
BAREFOOT FISHING SAFARIS

Run-Off Black Book

WHAT IS THE RUN-OFF

- After a couple of months of steady rain, the monsoon retreats away from Australia's Northern coast.
- As the tens of thousands of square kilometres of flooded river recede all the baitfish, frogs, crustaceans and of course Barramundi come with it.
- This time is a fisherman's dream. Barra from hundreds of kilometers find their way up the rivers and creeks to gorge themselves on the bounty being forced off the floodplains.
- Mid February through until the end of May are peak run off times.



A man wearing a light-colored hat and sunglasses is holding a large, dark-colored fish. The fish has a prominent white stripe running along its side. The background is a blurred natural setting with green foliage and water.

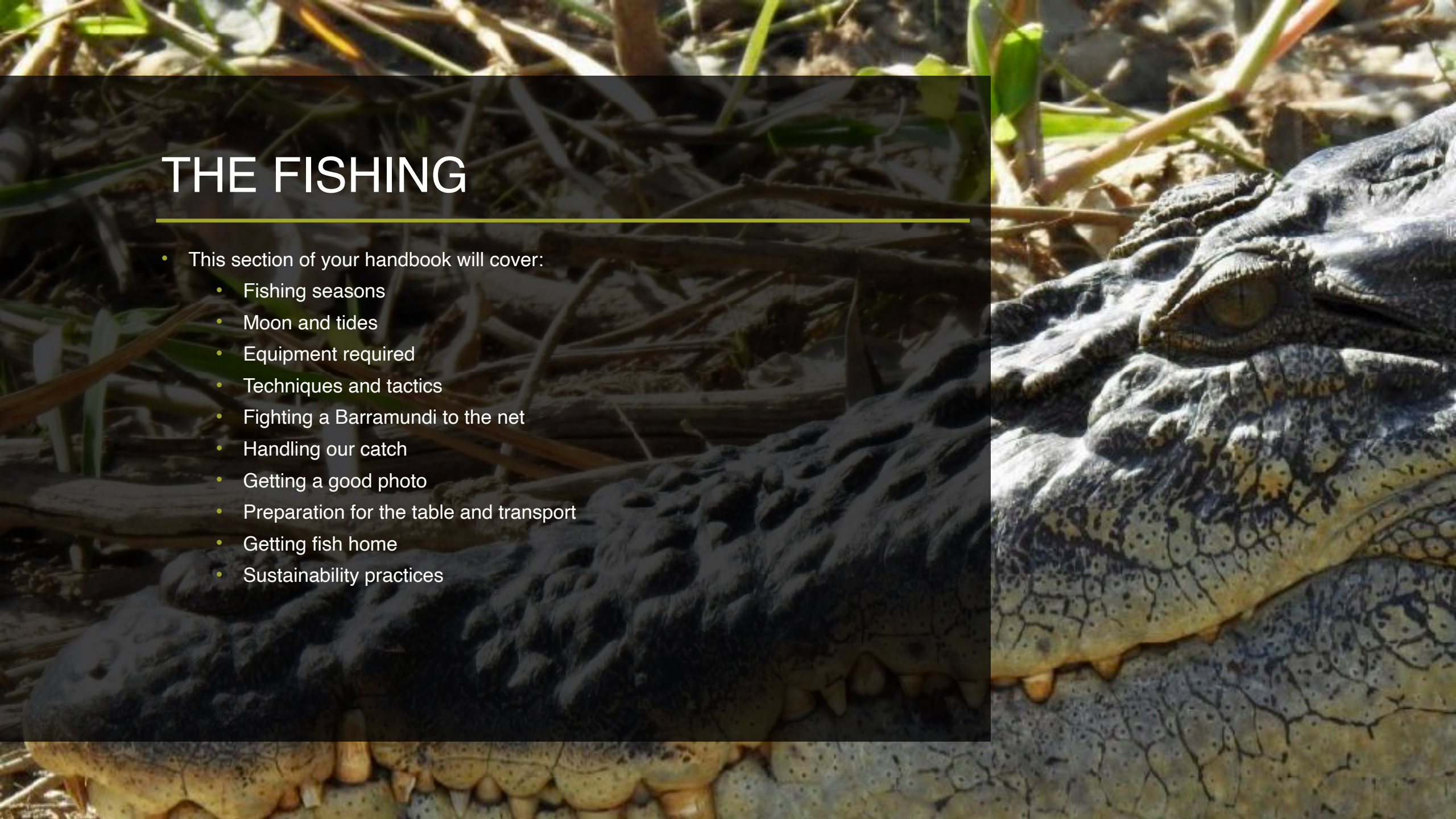
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

(AND SOME THINGS YOU DON'T)

- Inside this special guide you'll find everything you need to know about a Barefoot guided fishing safari in the run off and how to best prepare to ensure it truly is the trip of a lifetime.
- 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.

