking the eggs.

Our next stop was Sir Graham Moore Island in Half Moon cove. We had some R&R, then it was time to go and explore the area. Frank caught his first barramundi of 76cm, and a further 7 species were caught trolling along the edge of the rocks and mangroves. We took our tinny out, and enjoyed watching the kids having a ball catching juvenile G.T's and queenfish. Whilst only 1.5kg fish, they really give a good fight. Emmily's queen jumped 4 times. We had a little rest on the beach, and had a bit of exercise. The kids pretended to make a fire place, while I observed an eagle in her nest, on top of large rocks, collecting food for her young. A quick dash to the tinny (another large croc sighted) and back to *Steel Haven* to prepare our assortment of fish for tea.

We trolled to Vansittart Bay on the west side of the old Truscott airstrip used during WW-II.

Taking the tinnies to the beach, we had a short walk over the sand dunes, across a dry swamp, through some jungle, and we came to a USAF DC3 wreck from the war. It crashed in 1942 when it ran out of fuel, and we're told, all crew survived. It was an interesting sidelight to our fishing adventures. Back at the tinny, the water had excellent visibility, so we had a quick dip to cool off.

Coral trout, trevally, flag, cuda, and queenies completed the day's action. We had to dine on barra and coral trout for dinner. What a delicious dilemma.

In the morning, we left in search of a mother pearling ship, hoping they could provide us with some engine oil. We arrived at the pearl farm, called them up on the radio, and they were happy to accommodate our needs.



Cooper, Emmily-Rose, Ken and I took the tinny over to the 3 story high ship, and they invited us on board for a tour. They have a maximum of 35 staff at one time, whom usually fly in on a sea plane for two weekly shifts, home again for one. Flash living quarters, a gym, large recreation room, two cooks, (delicious menu), house domestic, (makes beds, does washing) sounded like a good place to work! The cooks sent us away with a big bag of home made choc chip, macadamia nut bickies. Yummm!! They asked us to visit on our way back.

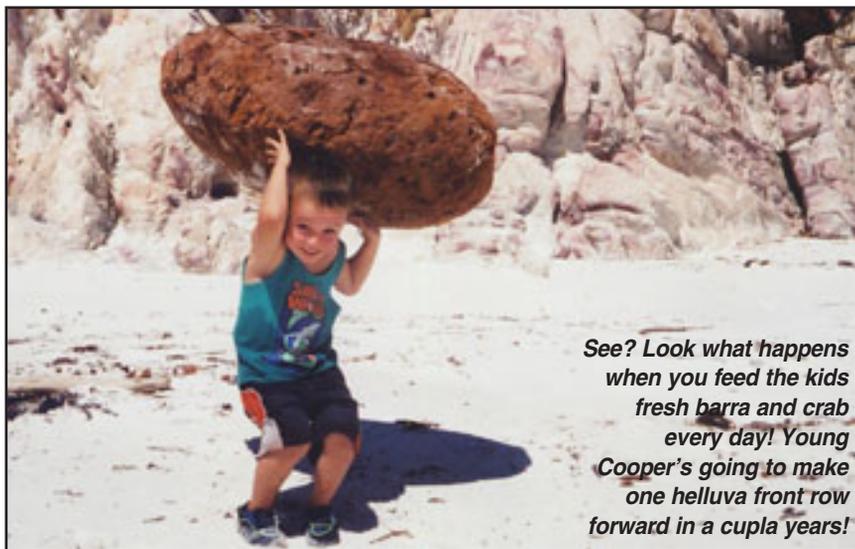
Queenfish Extravaganza

As we rounded Hat Point, the queenfish were in abundance. This turned out to be our next stop for 3 nights. When you are on to a good thing . . . We are talking big queenfish - 6-8 kilo. We lost count of the double hook ups and the number of fish we caught. We were looking for more of a

challenge, and moved to lighter gear for more excitement. The queenie extravaganza continued for the whole time with poppers and flies being ferociously attacked.

