

Time Out - On The Love River

Even for those who haven't been there, Weipa is renowned as a fisherman's paradise presenting a multitude of fish species, all within easy striking distance of Weipa itself. But when George Jekyll's visit centred around the arrival of a close friend's new 7.4 m Sportsfish called *Time Out*, their thoughts moved to even more isolated areas within range of the new boat. They made plans to travel down to the legendary Love River, approx 50 miles south of Weipa, on the eastern side of the Gulf of Carpentaria, Qld.

Words by George Jekyll, pics by everyone within reach of the camera !

Now the idea behind leaving an area that has been protected from the pros' nets for 20 odd years and going to a river that exists under their constant attention, could be questioned in the pure fishing sense. But the 50 plus nautical miles to get there was the challenge we needed for the new boat, along with a little bit of the isolation all fishermen crave.

Planning this trip had commenced months earlier when I contacted local Weipa guide, Craig Jenkins. A more

helpful person you wouldn't find. Although the Love River is generally out of range for his boat, he has been there and fished it, so we enlisted his services for the first trip down to the Love River.

With Craig, our party had now grown to five, and four of these were not of inconsequential proportions. In fact, a quick addition gave us over 500kg just in personnel. Then we added ice, liquid refreshments, food, cooking gear, sleeping gear and of course, fishing tackle and personal

items - all on top of some 300 litres of fuel. We were starting to ask serious questions about our expectations and the new boat's capabilities.

Leaving Weipa 0530 hours and we were in the water off Evans Landing, with Craig Jenkins wasting no time getting his hand on the wheel and guiding us out through the Weipa leads.

We then set a course to a mark about 3 nautical miles off Thud Point. There was a 2.0 to 2.5 m south westerly swell

that we were heading into with a rising south easterly, but even with the heavy load, *Time Out* was travelling comfortably into the swell at about 4,000 revs, making 17 knots over the ground. The torque of the Honda 90's and the blade area of the twin engines was very evident. All those questions in the back of our minds were being answered.

By the time we were off Thud Point conditions had deteriorated. With the south easterly giving us 15 to 20 knots, and the south westerly swell really confusing things, we were at the point where comfortable travel demanded a drop back in revs to a speed over the

ground of 14 knots. But with the hull handling it beautifully, despite the difficult conditions, the boat could maintain this speed for hours.

We arrived at the entrance to the Love River at about 0915 hours, or I should say the general area of the entrance, for over the broad expanse of sandbanks, a defined channel was very difficult to find.

We could see barra nets off to the western side of the beach, so we worked our way in from the northerly direction, swinging over towards the eastern side of the entrance. There was not a lot of water under us being in the last 3 hours of the run out tide, but once in the river there was good water, so we hit the shore to stretch our legs.

The "Genesis" bowsprit boarding ladder is excellent for these conditions, particularly with a very large "mud gecko" checking us out! Once ashore what else to do except start throwing lures at the nearest snags.

This produced, apart from juvenile Queensland groper, fingermark and salmon, the first barra for *Time Out* - a 68cm fish I nailed on the ever-reliable Gold Bomber.

While this was going on, Craig took his cast net and supplied us with live bait, but they were hard to come by, mainly scoring larger mullet more suitable for dead bait which were iced down for later on. Refreshed from our trip we organised ourselves and went further upstream to an area recommended by Craig, and started trolling.

Lure selection usually presents a problem in a totally new area, doesn't it? If nothing is happening, you are never quite sure if it is the lures, the tide, or the time of the day, but when one particular lure - the Elton John - scored the first four barra to a few cod on the others, there was some re-evaluating done.

In particular, no matter what I did,