THE FISHING

- This section of your handbook will cover:
 - Fishing seasons
 - Moon and tides
 - Equipment required
 - Techniques and tactics
 - Fighting a Barramundi to the net
 - Handling our catch
 - Getting a good photo
 - Preparation for the table and transport
 - Getting fish home
 - Sustainability practices



FISHING SEASONS

- The Top End exists under 4 key seasons
- Dry Season (June-September)
- Build Up (September-November)
- Wet Season (December-February)
- Run Off (March-May)
- The Run-Off is peak Barra season and is the prime time to target both numbers of fish and the elusive 'METERY' (a Barra over 100cm long)

97%

51

FISHING
EFFICIENCY

MOON
PHASE

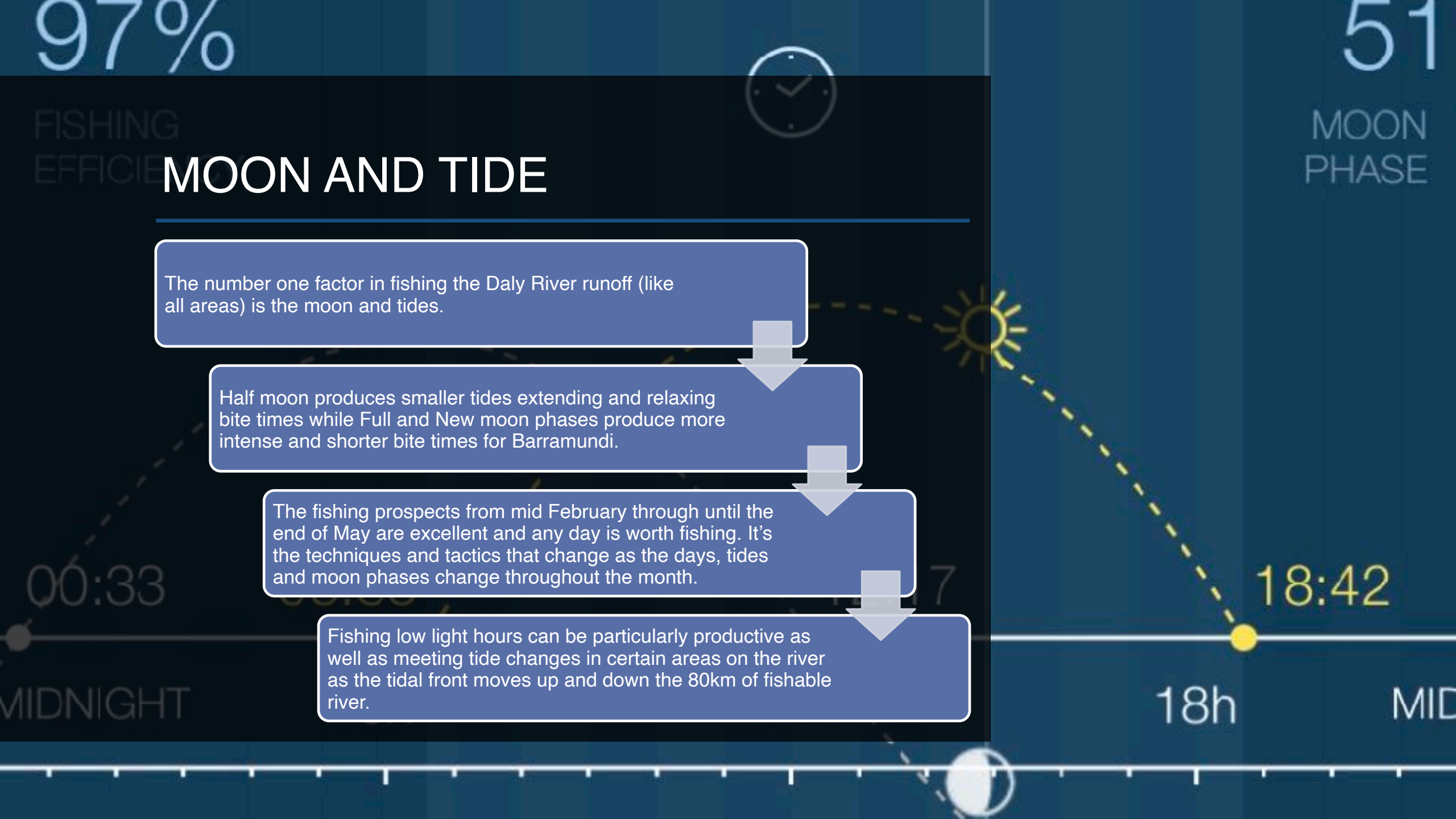
MOON AND TIDE

The number one factor in fishing the Daly River runoff (like all areas) 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.

The fishing prospects from mid February through until the end of May 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 low light hours can be particularly productive as well as meeting tide changes in certain areas on the river as the tidal front moves up and down the 80km of fishable river.



