



**Neil Dunstan:
Ebb & Flow**

For the last three months, the weather has been shocking for boaties in north Queensland, and apart from a couple of quick trips out in the Quintrex for an hour or two between wind blasts, the Trojan has sat in the yard getting dirty without catching a fish.

This usually gives me a serious case of cabin fever and blue water fever for which the only known cure is to dip your elbows into the sea at least twenty miles off shore. Usually I do not take the boat out on weekends or public holidays as I try not to get in the way of people who can only go out during these times. As I'm retired, I go out (weather permitting) whenever I want to, at other times.

When the weather report came up just before Easter with excellent conditions from Good Friday I thought that the working fishos would just have to put up with me, because I was not going to miss out on a trip even if it was during Easter. As I was thinking about where to go I received a call from Alvan Paynter, the owner of the charter vessel "Obsession" enquiring



Above: 'Obsession' from Mackay's "Cast & Catch Charters" took advantage of an Easter cancellation for its owner, Alvan Paynter, occasional skipper Neil Dunstan and a couple of locals to check out some new marks - and didn't they do a good job of that!
Left: Two berths + 4 blokes = 2 swags to go on the floor of the cockpit, and stay on the roof during the day.

Big Easter Reds Off The Rubble

whether I was interested in an over nighter, starting on Good Friday.

I often skipper this vessel on the shorter charters, and as such, I was aware that there were a couple of charters over Easter in the offing. When I mentioned this to Alvan he said "Look, the bookings still have not been confirmed - so let's get out and catch some fish for ourselves, and check out a couple of those new locations for the future."

I didn't need to be asked twice, so arrangements were made to leave on the

tide on Friday, and head out to Double Island (on the northern end of the Beverly Islands) to camp the night, then travel further out to the fifty metre line in the main shipping channel the following morning. This is about forty five n. miles offshore and we were hoping to get on to some of the big red emperor that we have caught on a series of rubble patches we have on the GPS.

We all met at Alvan's place on Friday morning with the various items each had been assigned to bring, then packed the boat

and took off for the ramp at Hay Point Tug Harbour.

The crew consisted of myself, Alvan, Alvan's grandson Connor (a mad keen eleven year old fisher) and Chris who is the manager of the Caltex bulk fuel depot at Mackay harbour and is a regular on trips with Alvan. The boat is a very handy outfit for the one day charter work for which it was designed, but does not have a lot of facilities for camping, but with swags and a gas stove, plus plenty of icebox storage we were pretty well set up.



Left: D'ya reckon young Conner is ever going to forget THIS day's fishing with the men 40 miles east of Mackay out in the shipping channel? No way, but hey, Neil reports that Conner gave 'em heaps, and 'He's a natural fisho' as evidenced by Connor's solo effort on this superb, probably record breaking nannygai.