Three times we also found a patch of G.T's, and managed to land one in each case. Steve caught his first G.T, and queenfish on fly gear. I also caught my first ever fish on fly. Steve did not warn me to watch out for my knuckles. When the fish runs, you get rubber burn on your left hand, and de-knuckled on the other. Nevertheless, I was rapt to land 2 queenfish on the fly rod.

My most memorable moment here was when Cooper landed his first 7kg queenfish. These fish are a great fighting sportfish. They jump out of the water, then dive deep. It was such a tremendous effort. Cooper's reel handle was broken, yet he still managed to catch it. He is a natural, although he looked uncomfortable.



See? Look what happens when you feed the kids fresh barra and crab every day! Young Cooper's going to make one helluva front row forward in a cupla years!

Onto his 2nd queenfish, this time the reel handle got wrapped up in his shirt, but yes, the fish was well hooked, and landed again. Cooper's arms were tired, so he was designated tinny driver – he handles the boat well, although he's so short, he cannot see obstacles in the water.

When we landed on the beach for a walk and a stretch, and to burn our rubbish, we noticed 50 or so large spider crabs running for cover. It was a funny sight to see these large crabs with long legs scampering along.

It has now been two weeks since we left Darwin, so have a treat of satay chicken for tea, and delicious pancakes - our weekly treat.

Sunday 13 July Cape Voltaire

Cape Voltaire – beautiful rocky outcrops, and contrasting scenery, large iron ore staircases, crocodiles, rock wallabies, nurse sharks, and schools of G.Ts. The clear sandy bottom waters

were very inviting, especially in the heat. The kids were swimming on the beach while daddy was casting the bait net. While keeping a look out for crocs and sharks, I spied a fish in the shallows. Casting a lure, I was rewarded with a 50cm Japanese large eye bream. The rocks visible at low tide were covered with large oysters, but we were scared off by the large crocodile footprints.

We travelled south, down into Yorke Sound. After exploring 2 small fresh water creeks, we discovered and explored an old Aboriginal cave (now collapsed), covered with a midden of empty cockle shells on what appeared to be a sort of natural verandah.

We then moved into the picturesque Prince Frederick Harbour. The P.F Harbour is surrounded by steep rusty cliffs, many islands, and a deep green rainforest. Our main interest lay in exploring the Hunter River.

Snapshots from a family album that will be treasured by many for years to come. We have only published a tiny fraction of the amazing fish photos - selecting the geography in preference.

Fishing The Hunter River

On arrival in the Hunter River, within five minutes, we were welcomed by a very inquisitive 6ft crocodile. This we found out was to be the norm in this river. At almost all the fishing spots, we were visited by a crocodile. In previous rivers, they mostly shy away and move away from the boat, however, these crocodiles are not aware that past hunters carried guns. One thing we noticed about the crocodiles is their ability to make themselves appear smaller than they actually are. It is not until they are nearly upon you, that you really notice how big and intimidating they are.

The guys successfully captured live baits with the cast net, so we were prepared for some fun.

We were fishing at the 'T' intersection of the Hunter. I had landed the best barramundi of the trip so far of 6kg (82cm). Steve had to pry his mouth open to drag him into the boat. Steve followed by catching the best Threadfin salmon. We noticed a crocodile moving closer to us, and were excitedly capturing some video footage. Steve then hooked up to a large fingermark. As soon as the croc saw the fish beside the boat, he thrust himself forward, trying to grab the fish.

Steve banged it on the head with his rod. I threw the kids down, the camera down, and pulled the anchor up. The crocodile was 6 to 7 foot, and I did not want to hang around. This crocodile meant business, and wanted our fish. It would not move, so Steve banged it on the head with an oar. We started up the motor, and moved away, much to Steve's annoyance. He wanted to stay put, as we were in a good, fishing spot. We moved about 30 metres closer to Ken, and yes, the croc followed, still wanting a feed. At this moment, Yvonne hooked up to an estuary cod which looked equally appetising to this aggressive crocodile. As soon as the cod was beside the boat, the croc pounced once again, and soon the tug of war was on.