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 2 basic setups in the kit when fishing the Daly River in Run-Off
 - Baitcasting rod and reel
 - Spin rod and reel
 - Let's cover them both in more detail.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's face, smiling broadly, showing their teeth. They are wearing a green and black striped shirt. In the foreground, a fishing rod is visible, featuring a red reel with yellow lures attached. The background is a clear blue sky.

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.

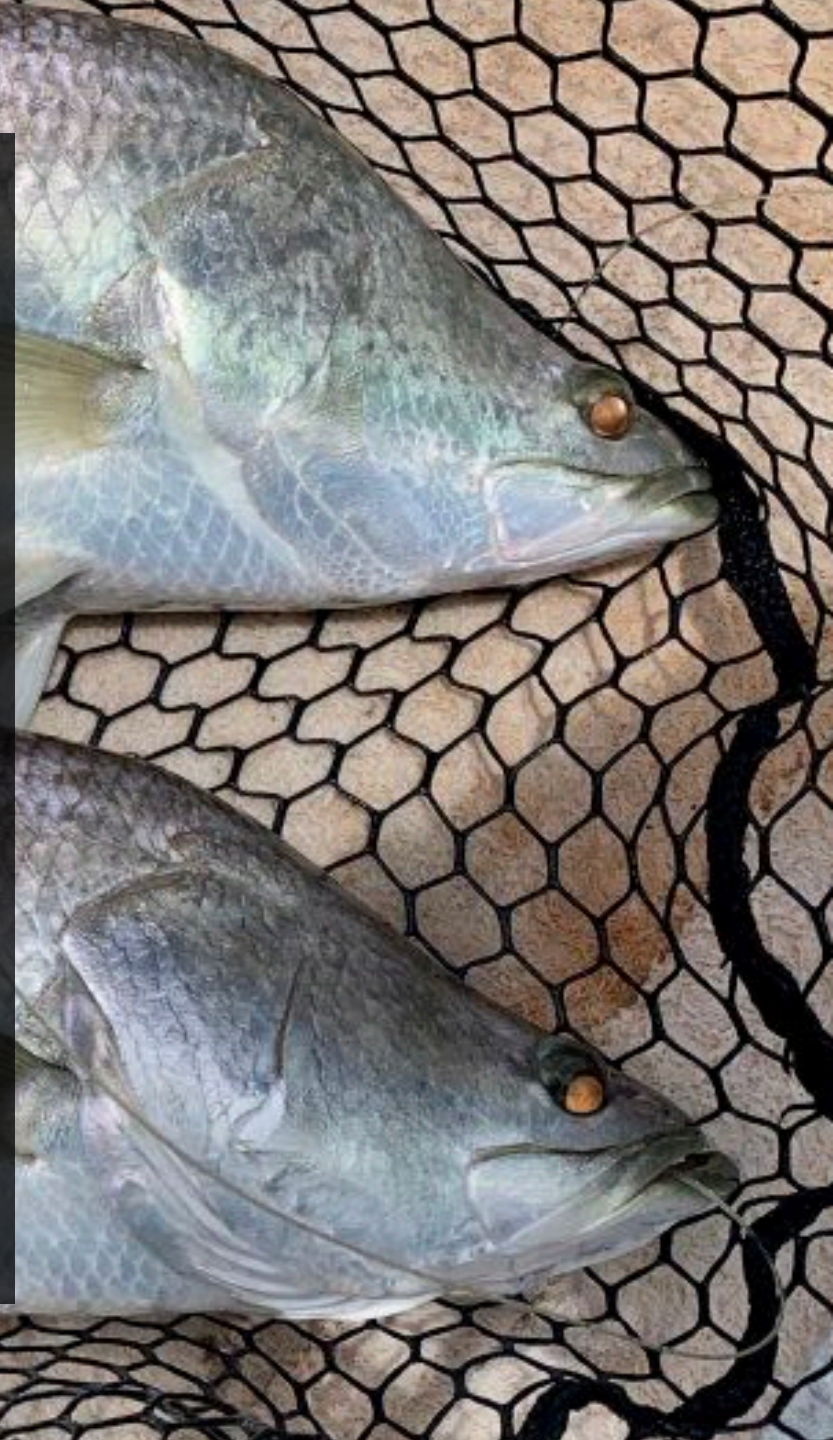
The background image shows a close-up of fishing equipment. On the left, a spinning reel is visible with a red and black body and a silver spool. To the right, a portion of a fishing rod handle is shown, featuring a black grip and a silver-colored metal section with the text 'ADIC 4000XG-B' and 'MALAYSIA' printed on it. The entire scene is set against a light-colored, textured surface.

