

Back-Over The Top!



Continuing the remarkable story by Louise Yeoman of her family's voyage right across the top of Australia from Townsville to Broome - and back again! This month, we pick up the crew at Broome, and travel back through the Kimberley, fishing in some of the most productive fishing country left on the planet . . . but be warned, the images on the following pages will make an indelible impression, followed closely by heartache and a burning desire to travel . . . *nor west!*

Following a busy week preparing the boat, servicing, re-fuelling, and shopping, we finally left Broome for a bumpy and restless night's travel up the West Coast. Onboard this leg was my husband Steve, friend Louise, our children Cooper (5) and Emmily-Rose (3), plus our new 'crew' of Yeoman, Ken, Colin and Anita.

25th September, 2003. After an uncomfortable ride to the Lacapedes, we moved with the current to cross the notorious King Sound. After 22 hours straight, with poor Anita hanging her head over the side of the boat, we cut

the motors, and moored in a little cove adjacent to Cockatoo Island for a calm night's rest.

Collier Bay At daybreak, we continued on to some of our favourite stops. First, Crocodile Creek for a swim in the higher spring-fed pool because the 10.6 m tide had flooded the lower pool, and could have brought a croc in with it. I made a photo-board to hang on the shrine (erected by the miners) to commemorate our trip in the Kimberley.

Our second stop was in Silver Gull Inlet, a very picturesque anchorage.

Following a reef walk at first light on low tide, we stopped at Silver Gull's swimming pool, which is an old concrete water tank that was installed by the Cockatoo Island Mine. We also took the opportunity to re-fill our fresh water tanks by the spring-fed stream. After 3 hours lazily swimming, we headed off to Dog Leg Creek where we re-fuelled. (The fuel is delivered by barge from Derby)

After waiting to move with the ingoing tide (down 10m), we entered Talbot Bay. We took *Steel Haven* through the narrow passage, which was quite frightening. The currents and whirlpools were so strong, I thought at one stage we were going to be pushed into the rock wall. Steve had it all under control, trying to avoid the whirlpools. (For the less adventurous, we suggest you wait for the ebb tide before entering this gorge.)

Another potential danger encountered when negotiating this area, are the sea planes. These waters double as a landing strip for the sea plane that visits this area up to 4 times a day, bringing day trippers to the Horizontal Falls. We eventually got permission from the nearby pearl farm to anchor on their cyclone mooring for the night.

The men decided that they wanted to fish inside both the narrow passages of the Horizontal Waterfalls. They could

only enter at 9am on low tide, and had to wait 6 hours to come back with the high tide. Gold trevally, giant trevally, cod and sharks were the order of the day. Coming out of the first chasm, Steve spotted Malcolm Douglas who was in there filming a documentary. Stopping to say hello, Malcolm was surprised to see a small tinny in these remote areas.

Our 15hp outboards were not powerful enough to carry us all through the turbulent waters of the falls, so while the guys were gone for the day, we kept ourselves amused, feeding large bat fish up to 50cm long, enjoying the views of the area, watching the tourist planes fly overhead, and general household duties including tossing out the fruit, vegetables and eggs that had already gone mouldy.

Only a week into the trip (with five weeks to go) we had to start on the dehydrated and the tinned food. With the build up to the wet season, the weather had intensified. It was very hot and humid with sweat literally dripping off us.

Another sunrise and we jumped in the tinnys, and went for a play and a spin in the whirlpools while admiring the Horizontal Falls in the morning sun light.

A short distance later, after stopping to observe the many migrating humpback whales, we went over to Koolan Island, a closed iron-ore mine, to explore the remains of the mountain, and the big water filled hole in the hill.

Red Cone With the ingoing tide, we passed Raft Point continuing on to Redcone (aka Ruby Falls) to anchor 2 miles upstream. For the next 5 days, we had barramania extravaganza, with