As Ken had not yet caught a barramundi on this leg, he reckoned he would out do all of us and catch a crocodile instead. The dangerous fun

lasted about seven minutes, until Frank eventually cut the line. All the time, the croc had the fish in his mouth, thrusting around within a metre of their tinny. I thought, as long as the croc is pre-occupied, it was not annoying us, and videoed the show.

The crocodile was fed, and moved off, but the lull was only temporary. After half an hour, the process began again. I did not want to encourage the crocodile, so we moved away this time.

We went to check on our crab pots, and successfully dined on crabs, jewfish, barra, flag, fingermark and salmon again. While enjoying our feast, I shone the torch on the water, and spotted red eyes spying on us. Again, all within close proximity to the boat. Too close. Time to move on. These crocs had worked us out.

The outgoing tide helped us leave the Hunter while witnessing turtles and the fascination of seeing the long toms skipping across the water. We stopped at a secluded sandy shelly beach to give the tinnies a much needed wash.

While crossing between Augustus and Heywood Islands, we encountered our first heavy traffic of humpback whales for this leg of the trip. We must have seen 30 or more, with some breaching out of the water while others lay motionless at the surface. We reef fished for coral trout while admiring these graceful mammals. Then moved on into Deception Bay to anchor.

We enjoyed 2 great day's fishing here, after catching enough live bait in the morning, our cast net providing mullet, herring and gars. Our aerator ended up overboard, so it was a struggle keeping the baits alive and continually had to change the water. Nevertheless, a total of 12 species were caught in this clean, picturesque, healthy creek. This was very colourful gorge country, with interesting root systems clinging to the sandstone walls. Large black lipped oysters (15cm diameter) dotted the rocks along with two other oyster types. The barramundi were quiet, and not one crocodile was spotted. I don't think the crocs or barra had been told about this creek.

We continued along our way for another interesting stop and history lesson. After passing Steep Island, (impressive sheer cliff) we anchored at Raft Point for a 20 minute climb up the mountain, passing many boab trees, and arrived at a cave which has some



spectacular detailed rock art and impressive views.

Note: The Wandjiina style rock art is apparently 500 years old, however, every 50 years, an elder from Derby community arranges a party to go and restore the paintings. The art tells the story of the 'Great Fish Chase', and includes paintings of rock cod, crocodile, turtles, and Wandjiinas with obvious genitalia.

Moving onto Red Cone Creek, we passed a tour boat, and 2 fishing charters, reminding us we are now only 150 km from Broome. We spent 2 days in this creek. Ken finally caught a barra for this leg, but was followed by the biggest landed barramundi of 96cm by Steve.

Another healthy creek, with lush green trees, mangroves, boabs, cabbage palms, big bird life and larger crocodiles. Maybe there is something in my theory that bigger crocs are found with the bigger barrra.

I do not like the fact that the crocodiles in these waters are too interested in us, and what we are catching, with further crocodiles

approaching our boats. While the fish were quiet, we were kept interested by a white bellied sea eagle, which we were feeding. At one point, we threw the eagle a fish which landed two feet in front of a croc, however, the eagle still got the fish. The croc opened its mouth and tried to get the eagle, but was too slow.

Another observation was the mass migration of the Cyanea jelly blubbers heading up the creek where they will spawn, then die. We saw hundreds of these up to 40cm in diameter.

Favourite Places

One of my favourite places was discovered at the end of this creek. After travelling 3 miles up the mangrove lined creek, we were met by a narrow, sandstone gorge. Before we knew it, the gorge led us to an amazing freshwater oasis. We climbed the steep rock steps to the top area of the falls, and was rewarded with a beautiful freshwater pool, with lillies - and no crocs! We were thoroughly enjoying the seclusion of the area, got naked, and were happily swimming and washing in the deep pool under the small falls.

Steve soon noticed Cooper covered in small leeches, and noticed that we all had them crawling over us. We could not get out quick enough. Never mind, we just moved down to the lower falls.

I was a bit hesitant here, knowing that in big tides, crocs could get up to this area, but Ken and crew had been safe here 10 minutes prior. The holes here are deeper and blacker, the falls much bigger and more powerful. When we finally swam over the deep holes to reach the waterfall, we were pelted by the force of the falls. It was good to know that it would have knocked any further leeches from our bodies.

