

Down The Daly River

Story & Pics By Mike O'Neil & His Travelling & Fishing Mates From Northern NSW

It was a hell-of-a trip, from our first overnight camp site on the banks of the Moonie River beside the Nindigully Pub, to our last overnight stay... also at the Nindigully Pub, about 80km south of St George in south-west Queensland.

Somewhere about the middle of that stretch, we spent 15 days chasing barra on the Northern Territory's Daly River. We were revisiting that magnificent stretch of water after a five year absence fishing other tropical destinations.

From busted props to jammed throttles... a few close encounters with Jurassic Park lizards... to a medical emergency, this trip had it all.

But let's start at the beginning. Fishing buddy Mike Parker and I rolled into the Nindigully Pub eight hours after we left Macksville on the Mid North Coast of NSW. Already perched at the bar were Russ Roberts and his son Glen.

Below: The Daly River has a very healthy population of crocs. Small ones like this little bloke, like to get as much early sun as they can. Crocs this size are plentiful... but don't be lulled into a false sense of security, there are some saurians here that would easily get a run in Jurassic Park.



It didn't take long before pub management fired up a video of Ben Dark promoting the establishment on the idiot box. From this informative video we learned the population of Nindigully stood at nine for most of the year... but swelled into the

Above: Nindigully Pub, some 80km shy of St George in South-west Queensland, has the best tucker you will find along the track and offers free camping along the banks of the Moonie River. Just grab a beer at the bar and you can make use of the amenities, including hot showers.

Right: Mike O'Neil poses with a solid saltwater barra destined for the table



Left: Twenty minutes north of Longreach, we pulled up at this roadside camp area for a few beers and a good night's rest. Night time camps along the track are quick and simple. We use our boats as rudimentary caravans... a swag and small tarp are all you need, unless you endure a tropical downpour. We call this one the Hornet Hilton.

Left Centre: These are some of the author Mike O'Neil's homemade lures. He likes 'em bright and flashy and in three depth ranges – one, three and five metres.



thousands for dirt bike meets and New Year's Eve.

The feed and hospitality that night were bloody terrific, so good in fact, we made a pact to cut our trip short a day so we could make it back to the pub for a wind-down camp... and so Russ could attempt the 1kg T-bone feed.

It was May and although a tad cool, we stuck to our plan of sleeping in the boats, both 4.75 Quintrex (one a Hornet, the other a Topender). We were quite comfortable in our swags,

