
BAREFOOT FISHING SAFARIS

Dry Season Barra and Bluewater Black Book

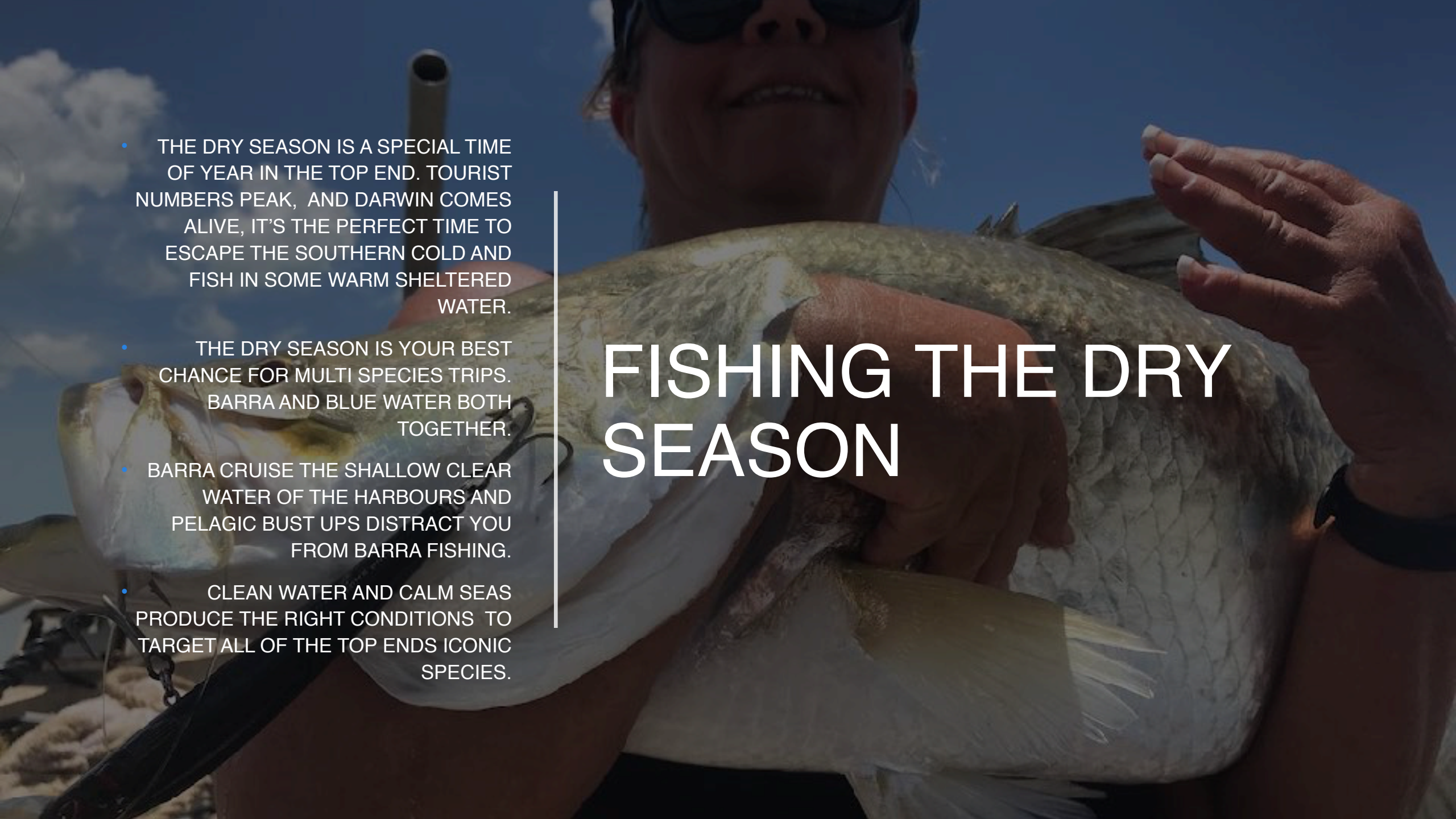


WHEN IS THE DRY SEASON ANYWAY?

- Dry Season runs from 1 July- August31st.
- When the cool south-easterly winds blow and seas are calm, there is no better way to spend a few days than sight casting a cruising saltwater barra or threadfin salmon.
- On one of our Barra & Bluewater Darwin fishing charters your can tangle with the tenacious saratoga or a plump barra in a tranquil inland billabong. Get your pulse pumping when the spool of your light spin or fly rod screams as a blistering longtail tuna, queenfish or giant trevally heads for the hills .
- Do the dance with a magnificent sailfish or slug it out with a 50lb black jew bulldozing its way towards a jagged reef with only you and your determination to stop it.
- Or maybe a delicious feed of mud crab, golden snapper and coral trout is your style.
- You can also try some high speed jigging for Spanish, grey and spotted mackerel on the bluewater.

- THE DRY SEASON IS A SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR IN THE TOP END. TOURIST NUMBERS PEAK, AND DARWIN COMES ALIVE, IT'S THE PERFECT TIME TO ESCAPE THE SOUTHERN COLD AND FISH IN SOME WARM SHELTERED WATER.
- THE DRY SEASON IS YOUR BEST CHANCE FOR MULTI SPECIES TRIPS. BARRA AND BLUE WATER BOTH TOGETHER.
- BARRA CRUISE THE SHALLOW CLEAR WATER OF THE HARBOURS AND PELAGIC BUST UPS DISTRACT YOU FROM BARRA FISHING.
- CLEAN WATER AND CALM SEAS PRODUCE THE RIGHT CONDITIONS TO TARGET ALL OF THE TOP ENDS ICONIC SPECIES.

FISHING THE DRY SEASON



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW (AND SOME THINGS YOU DON'T)

- Inside this special guide you'll find everything you need to know about a Barefoot guided fishing safari during the Dry Season and how to best prepare to ensure it truly is the trip of a lifetime.
- Let's have a look at what you'll need to know about the areas we fish. The surrounding Culture. The fishing. Equipment required. Techniques and tactics. Handling our catch. Getting a good photo. Preparation for the table and transport. Getting your fish home. Sustainability practices. A basic tour outline. What's included on tour. Where we stay. What we eat. What you need to bring. How you can best prepare for the trip. Tour pricing and other things to consider.