This is the most freshwater we have seen, and flowing fast. It must be spring fed and fortunately for us, it had not dried up like most of the falls we had seen.

We ended back at Raft Point to anchor, again surrounded by a superb view of Steep Island, Bluff Point and sheer cliffs.

The Horizontal Falls

After breakfast, we continued to Montgomery Reef to witness the phenomenon of the cascades. This unique reef is about 220km in area,

and under the influence of 10m tides. On high tide, the reef is 5m underwater, and at low tide, it is up to 5m out of the water. The effect of the tide falling below the reef is a wonderful display of cascades flowing off the entire edge of the reef. The area attracts many turtles, birds, sharks, sea snakes, and the odd dugong.

We all went for a walk on the reef, while Steve snorkeled in a pool we found on the reef. We parked in the narrow stretch between the two reefs. The fast moving waters made a loud roar, while the fast moving currents had the boat's propellers spinning, these sounds waking us at 2.00am.

Travelling onto Talbot Bay, we passed some of the most scenic geology along the entire coastline. The Bay is made up of a lot of islands, and rocks that have broken off in large thick tablet form by fault lines and major earth movement. After passing another pearl farm, we navigated through some spectacular narrow gorges to reach the upper arm of the Talbot. We stopped here for lunch while witnessing the frights of a sea plane landing with day trippers. We really did not think they were going to make it out alive. The plane needs to descend and ascend very steeply and quickly to get out of the gorge. Hair raising stuff . . .

A visit to the Horizontal Waterfalls ('The Gaps') was a thrill seeking ride in itself. The tidal flow of powerful waters have to surge through the very narrow chasms, in the vertical escarpment creating whirlpools and strong undertows and currents. It's a bit like Myer Melbourne's post Xmas sales, when thousands of people force themselves through the double doors . . .

Steve and Frank managed to get through the gap on their first attempt just after the tide change, but our 15hp motors were not powerful enough to make it through the 2nd, and were working overtime. While Steve had fun getting thumped around, we were in Ken's tinny, hanging on tight, getting bumped around in the whirlpools, while trying to video Steve.

The levels of the water on either side of the gap can be up to three metres different at times. A bit like the rise and fall of a lock, but without the security.

Dog Leg Creek Fuel

The fun continued the following day.

In the morning, we managed to re-fuel in Dog-Leg creek. It is a new fuel outlet, still in the process of being established. 'Curly' was propositioned by the local iron-ore mine to set up a fuel outlet to service the mine. He was happy to oblige, and is in the process of building a home.

His lifestyle and business are only accessible by sea. He is a young guy who lives alone with the dingos, king browns, taipans, death adders, crocodiles, termites, and other wildlife. The fuel is \$1.50 litre, and he has a barge delivery once a week with supplies. His back yard is a white wall of rock pillars, up to 100 metres high.

He has done a bit of exploring, looking for fresh water, and has found cave art in the process.

Curly's neighbours, apart from the miners, are a couple of hermits who live the lives of modern day hippies in Silver Gull Inlet, 5 miles away. While we were fueling up, his neighbours stopped for a visit, and kindly invited us back to their place for a look, a swim and offered to fill our fresh water tanks.

I love this area so much. You travel towards the islands, and every time you think you've come to the end, a new passage, creek, or hidden gorge awaits you. Mysteries are around every bend. A lot of these areas are marked on the charts 'Inadequately surveyed' It would take you a lifetime to explore just these waters around Yampi Sound.

Silver Gull Inlet is unique in itself. Again, the landscape, rock formations, colours and vegetation are different and contrasting. Termite mounds are now a regular sight, and all shaped individually. It is amazing to see them formed on a cliff face, in amongst only rock. The scenery is so different between high tide, and low tide. At low tide, you see a further 10m of landscape. Interesting rock pillars line the gorge up Silver Gull Inlet. Once you reach the end, the only true give away of life here is the home made jetty.

Beating The Heat

After a wonderful night, a perfect anchorage, and tremendous views, we ventured up Crocodile Creek, (named because of rock formation which resembles a crocodile), and at the end, on low tide, a 12m tall stainless steel ladder installed by the mines, led us up to the rock pool.

