



# Kimberley Kapers

Bob & Colleen Ford's

In Part Two of this very special report, roving columnist Bob Ford takes his trimaran *Moonglow* down the top end of West Australia, fishing some of the most remote wilderness regions left in the world. Buckle up and hang on . . . !

As we reluctantly departed the Hunter River, large crocodiles drifted by in escort as we used the strongly flowing ebb tide. We sailed back west through Prince Frederick Harbour, (about the size of Moreton Bay) to Cape Torrens, with Bosun's run on shore cancelled due to the presence of dingoes.

Next morning, we sailed north west along the western shore of Bigge Island to Boomerang Bay. This large bay's southern shore is a series of natural rock breakwaters with sandy beaches between each. Behind the most eastern breakwater was a tidal inlet, again with many large crocs. Beaching *Moonglow* was easy on one of the protected beaches to scrape off our hull, - our rudder top chocked with barnacles becoming so large, they were scraping across our hull when we steered. So rapid is the tide rise and fall, two hours after our bows nosed in to touch gently on the sand, we were totally dried out.

I had a couple of hours to



kill after anchoring back out so with a little bait I travelled in our dinghy over to the end group of rocks, the extremity of the breakwater guarding the creek mouth, the tide two hours into the ebb. The sounder indicated 6 metres on the inlet side where I anchored.

The first bait was just settling when the rod was slammed down. I grabbed the rod and heaved, and was nearly pulled out of the dinghy. Only the line parting eased the straining

**Facing Page & Above: Typical Hunter River barra, and the reason for making the long run to the top of WA.**

muscles. To say I had been comprehensively blown away an understatement.

For the next live bait I was a little more prepared. No waiting. BANG, whiz, slack, cut off line lifted in the breeze. Shit, now what? I retreated back to *Moonglow* somewhat chastened - if these were mangrove jacks they were spawned in hell.

I returned the next day on an identical stage of tide, a

fresh large supply of live bait, and 30lb line instead of 20lb. It wasn't long before the Platypus pink mono was tested to the max. With a locked up drag and determination I stopped the first fish after only a 2-3m run. I stood and kept the rod high and was rewarded with a fingermark (spotted scaled sea perch) of about 4kg.

As it cut back and forth in a final desperate effort another fingermark which