FISHING LOCATIONS

- Depending on weather conditions and tides we might find our-selves moving around a little to get the very best fishing.
- Locations we target at this time of year include but are not limited to:
 - Dundee Beach
 - Bynoe Harbour
 - Shoal Bay
 - Leaders Creek
 - Adelaide River
 - Mary River
- All of these locations are proven areas for catching fish at this time of year and all fish well in differing conditions. Years of experience and observation of patterns go into planning a successful Dry Season fishing safari.



THE CULTURE

- The Traditional Owners of all area's welcome recreational fishers to their country and an agreement between the Traditional Owners, the Northern Land Council and the Northern Territory Government has been reached to guarantee ongoing access for recreational fishers to the waters of the Northern Territory.
- Recreational fishers should respect and recognise the cultural importance of these waters to the local Traditional Owners.
- If you'd like to add on a day or two exploring the History and Cultural significance of the Northern Territory to the local Traditional Owners, it is highly recommended and easily arranged.



THE FISHING

- The Dry Season is the most popular time to visit Darwin and escape a cold Southern winter.
- There are plenty of different fishing options for us at this time of year so with some mindful planning your Dry Season fishing safari will surely be one of the best fishing experiences you'll find.
- This section of your handbook will cover:
 - Fishing seasons
 - Moon and tides
 - Equipment required
 - Techniques and tactics
 - Fighting large fish to the net
 - Handling our catch
 - Getting a good photo
 - Preparation for the table and transport
 - Getting fish home
 - Sustainability practices



WEATHER

- As mentioned earlier the Dry Season is a spectacular time of year. Day time temperatures generally reach around 31C and nighttime around 21C.
- Humidity is low at this time of year and the feel is that of a nice summer day in Southern oz.
- Afternoon sea breezes bookend cool south easterly flows pushed up from the desert by high pressure systems forming in the great Australian bite.
- This is the time of year to bring the family and experience everything the top end has to offer. From ancient rock art to modern rock concerts. The dry season is bursting with activities and possibilities.

97%

51

FISHING
EFFICIENCY

MOON
PHASE

MOON AND TIDE

The number one factor in fishing anywhere in the Top End is the moon and tides.

Half moon produces smaller tides extending and relaxing bite times while Full and New moon phases produce more intense and shorter bite times for Barramundi and other species.

The fishing prospects from June until end of August are excellent and any day is worth fishing. It's the techniques and tactics that change as the days, tides and moon phases change throughout the month.

Fishing predicted bite times can be particularly productive as well as meeting tide changes in certain areas of a system as the tidal front moves up and down the extensive coastline.



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18h

MID



EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- You can go as deep as you want when talking tackle and the perfect setup could see you with up to 10 rigs in your arsenal, however most of the time I think its best to keep it simple.
- There are 3 basic setups in the kit when fishing the Northern Territory's Estuary and inshore reef systems.
 - Baitcasting rod and reel
 - Medium spin rod and reel
 - Heavy spin rod and reel

Let's cover all three in more detail.



BAITCASTING SETUP

- Don't let the name fool you, you'll mostly be casting lures with this beauty, your bigger hard body's and soft plastics especially. As well as using this rig for your fast trolling on spring tides and jig trolling snags and rock bars on neap tides.
- Also don't be intimidated by the old bird's nest. With the right teacher and decent quality equipment set up to suit the individual you'll be hitting an empty beer can on the lawn in no time.
- A 4-6kg rod about 6'4 is perfect for all round use. Longer and shorter rods are great for specific applications.
- Matched with a 100-200 size low profile reel with the preferred handle side and spool with 30-50lb braid and we're covered for most situations. Let me know if you prefer to wind with your left hand and ill make sure I have enough spare reels!



LIGHT SPIN

- The old eggbeater has come a long way in recent years and now have faster retrieve rates, stronger drags and better castability. A decent spin rod and reel is a must when Barra fishing.
- Mostly used when fish are sitting hard on the edges or in submerged structure, the ability to cast small hard body and weedless presentations is more easily done with spin than baitcast equipment.
- A 10-17lb rod again around 6'4 is a good choice matched with a 3-4000 spin reel spooled with 20-30lb braid.
- With some technique coaching and a bit of practice you'll find you can cast just as accurately with a spin outfit as a baitcaster and the benefit of being able to throw light lures in all conditions gives you an advantage.

HEAVY SPIN

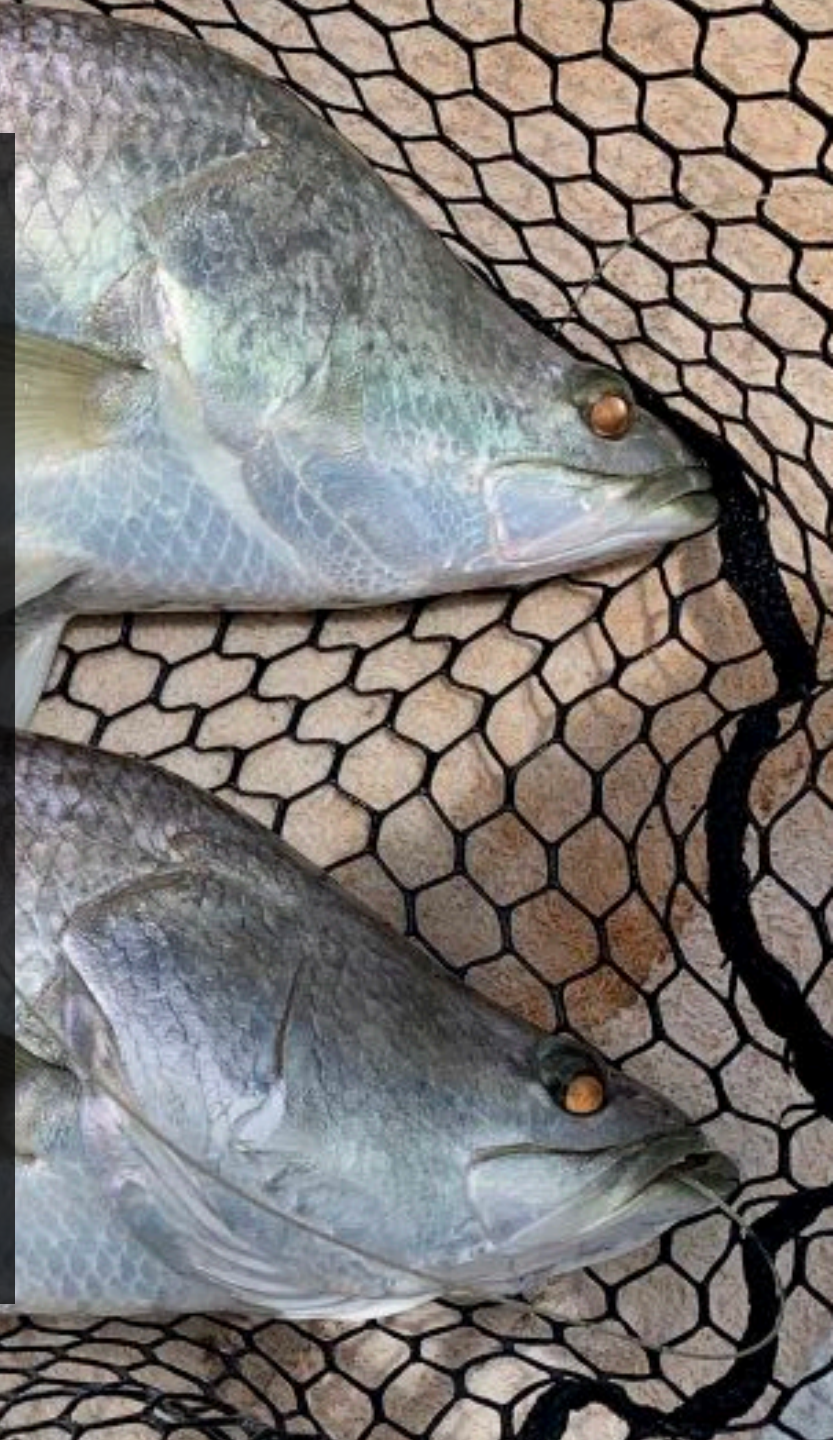
- When the hard hitters are on the target list a heavy spin outfit is a must.
- Big black jew fish, Spanish mackerel, giant trivially, coral trout and golden snapper all require a bit more horsepower than our light estuary spin sticks can produce.
- A quality 6-10kg rod matched with 5000-8000 size Shimano spin reel will have you with the upper hand in a battle with a 40lb black jew and well on the way to glory.