The first thing we noticed up top was a mesh structure that housed a shrine of trinkets, made by passing visiting boats. Hanging from the ceiling, this tiny place captures memories, tokens, names, and places, all individually made. Some were made out of carved wood, shells, toilet seats, a guitar face, a stuffed monkey, all signed and etched. Some unique and well designed original pieces. We liked the old phone with the Pizza Hut 131166 number attached to it. We decided to make something in Broome to leave on our return trip.

The area also had a BBQ, a sink, and concrete paved seating within the rock wall. I could imagine the fun the miners would have had here in days gone by.

No one declines the offer to cool down in the Kimberley heat. After a careful inspection, due to the possible presence of saltwater crocodiles, we have a swim in the deep pool, set amongst surrounding rocks, with a 20 metre freshwater fall tumbling down as a back drop. Smaller rock pools run into the tidal estuary until it is high tide, then the saltwater runs into the fresh - this is when the crocs can get in.

An absolutely delightful, interesting, refreshing stop. The remainder of the day was spent reef fishing, and catching squid during the night.

A new day, a new destination. This time we stopped at a hidden silica beach. It housed many caves for exploring, and the whitest sand with clear water. We found a large brown foam ball which resembled a rock. Cooper pretended to be Hercules, while we videoed the show. In the morning at low tide, the reef was visible, and an opportunity to do some reef walking was accepted by all. Whilst from a distance the reef appeared brown and muddy, up close you could see the different species and vibrant colours of the clams, corals, shells and sea life. It was very fascinating to watch the bright yellow blue ringed octopus, while keeping our distance in the shallows. After catching some reef fish for dinner, we headed to Cape Leveque for the next anchorage.

At this point, we had rounded the tip, and were heading south down the west coast of W.A.

This part of the coast is noticeably different from the true Kimberley landscapes that we have come to love. The area is dominated by low-lying

coastal sand dunes, with Aboriginal communities dotted down the coast. We are now into our last week of this leg, and were concentrating on trying to catch some sailfish before reaching Broome.

Our 1st day game fishing was quiet, and the sea conditions quite uncomfortable with large swells. Yvonne managed a large spanish mackerel, with everyone catching mackerel tuna and long tail. Yvonne and Frank were on strike first, so they had first grab at the rods when a fish came along.

Day 2 and 3 were much the same, and at times frustrating, with up to six billfish inspecting our lures, and dead baits, but not one interested enough to touch them.

The morning of day four was very promising.

The seas were calm, and the birds were everywhere diving onto the baits, then resting on the sea. We had longtail tuna schools directly under our boat. Steve managed to catch a northern blue on the fly rod, with everyone having a go on conventional gear.

About 20 Sailfish in total, mostly in packs of up to four, approached our

lures, and stalked them from behind. Our lures could not entice them enough.

It is adrenalin pumping stuff seeing the fish at your lures, just waiting for one of them to grab the bait, knowing that you could be fighting a fish any moment. This was to be the case only three times that day. Yvonne tagged a small sail of 10kg, Frank was next with a black marlin of 30kg, and Ken released a sail of 30kg. While Steve was in the loo, it was my turn to steer the boat. I saw some whales in the distance blowing, hence, I set the course. Within 5 minutes, we were enjoying front row seats of whales nearly as wide as Steel Haven and perhaps longer, playing around us. At times diving directly under the boat, and doing full body jumps out of the water. Much fin and tail slapping was great music to our ears. We witnessed many playful pods of dolphins, balls of bait fish, sea snakes, turtles, brown booby birds and frigates all in a day.

After all the excitement, and at the end of a 3000 nautical mile journey from Townsville, we arrived in Broome, just in time to watch the camels parading at Cable Beach on

sunset.

We have had an amazing adventure, and fulfilled another dream. It was everything we hoped it would be, and more, so now we look forward to the return trip to Darwin by sea in October to do it, and see it again in the lead up to the wet.

Fishing and cruising the Kimberley is an experience we would not want to miss.

F&B