

Another F&B Boating Adventure Series

Planning The Great North Oz Adventure



Introducing a very special new series from the F&B team of writers and photographers ... sharing their considerable experience of living, working and fishing the northern most waters of the continent. Spanning the two big states - WA and QLD - plus spectacular Northern Territory, plus all the rugged coast between, the



series will tackle everything the southern based angler needs to know to enjoy one of the greatest adventures left in Australia - to fish, to explore, and to appreciate the Top End of this great country. Many writers and specialists are involved - this month, Bob Ford tells it like it is . .

P-4

A Virgin In Paradise

Introducing the most unusual view on fishing the Top End you are ever likely to read, from a man who has spent the past 12 months fishing almost every inch of it. From Cairns, up to the tip of Cape York and on to Thursday Island, and then back down and around the entire Gulf, few people have ever seen this world more closely than Bob Ford. In this special report, this veteran fishing guide presents a view that some may find disappointing, to say the least. But sometimes the myths need to be debunked . . . now read on !

Wow! In four or five pages, condense into print 30 years of estuary fishing knowledge still being added to on virtually a daily basis.

Sure Peter, no trouble at all, easy, here goes.

Welcome to my world. . .

The tropical estuary creek, where everything can be very large indeed. The creek can be as wide as any river found south, and run for 20 nautical miles. They can be shrouded by lush rainforest or forests of impenetrable mangroves, sandbanks, mud banks, rock bars, swarming with sandfly and sometimes clouds of mosquitoes.

Your destination North Queensland? Far North Queensland? Or Nirvana - the Gulf of Carpentaria? On arrival fish will surrender themselves up to you! Barramundi, queenfish, mangrove jacks and mudcrabs.

I'm sure writers like myself have

instilled this image. The vast majority of southern visitors, go north – but leave without ever seeing a barramundi. At the Nassau River, in the Gulf of Carpentaria recently, we spoke with some Southern Queensland fishermen who had been camped at the river's mouth for two weeks, caught a small black jew in a deep hole on day one, couldn't get a sniff of a barra, which they desperately wanted and became even more dismal when I pointed out their 30cm Javelin were now 10cm below the new legal length, and that the 100 odd fillets far exceeded the total of 10 only now fish of this species permitted to be in each person's possession, in total, not per day or trip out, but for their entire holiday.

And be aware, the good folk of the fisheries authorities do carry out random roadside checks of vehicles heading out of the Gulf country.

These guys had lures of every description, and colour and tackle most small stores couldn't afford to stock all at once, and were really pissed 30 minutes later when I returned and showed them a barramundi. Not being a complete bastard I spent 10 minutes imparting a few clues, but will never know if they made good on their last day's effort as we departed.

Sorry Peter, I hope you are not reliant on advertisers whose noses I'm about to put out of joint, but these are the facts, as I know them.

DON'T buy a 4WD to fish up this way. DON'T buy that 6000 cc super wammo wopper stopper combo. DO bring the tinnie - 10ft to 14ft is just fine. I use a 9'6" Tupperware dinghy. DON'T buy a specialised punt. The little V bottom tinnie or V nose punt is excellent. Tow it or roof top it on the family sedan. DON'T target the Gulf country first trip north, stay on the East