

Cape York Adventure

Mike

There is nothing like the reward of being in the right place at the right time versus my normal situation of the being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I got a call from, CAA's Life member, Stuart, asking me what I was doing, how I was getting along, which was followed by the normal exchange of pleasantries. My answer was continuing with the renovations to the townhouse and all the other normal dull life duties. He asked me, what about going fishing on the Western side of the Cape York peninsula? My response was, a resounding, yes!

Travel plans were for the six of us, Derek, Phil, Steen, Stuart, Wayne, and myself, to travel from Canberra to Mapoon and return together. Sadly, Steen had an accident five days prior to leaving. He's okay, but, was unable to make the trip. Our sixth fisherman, was filled by Gordon. Gordon is a very active member of the Victorian Fly Fishers, in Melbourne. Travel arrangements were very easy, primarily because I had specific Qantas flights to book. The travel itinerary schedule was; Canberra to Cairns, overnight in Cairns, then Cairns to Weipa. Once in Weipa there was a three-beer (Stuart's terminology, not mine, lol) bus trip to the boat ramp in Mapoon. At the boat ramp we were transported in three guide boats to the, mothership, Kerra Lyn, our home for the next eight nights.



The next morning, two casts later, and Stuart was into a Longtail Tuna.





I have to say that every fish I hooked was a “first of” for me. I mainly spin fished, but did fly fish, 60% - 80% spin and the remainder fly fishing. I was more than happy, to spin cast from the back of the guide boat, while the other, dedicated, fly fishers did their thing in the front.

Stuart arranged that every fisho changed guides and boat-mates every day. I loved it, meeting new fisho's and guides. Our three guides were, Clinton, Cam, and Wade. Clinton is the owner / operator of the Australian Fly Fishing Lodge (<https://www.australianflyfishinglodge.net.au/>). You will not meet a more friendly, helpful young man than Clinton. He does cater to non-fly fishers, and I will attest to that. Cam, aka. The Bird Man Cam, would tell us the name of every bird in the area. Wade, the Captain of the Kerra Lyn, had detailed knowledge of every fishery system we fished. The guides kept us into fish, and did everything in their power to help us. We had a tally board for the all the species we caught. At the end of our trip 44 species of fish were caught.

The equipment and gear used was; Fly 8,9,10 weight fly rods. Fly reels need to match up to your rod, plus the reel must have a good drag system. Tippet material needs to be 30, 40 pound range, with fluorocarbon preferred. For the flies, the number one fly was an all-white 1/0 clouser, with a little bit of UV material in the wing. Other flies that were used; olive over white clousers, surf candies, gold bombers, and black barra bunnies. Four fishos were strictly fly fishers. For the two that used spinning gear; the rods were three-piece travel spinning rods. Reels were the in the 4000 and 5000 series. The reels were spooled up with 30 – 40 braid, with 40 pound fluorocarbon leaders. Some of the lures that were successfully used were the Samaki Flash, Rapala Saltwater X-Rap Long-Cast Shallow, Halco Twisty, and Nomad Riptide. It was highly recommended to bring an extra rod/reel rig.



Six full days of fishing with those saltwater battlers took a toll on equipment, I have a three-piece travel spinning that is now a five piece. In total three fly rods were broken in the heat of battle.

(note that the dates on the photos are incorrect)