

Fishing The Great Sandy Straits

With Damon Olsen & The Motley Crew!

Located only a few hours drive north of Brisbane is one of Australia's truly great boating waterways. The Great Sandy Straits is the name given to the body of water formed between mainland Australia and Fraser Island.

The Straits extend from the southern tip of Fraser Island through to Hervey Bay, about 100 kilometres north of the bottom end of Fraser Island. The area known as the Great Sandy Straits extends only about halfway up Fraser Island itself, giving some idea as to the size of Fraser Island.

The Sandy Straits comprise countless islands, creeks, reefs and sandflats. And the best part is that they are largely untouched. The central section of the Sandy Straits is reasonably inaccessible, providing excellent fishing for a variety of species on a year round basis. Species such as whiting, flathead, bream, golden and giant trevally, spanish, school and spotted mackerel, longtail and mac tuna, snapper, parrot, mangrove jacks, threadfin salmon, and sweetlip live in this waterway, not to mention the occasional stray black marlin.

This list of species gives some idea as to the variety of fishing environments available in the Sandy Straits. As can be seen on the accompanying map, the open expanse of deep water between Big Woody Island and Moon Point offers ample hunting grounds for all of the above species. While a trip into the creeks and sandflats of the central

It had been talked about for months. Fishing heaven right on Brisbane's back doorway, and only a few miles from where the Olsen's charter business was being put in place, out of Urangan Boat Harbour.

Okay, so the recipe includes the mothership, the Quinnie Hornet Wildfisher, a Sea Jay Magnum with a new Honda 20 4-stroke - and a cast comprising Ben, Steve, John Olsen, and F&B's resident tackle nutter, Aaron Concord.

So they were ready. Aaron and his tackle boxes took up all the available space in the 46' mothership - and the rest of the crew squeezed into the tinnies . . .

Straits allows opportunities to tangle with the likes of golden trevally, mangrove jacks, threadfin salmon, bream whiting and big flathead. The accompanying map does little to provide an idea of the huge maze of mangrove lined creeks in the area. The whole area from the Mary River mouth down to the bottom end of Fraser Island is littered with winding

creeks, islands and mudflats.

This month we're going to have a closer look at a trip we conducted at the start of summer with the "Odyssey" and a couple of tinnies. We were quite keen to put in a concerted effort fishing some of the sandflats around Moon Point and also the more inaccessible areas of the central Great Sandy Straits.

The Trip It was decided that a week exploring the Great Sandy Straits with a couple of tinnies in tow would be a good way to run in the recently finished "Odyssey". The folks at Seajay and Honda were kind enough to lend us a 4m tinnie with a new Honda 20hp outboard to accompany the Quintrex Hornet on this trip, and with the 2 tinnies between the 5 of us, we were set for a bit of fun. Accompanying me on this trip were my father (John Olsen) and mates Ben, Steve and Aaron.

The plan was to head down the Straits in search of a couple of things. Firstly, we were keen to try catching a few golden trevally on the sand flats, preferably sight-casting on fly, but the weather was going to have more say in the method than anything.

Secondly, we were very keen to check out the maze of mangrove-lined estuaries and find out if there were any numbers of mangrove jacks to be caught. Of course, a few mudcrabs thrown in for good measure was also on the cards.

The charts we had for the Sandy Straits showed a huge maze of mangrove creeks around Turkey

Steve with his biggest ever fish, about 8 kg of golden trevally taken on a shallow running Gold Bomber. Inset: And off it goes to fight another day. Beautiful.