SPIN SETUP

- 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.

TECHNIQUES AND TACTICS

- The Run-Off is generally considered the easiest time of the year to catch a Barra, although they can be caught year-round it is from mid February through to the end of May when they are most easily targeted in numbers and when the bigger fish are more present in the river system.
- There are 3 main techniques used when fishing for the mighty Barramundi and they are:
 - Lure Casting
 - Lure Trolling
 - Fly Casting
- Let's look them 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

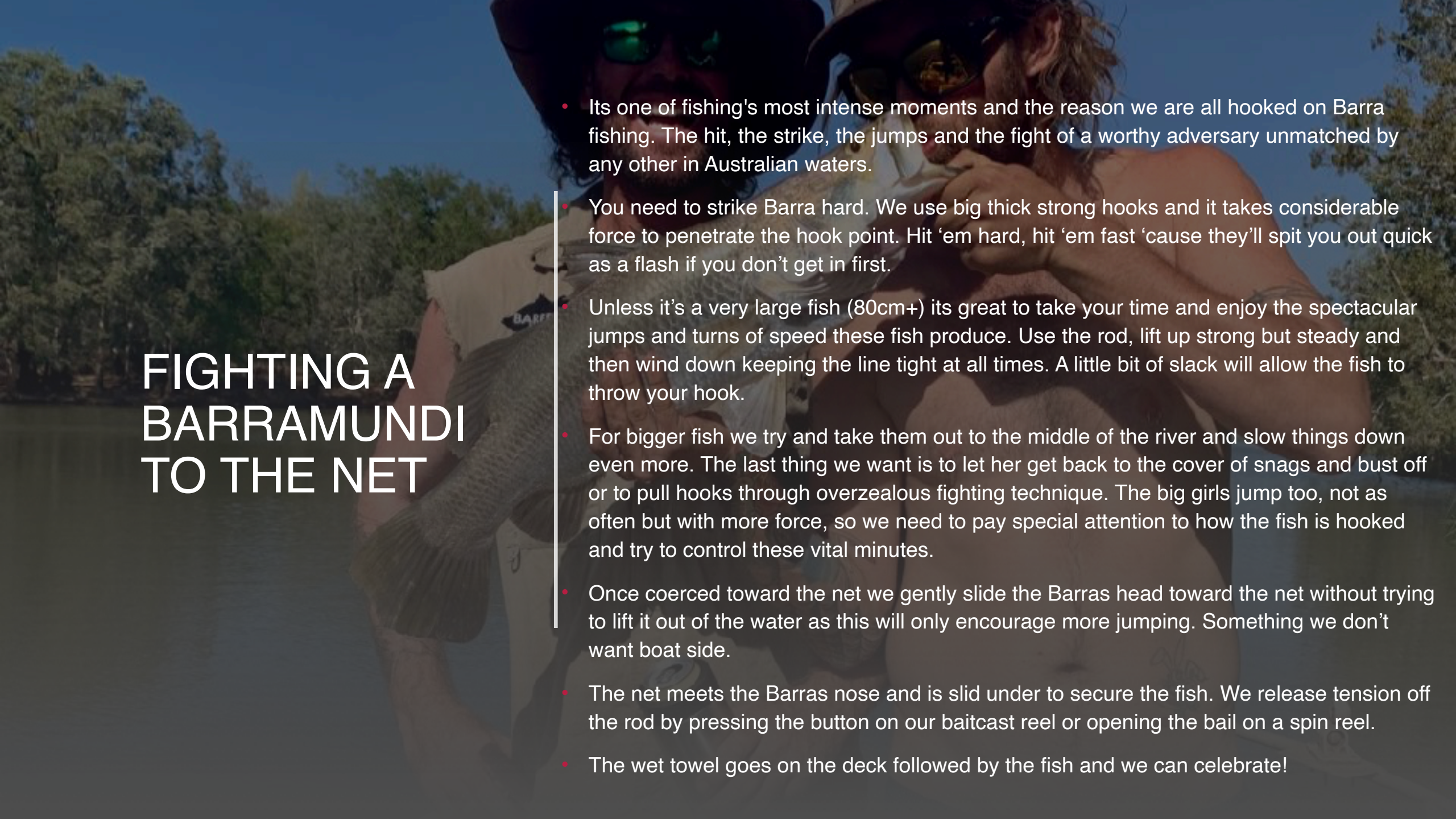
- Arguably the most effective way of targeting big Barra, being able to troll lures correctly is a hard-earned skill in the Top End. The ability to target specific areas through interpretation of high-end electronics while avoiding ever present fallen timber and rock bars, along with setting up the spread 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 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





FIGHTING A BARRAMUNDI TO THE NET

- Its one of fishing's most intense moments and the reason we are all hooked on Barra fishing. The hit, the strike, the jumps and the fight of a worthy adversary unmatched by any other in Australian waters.
- You need to strike Barra hard. 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 these fish 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 to the middle of the river 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 girls 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 the Barras head toward the net without trying to lift it out of the water as this will only encourage more jumping. Something we don't want boat side.
- The net meets the Barras nose and is slid under to secure the fish. We release tension off the rod by pressing the button on our baitcast reel or opening the bail on a spin reel.
- The wet towel goes on the deck followed by the fish and we can celebrate!

A photograph of two men on a boat, one wearing a hooded jacket and the other a hat and sunglasses, both holding a large fish. The background shows a body of water and a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent dark box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title and a list of instructions.