TECHNIQUES AND TACTICS

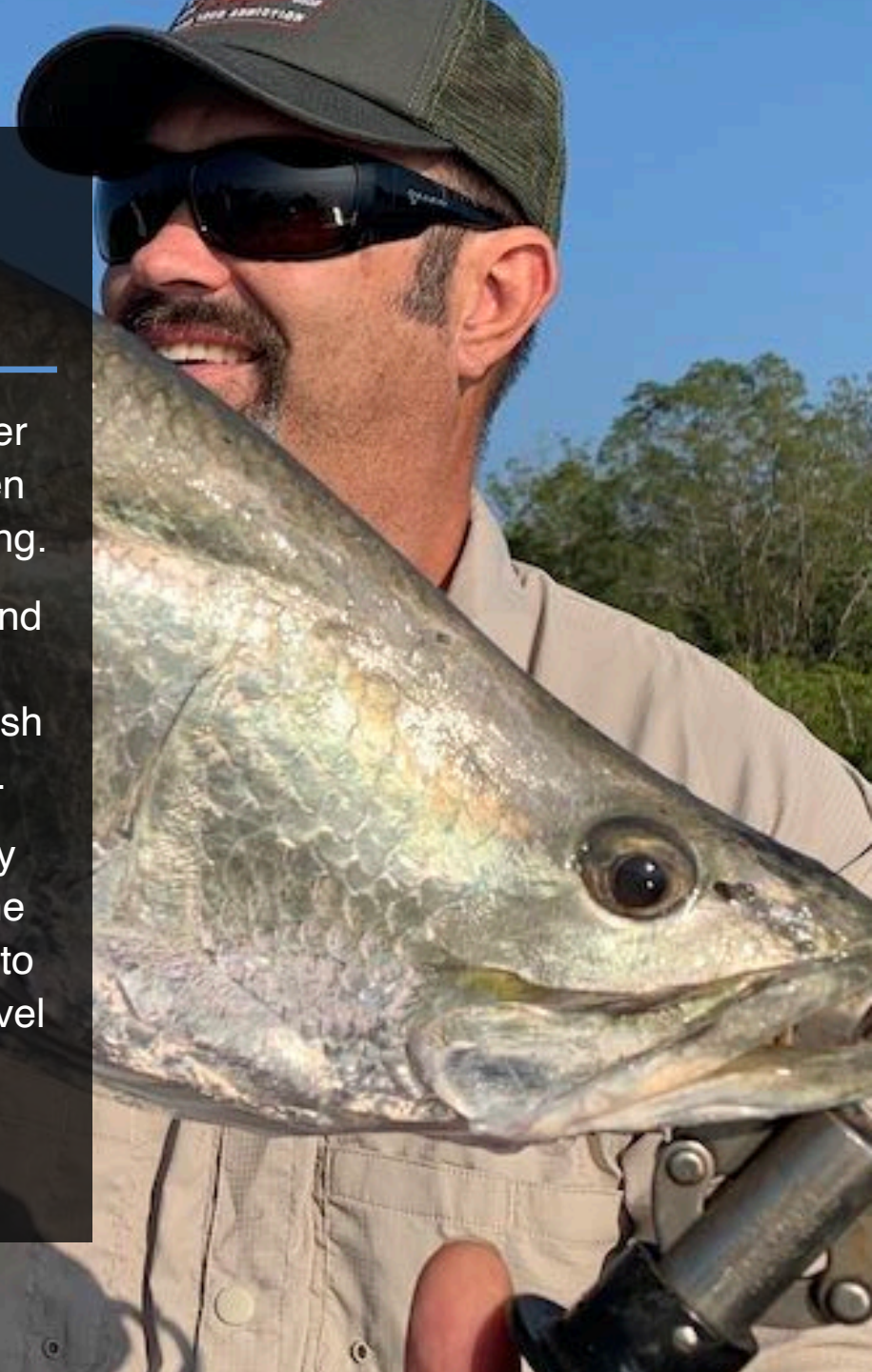
- From June through to the end of August the world is at an angler's feet. Techniques and tactics change as the season progresses and with a keen eye and years of experience, we are sure to make the most of every situation.
- There are 4 main techniques used when fishing during Dry Season and they are:
 - Lure Casting
 - Lure Trolling
 - Fly Casting
 - Reef fishing with bait

Let's look at all three in a bit more detail.



