

Countless boating mishaps have occurred along the ocean entrances on Australia's eastern seaboard. From Lakes Entrance (VIC) in the South, to the Town of 1770 (QLD) in the north, where the rivers meet the sea, can spell big trouble for all manner of craft, especially if they get it all wrong, and there's

Nowhere To Hide

On the following pages, we are publishing a set of photographs brilliantly captured by a Yamba photographer back in 2010 as a trawler put to sea on a run-out tide with the powerful Clarence River - one of the biggest in Australia - carrying the trawler out to sea.

What happened when the trawler neared the mouth of the entrance, is the stuff that gives most boatowners nightmares . . . not only did the waves stand up in front of the trawler, the rush of the river flow meant it was trapped in an unstoppable force, sweeping the trawler out into the break regardless of what the skipper might have wanted to do. It was all over in seconds, and by the time the trawler shook itself free on the other side of the break, the damage was done.

Not only was the front of the trawler badly damaged structurally, windows were smashed, the gantry damaged, nets washed over the side. .

it was a small miracle on its own that the nets didn't get caught in the trawler's rudder and prop.

His trawler and the crew in real danger (and badly shaken) the skipper brought it about, and started to make his way back in, struggling to make way and keep steerage against the river's powerful flow, still sweeping relentlessly out to sea between the walls.

But they weren't out of danger, as they were then trapped in several heart-in-mouth broaches . . . before regaining control, and going home.

There is much we can learn from this series of photos, and we are grateful for the opportunity of sharing them with ABM readers. The object here is not to scare people, but to learn more about how these bars work. With knowledge, skill and experience, recreational boatowners can cross these ocean entrances safely.

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Introducing a new, regular section of interest to all boatowners, no matter where they fish, or the size and type of boat they use. In the coming months, we'll be tackling some of the unmentionables; the really scary stuff and issues that have driven people away from boating. The object is to develop a healthy respect for the sea, and a much better understanding of how to use your boat more safely, for more fun and long term satisfaction.