HANDLING OUR CATCH

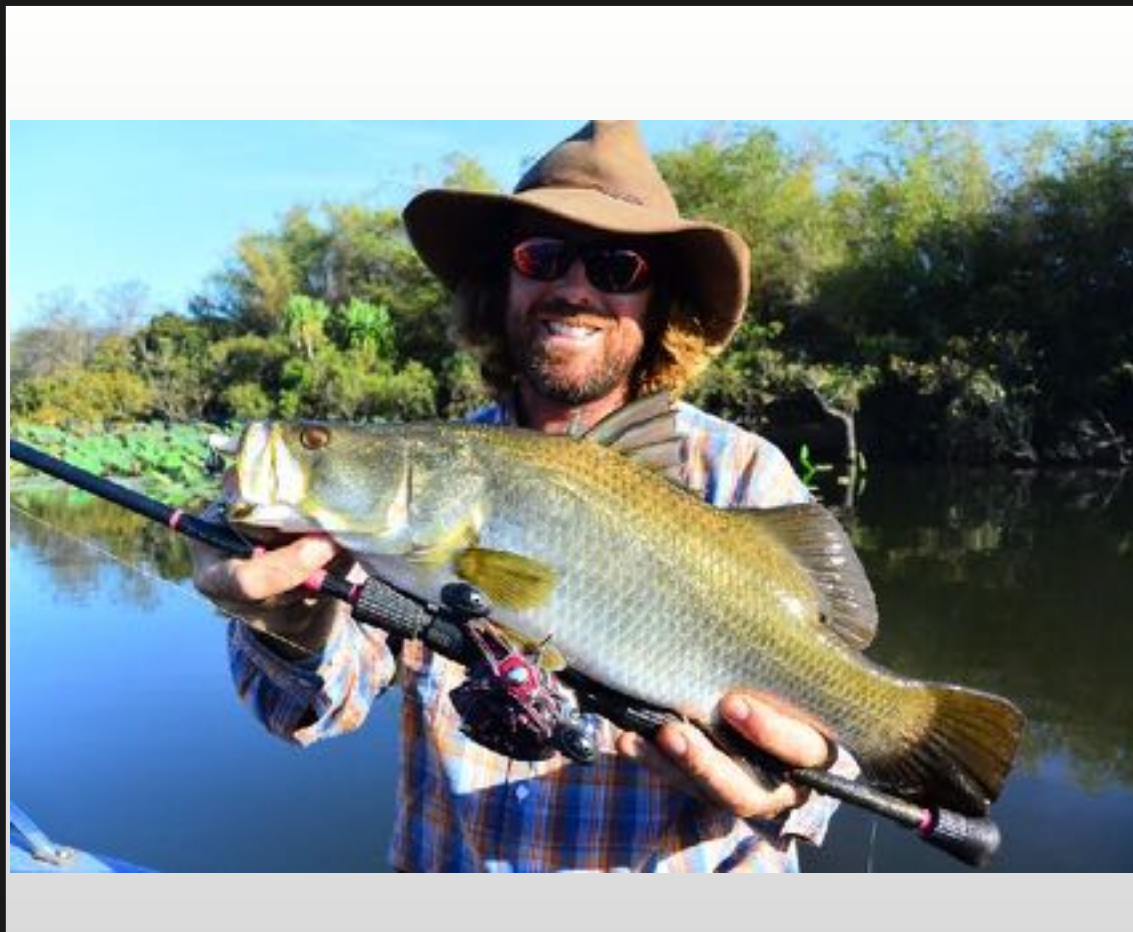
- We all know its very important to handle fish with respect and care. It's especially important with big fish we intend to release so they return to the system in good health.
- Things we do to help fishes health.
 - Lay the fish down, inside the net on a wet towel.
 - Always use Boga Grips to hold 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.



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

Making the little guys look a bit bigger!

PREPARATION FOR THE TABLE AND TRANSPORT

- We all love a feed of fish, especially when its fresh Barramundi!
- 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 better result in the pan.
- We then bag and seal the fillets, removing all the air form 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 barramudi per person 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).

A combined personal possession limit of 30 freshwater crustaceans which includes a maximum personal possession limit of 10 cherabin.

A total combined vessel limit of 90 freshwater crustaceans which includes a maximum vessel possession limit of 30 cherabin when there are 3 or more people on board.

Berried females must be released unharmed

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 2-7 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 to make in back to the local pub for a counter lunch and then idle back to Darwin. 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.

WHERE WE STAY

- There are several great accommodation options on the big rivers for us to choose from (if we get in early enough)
- All locations are within 20-minute drive of the public boat ramp 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 generally 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

- Run-Off time can be hot and sticky 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 heaps of room and makes fishing difficult.
- You'll need to organise your own grog 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