LURE CASTING

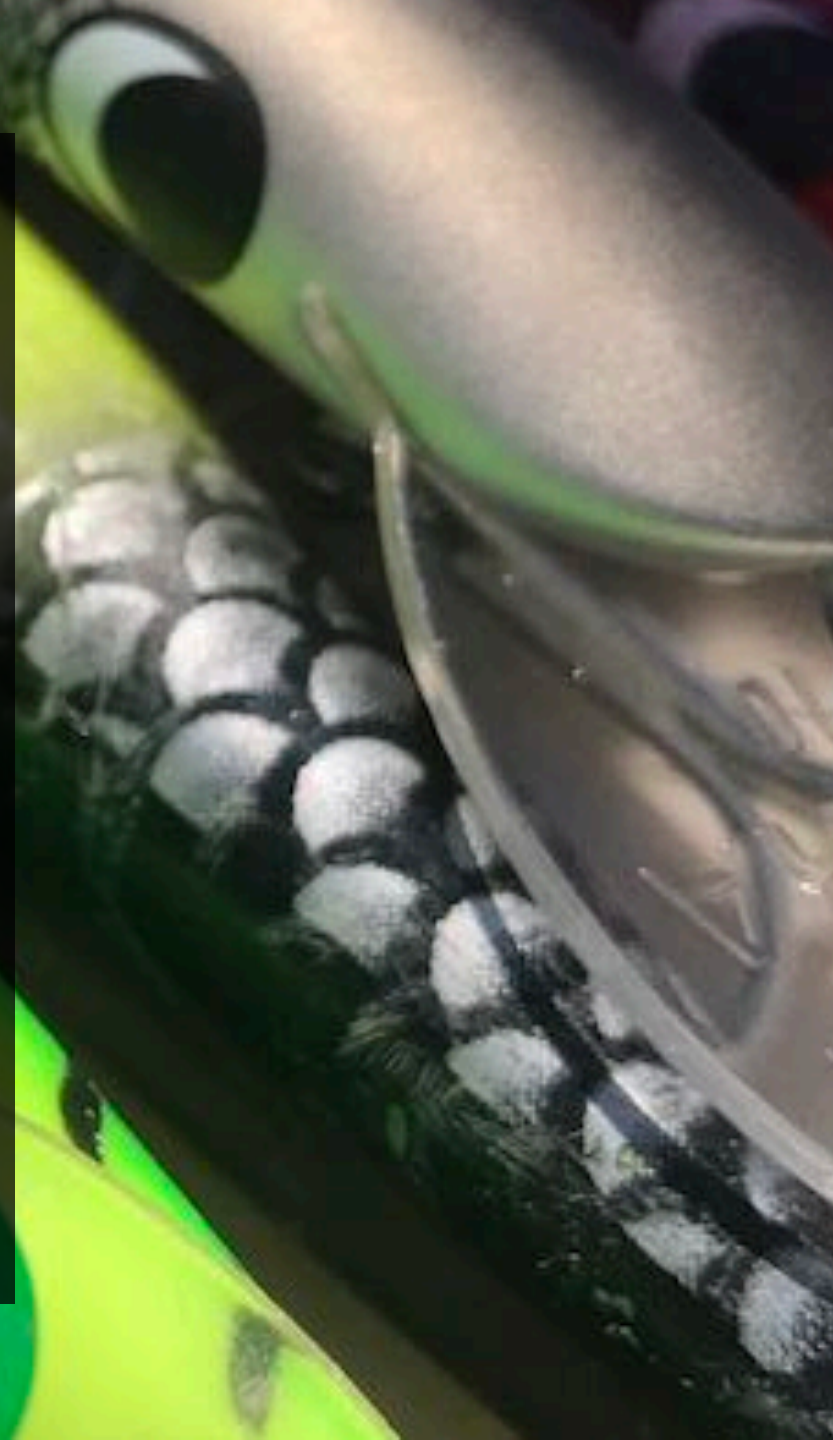
- An engaging and rewarding way to fish. A well paced cast worked over a target in a way to induce the strike provides an amazing feeling when the thump of a hungry Barra engulfing your lure sends your heart racing.
- Casting soft plastic lures around creek mouths, snags and drop-offs and working them in deep holes and over rock bars is a very successful method as well as sight casting cruising fish in shallow clean water. Fish in accordance with time, tide and technique and you will see rewards.
- Casting and working a hardbody lure in likely areas is also a great way to induce an aggressive reaction strike from Barra, although getting the 'twitch' right can make all the difference with a bit of coaching on how to hold rods, work the lure and setup for the strike and you'll be at pro level pretty quick.



LURE TROLLING

- Arguably the most effective way of targeting big Barra, being able to troll lures correctly is a hard-earned skill in the Top End. The ability to target specific areas through interpretation of high-end electronics while avoiding ever present fallen timber and rock bars, along with setting up the spread of lures to avoid tangles and wasted time is something only learned through hours on the water.
- Depending on the tides and time of the tide you'll find yourself slowly 'jig trolling' over submerged timber and rock bars with suitable hard bodied deep diving lures as well as 'mackerel trolling' at high speeds with shallow fast running minnows.

Both jig trolling and mackerel trolling work excellently on the right phase of the moon and time of the daily tides so over a few days of fishing you'll likely have a crack at both while you rest up between casting sessions.



- WITHOUT DOUBT THE MOST CHALLENGING AND OFTEN PRODUCTIVE METHOD OF FISHING THE DRY SEASON, PARTICULARLY IN CLEAN WATER IS FLY CASTING.
- WHEN THE FISH ARE PLAYING HARD TO GET DUE TO A RECENT HATCH OF JELLY PRAWNS OR THEY ARE RELUCTANT TO EAT EVEN THE MOST FINESSE SOFT OR HARD PRESENTATIONS ITS DIFFICULT TO BEAT THROWING A FLY AT A BIG BARRA.
- A WELL PLACE FLY IN 1/0-5/0 SIZE DEPENDING ON FORAGE SPECIES IS LIKELY TO UNLOCK THE JAWS OF EVEN THE MOST FINICKY FISH PROVIDING TENSE MOMENTS AND GREAT CELEBRATIONS AT THE FISH IS DECEIVED.
- IT IS WIDELY REGARDED AS THE MOST HONOURABLE WAY TO CATCH A FISH, PARTICULARLY ONE WHICH RELIES ON SIGHT SO HEAVILY IN ITS BEHAVIOUR. AN HONEST DECEPTION AND SKILFUL TACTIC TO OUTWIT A FORMIDABLE FOE DOES NOT GO UN-NOTICED.

FLY CASTING



REEF FISHING WITH BAIT

- The best way to fill the esky with a few fillets to eat that night, and take home.
- Getting the tides right is key with reef fishing so lets plan that out properly as you make your booking.
- Our heavy spin outfits double as pelagic trolling and casting sticks as well as our bottom bashing outfits.
- Simple one hook paternoster rigs are the most effective.
- If you intend on taking some fish home please let us know before your trip so we can plan to get it packed up and frozen to ensure a quality product at the other end.
- Each person who takes fish home will be asked to make a \$100 donation to AusFish Unlimited to ensure the longevity of abundance in the fishery.



A photograph of two fishermen on a boat, both wearing khaki shirts and hats. They are smiling and holding large, yellowish fish. The background shows a blue sky and some greenery. The text 'FIGHTING LARGE FISH TO THE NET' is overlaid on the left side of the image in white, bold, sans-serif font.

FIGHTING LARGE FISH TO THE NET

- Its one of life's most intense moments and the reason we are all hooked on fishing. The hit, the strike, the jumps and the fight of a worthy adversary unmatched by any other previously encountered.
- You need to strike hard in the Northern Territory. We use big thick strong hooks and it takes considerable force to penetrate the hook point. Hit 'em hard, hit 'em fast 'cause they'll spit you out quick as a flash if you don't get in first.
- Unless it's a very large fish (80cm+) its great to take your time and enjoy the spectacular jumps and turns of speed many of our tropical sportfish produce. Use the rod, lift up strong but steady and then wind down keeping the line tight at all times. A little bit of slack will allow the fish to throw your hook.
- For bigger fish we try and take them out of the shallows and slow things down even more. The last thing we want is to let her get back to the cover of snags and bust off or to pull hooks through overzealous fighting technique. The big fish jump too, not as often but with more force, so we need to pay special attention to how the fish is hooked and try to control these vital minutes.
- Once coerced toward the net we gently slide our fish head toward the net without trying to lift it out of the water as this will only encourage more jumping. Something we do not want boat side.
- The net meets the fish's nose and is slid under to secure the fish. We release tension off the rod by pressing the button on our baitcast reel, opening the bail on a spin reel or pulling some line from our fly reel.
- The wet towel goes on the deck followed by the fish and we can celebrate!

A photograph of two fishermen on a boat. The fisherman on the left is wearing a dark hooded jacket and sunglasses, holding a large fish. The fisherman on the right is wearing a light-colored shirt, a hat, and sunglasses, also holding the fish. The fish is large and silvery, with a prominent tail. The background shows a body of water and a clear blue sky.

HANDLING OUR CATCH

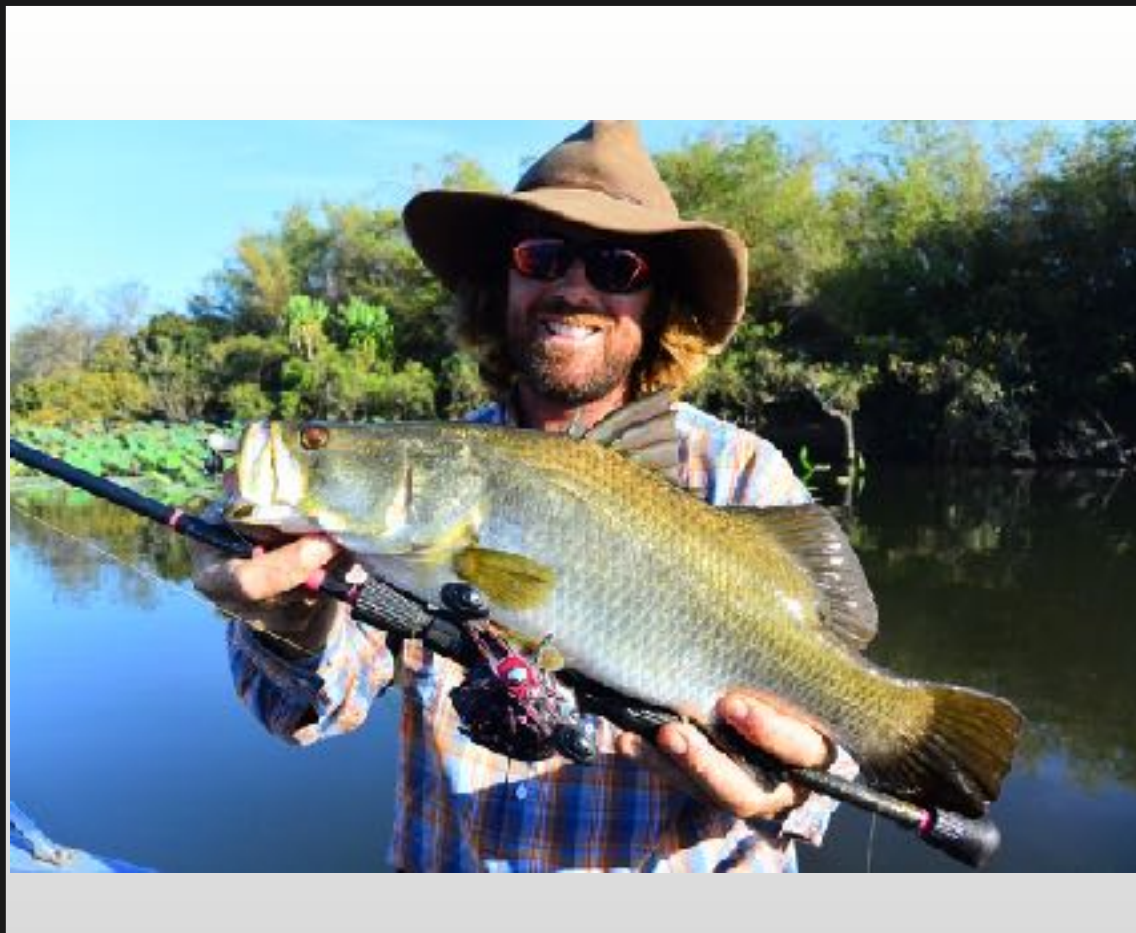
- We all know its very important to handle fish with respect and care. It's especially important with big fish we intend to release so they return to the system in good health.
- Things we do to help fishes health.
 - Lay the fish down, inside the net on a wet towel.
 - Always use Boga Grips to hold the fish securely by the bottom jaw.
 - Gently remove hooks
 - Lift fish with two hands supporting the body weight and not straining gills, jaw and spine.
 - Release the fish back to the water or dispatch quickly if intended for the table.