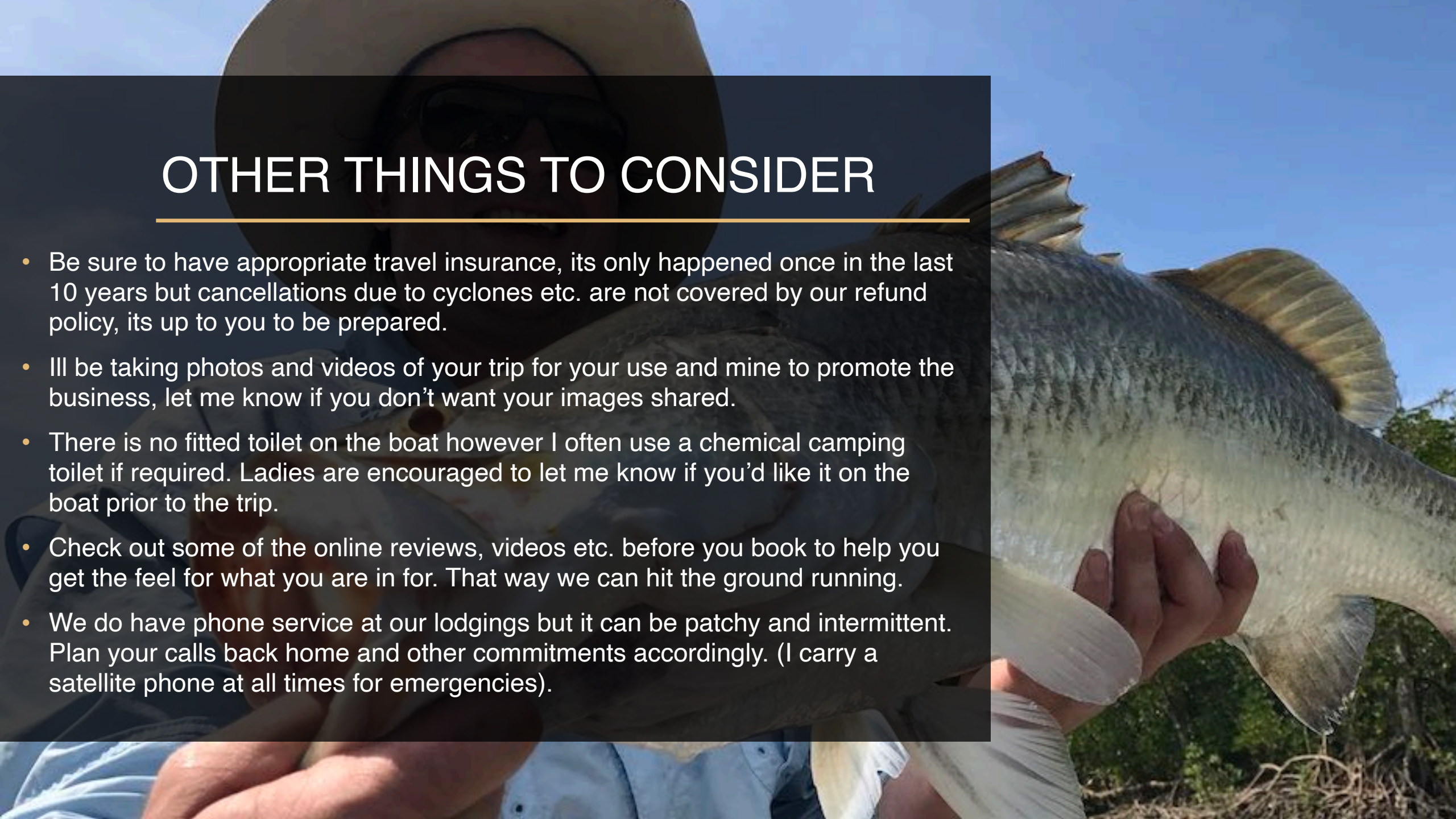
- There are a few things you can do to prepare for a Run-Off fishing trip, including reading this handbook a couple of times!
- If you can, practice your casting. Give me a call if you need any help or check out the videos on the Barefoot youtube channel.
- My number is 0417272871.
- Learn how to work 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
- Maintain a level of fitness 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 is local bush nurse clinics at some locations if we need extra help.
- A Satellite phone and epirb for emergencies and contact numbers for care flight choppers 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 person wearing a light-colored hat and sunglasses is holding a large, silvery fish. The fish has a prominent dorsal fin and a large eye. The person is wearing a light blue shirt. The background is a clear blue sky with some green foliage visible at the bottom right.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Be sure to have appropriate travel insurance, its only happened once in the last 10 years but cancellations due to cyclones etc. are not covered by our refund policy, its up to you to be prepared.
- Ill 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 our lodgings but it can be patchy and intermittent. Plan your calls back home and other commitments accordingly. (I carry a satellite phone at all times 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

- ***Extended Tours Cancellation Policy***

- 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...