Dave's first Barra on Fly.
An 85cm beauty!

GETTING A GOOD PHOTO

- Firstly get the light right. We will move the boat if we need to but simply shifting to the other side, so the sun is on the angler and the fish is all you need to do.
- Pull down any face masks and remove hats and sunglasses if necessary, to get a clear picture without shadows.
- You want to hold the fish right up in front of the center of your chest, just below shoulder height with the nose slightly toward the camera to get good depth in the pic.



Making the little guys look a bit bigger!

GETTING A GOOD PHOTO CONT.

- Smile like you just won a gold medal and be sure to fill the frame with only the important stuff.
- Be sure to focus on the point in the frame you want to be most clear and sharp
- Take a couple on landscape and a couple of portraits and you'll have the memory forever

PREPARATION FOR THE TABLE AND TRANSPORT

- We all love a feed of fish, especially when its fresh!
- There are some key steps to remember when preparing our catch for the table or the plane trip home.
- We always bleed our table fish, like any meat. Cut the fishes throat and either iki jime (brain spike) or sever the spinal cord, this insures a quick honorable death and quality fillets.
- Ill be taking my time when filleting, an extra few seconds here makes for a far better result in the pan.
- We then bag and seal the fillets, removing all the air from the bag with a special trick I'll show you.
- The clean bags of fillets are now placed on ice, even if we must drink a few extra beers to fit them in the esky.



GETTING YOUR FISH HOME

- Once we've got your fillets all nicely bagged and frozen the hard work is done.
- You can either bring your own cooler with you and take your fillets home in it or purchase an airline approved box with all the necessary bits and pieces supplied to get your precious cargo home in excellent condition. I can supply the boxes for \$20 each.
- You might need to book some extra luggage for your flight and you simply check your cooler or fish box in with your regular bags.
- Be mindful not to put ice in with your fillets when you leave Darwin as the airlines will not allow you to check the box in if it has ice in it.
- Each person who takes fish home will be asked to make a \$100 donation to AusFish Unlimited to ensure the longevity of abundance in the fishery.



SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

We'll be following all the legal bag limits and sizes below of course but it's the big Barra that are the breeding females and Barefoot policy of releasing fish over 80cm will also be followed unless the fish is badly injured, and wont successfully release.

3-5 Barramudi per person (depending on location) including a vessel limit of 1 fish over 90cm. Minimum overall length 55 cm. 3 king threadfin per person including a vessel limit of 1 fish over 90cm (fork length).

3 Golden Snapper, 2 Black Jew per person

A total combined personal limit of 15 mixed species

Area specific legislation applies and will be followed as necessary

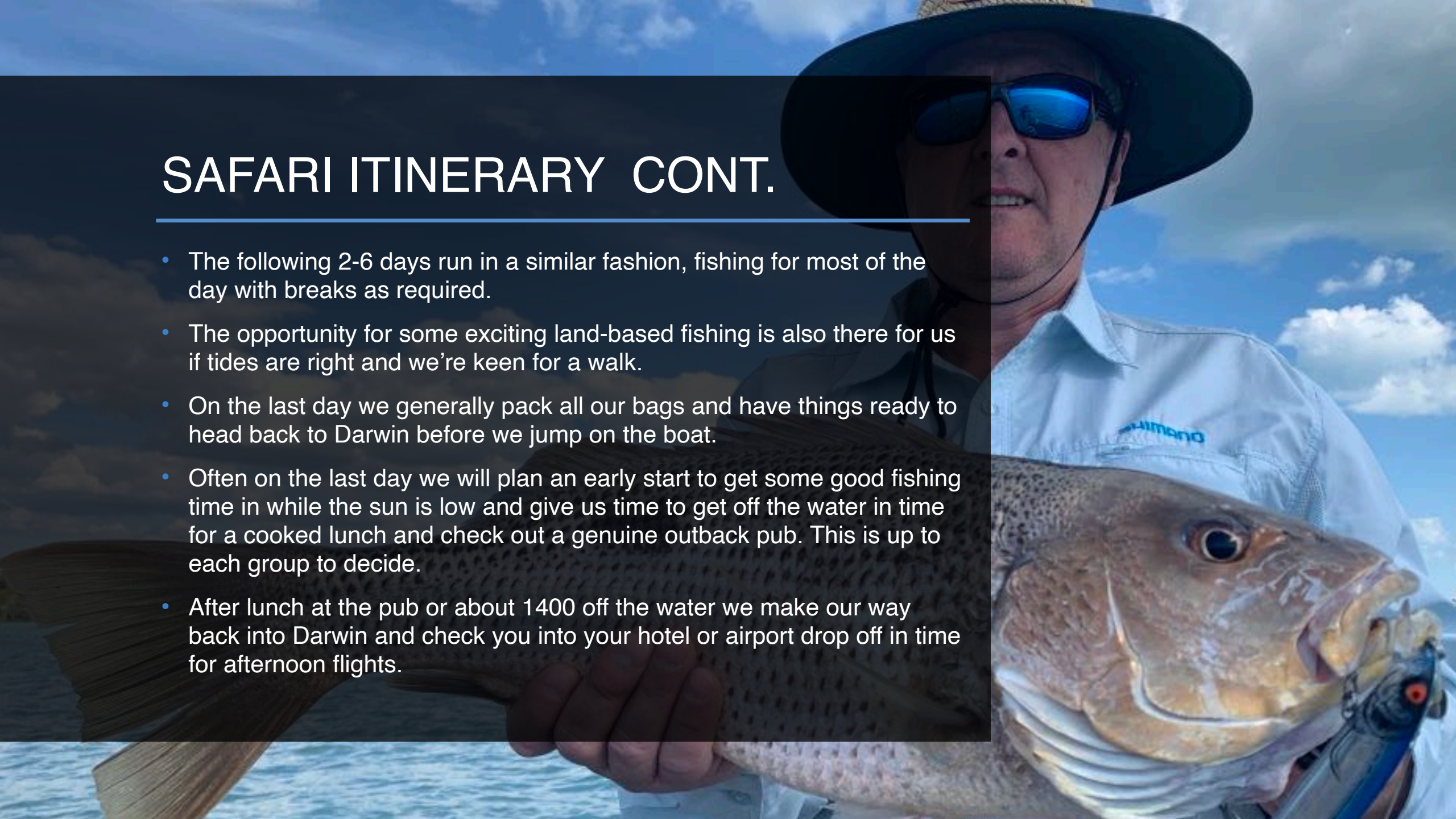
SAFARI ITINERARY

- Keep in mind that all Barefoot fishing safaris are fully customisable to suit your needs however generally we follow this outline.
- You make your own way to Darwin.
- Pickup can be direct from the airport if pre-arranged, at 0700 on the morning of the first day of fishing or we can travel out the day before the first day of fishing and settle in.
- We travel to our fishing location stopping about halfway for a stretch and quick breakfast at a local truck stop.
- After picking up the boat and dropping bags at our accommodation we'll be on the water and fishing in no time.
- Fishing days run from 0630-1600 each day, apart from the last day.
- Lunch is taken on the boat each day and we are off the water in time for a shower before dinner.



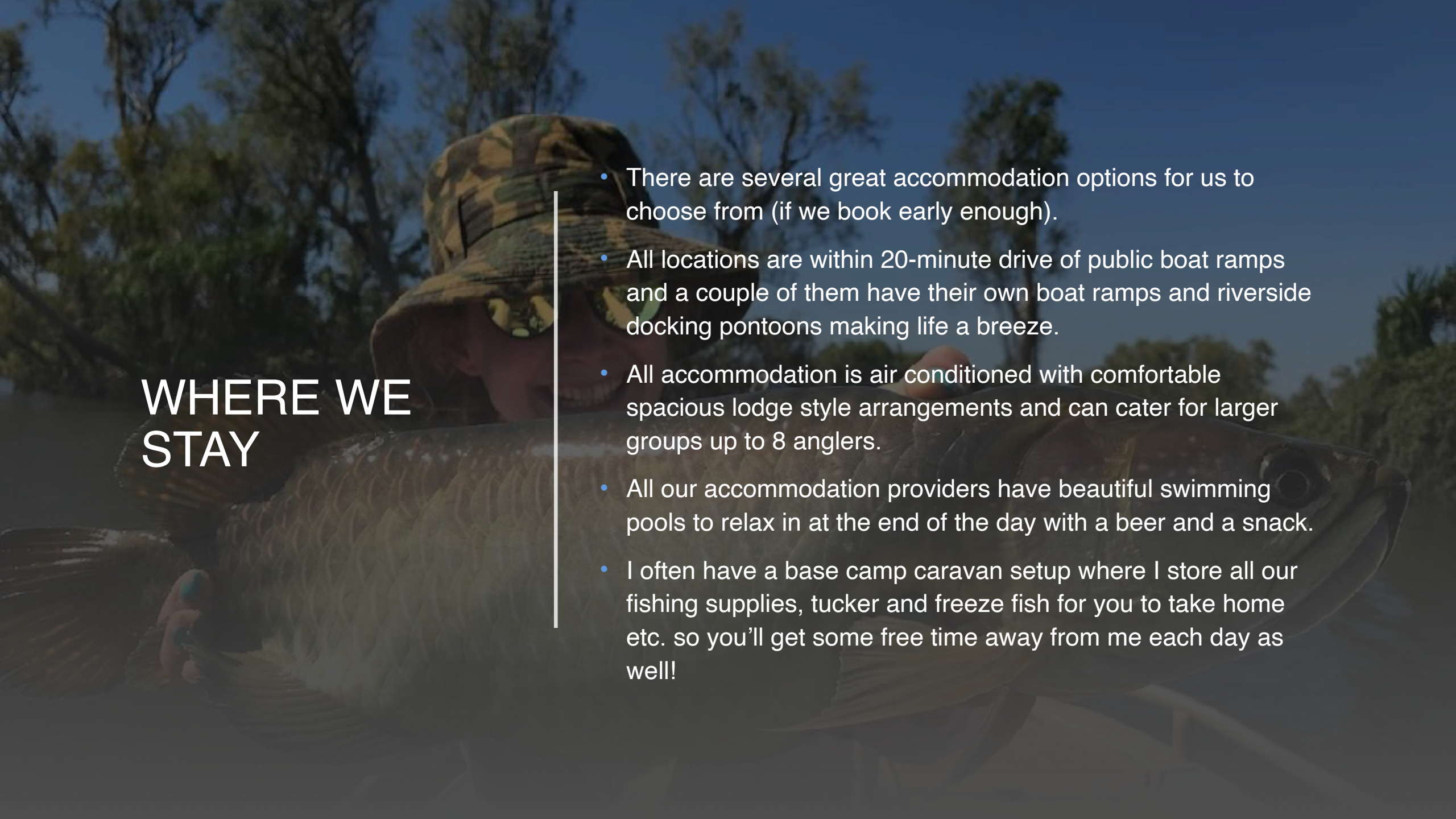
SAFARI ITINERARY CONT.

- The following 2-6 days run in a similar fashion, fishing for most of the day with breaks as required.
- The opportunity for some exciting land-based fishing is also there for us if tides are right and we're keen for a walk.
- On the last day we generally pack all our bags and have things ready to head back to Darwin before we jump on the boat.
- Often on the last day we will plan an early start to get some good fishing time in while the sun is low and give us time to get off the water in time for a cooked lunch and check out a genuine outback pub. This is up to each group to decide.
- After lunch at the pub or about 1400 off the water we make our way back into Darwin and check you into your hotel or airport drop off in time for afternoon flights.



WHAT'S INCLUDED ON TOUR

- Depending on your package (full or boat only) you can choose to have meals and accomodation included.
- Transfers to and from Darwin in Toyota Landcruiser 200 series 4WD tour vehicle.
- All fishing gear supplied on a replace if lost or damaged basis (I never charge for lost lures) .
- Lunches, morning tea, breakfasts and dinners in full package and lunches only for boat only package.
- Special dietary requirements catered for.
- Feel free to bring your own rods if you like but remember Ill always have my top-quality outfits ready to go if you'd rather use them.

A person wearing a camouflage hat and sunglasses is holding a large fish. The background shows trees and a clear sky.

WHERE WE STAY

- There are several great accommodation options for us to choose from (if we book early enough).
- All locations are within 20-minute drive of public boat ramps and a couple of them have their own boat ramps and riverside docking pontoons making life a breeze.
- All accommodation is air conditioned with comfortable spacious lodge style arrangements and can cater for larger groups up to 8 anglers.
- All our accommodation providers have beautiful swimming pools to relax in at the end of the day with a beer and a snack.
- I often have a base camp caravan setup where I store all our fishing supplies, tucker and freeze fish for you to take home etc. so you'll get some free time away from me each day as well!

WHAT WE EAT

- Depending on the package you choose your meals will either be supplied for you or available for purchase each day.
- Breakfast is commonly buffet style toast, cereal and cook your own hot food however we often get away early and eat breakfast on the boat which varies depending on the fishing plan
- Lunches vary from fresh salad wraps to freshly caught Barra or mudcrab cooked on gas in the boat. Again depending on what the fishing plan is and if we are too busy catching fish or not! There is always some cool shade to pull into for a break.
- I always carry plenty of extra fruit, nut bars and other snacks so we don't go hungry.
- There is a 15 litre cooler of ice water on the boat and if you have a reusable water bottle, I encourage you to bring it.
- Of course there is plenty of fish on offer for evening meals, but other common menu options are pub fare style meals. All diets can be catered for, just let me know in advance.



WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- It can be a bit of a shock to the system fishing in the Northern Territory Dry Season so make sure you pack loose fitting, cool, long sleeve shirts and pants. I recommend pure cotton. Shorts are fine too but don't get burned or you'll regret it!
- Sunscreen and insect repellent. Most people bring a sunscreen they use regularly at home which is fine. Aerogard Tropical Strength works well.
- A big hat is essential. We do have shade on the boat but only put it up if we must as it takes up a lot of room and makes fishing difficult.
- You'll need to organise your own alcohol before we leave Darwin as well. You can either purchase it yourself the day before or pre-order it and I'll grab it for you.



HOW SHOULD YOU PREPARE FOR THE TRIP

- There are a few things you can do to prepare for a Dry Season trip in the Northern Territory, including reading this handbook a couple of times!
- If you can, practice your casting. Give me a call if you need any help or check out the videos on the Barefoot Fishing Safaris facebook and Instagram.
- My number is +61417272871. I can be contacted on WhatsApp as well.
- Learn how to work your camera properly so you don't miss the shot of a lifetime.
- Make sure you've got enough baggage booked to allow some fish on the way home if you choose.
- Maintain a level of fitness so that you'll be able to get the best out of the trip.



YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY

- You can be assured that every precaution to provide a safe trip is taken, and for good reason. Heat, deadly critters and fatigue are some of the main issues we need to consider when heading this far away from town.
- Barefoot is a fully surveyed vessel maintained to very high standard and carrying all the required safety equipment plus some.
- I'm trained in senior first aid and there are often bush nurse centres nearby if we need extra help.
- A Satellite phone and Epirb for emergencies and contact numbers for care flight helicopters are on hand should we require evacuation.
- Ill be keeping a close eye on how you are travelling in the heat if you aren't used to the conditions and we will take regular breaks to cool off and have a rest.
- If you have any special medical requirements just let me know prior to the trip so we can put the appropriate safety measures in place.



A man wearing a blue shirt and a hat is holding a large fish, likely a salmon, against a clear blue sky. The fish is held vertically, with its head at the bottom and tail at the top. The man's hands are visible, gripping the fish. The background is a bright, clear blue sky.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Be sure to have appropriate travel insurance. It's only happened once in the last 10 years but cancellations due to cyclones etc. are not covered by our refund policy, it's up to you to be prepared.
- I'll be taking photos and videos of your trip for your use and mine to promote the business, let me know if you don't want your images shared.
- There is no fitted toilet on the boat however I often use a chemical camping toilet if required. Ladies are encouraged to let me know if you'd like it on the boat prior to the trip.
- Check out some of the online reviews, videos etc. before you book to help you get the feel for what you are in for. That way we can hit the ground running.
- We do have phone service at all our lodgings, but it is patchy and intermittent. Plan your calls back home and other commitments accordingly. (I always carry a satellite phone for emergencies).

2024 PRICING

- You can choose a full meals and accomodation package or boat only package to save a few bucks.
- If you choose the boat only package I'll provide assistance in booking the correct accomodation.

boat only fishing days	accomodation nights	4 anglers per boat & guide	3 anglers per boat & guide	2 anglers per boat & guide
3 days	2 nights	\$1,650	\$2,000	\$2,400
fishing	3 nights	\$2,050	\$2,400	\$2,800
4 days	3 nights	\$2,200	\$2,667	\$3,200
fishing	4 nights	\$2,600	\$3,067	\$3,600
5 days	4 nights	\$2,750	\$3,333	\$4,000
fishing	5 nights	\$3,150	\$3,733	\$4,400
6 days	5 nights	\$3,300	\$4,000	\$4,800
fishing	6 nights	\$3,700	\$4,400	\$5,200
7 days	6 nights	\$3,850	\$4,667	\$5,600
fishing	7 nights	\$4,250	\$5,067	\$6,000

full package fishing days	accomodation nights	4 anglers per boat & guide	3 anglers per boat & guide	2 anglers per boat & guide
3 days	2 nights	\$2,400	\$2,685	\$3,450
fishing	3 nights	\$2,800	\$3,085	\$3,850
4 days	3 nights	\$3,580	\$3,580	\$3,580
fishing	4 nights	\$3,980	\$3,980	\$3,980
5 days	4 nights	\$4,000	\$4,475	\$5,750
fishing	5 nights	\$4,400	\$4,875	\$6,150
6 days	5 nights	\$4,800	\$5,370	\$6,900
fishing	6 nights	\$5,200	\$5,770	\$7,300
7 days	6 nights	\$5,600	\$6,265	\$8,050
fishing	7 nights	\$6,000	\$6,665	\$8,450

BOOKING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Cancellations must be made in writing.
- No cancellation will be accepted unless received in writing
- Bookings Cancelled outside 90 days incur a 30% charge of total booking cost.
- Bookings Cancelled between 90 – 30 days incur 75% charge of total booking cost.
- Bookings Cancelled inside 30 days incur 100% charge of total booking cost.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- If there is anything you'd like to know that hasn't been covered in this guidebook let me know.
- Mobile 0417272871
- What's App +61417272871
- glenn@barefootfishingsafaris.com.au
- That's me by the way in 1983 with the old man on the family farm in Balmoral, Victoria. Holding a brace of nice Redfin for the table.
- A couple of good lookin' roosters you'd have to agree...

