

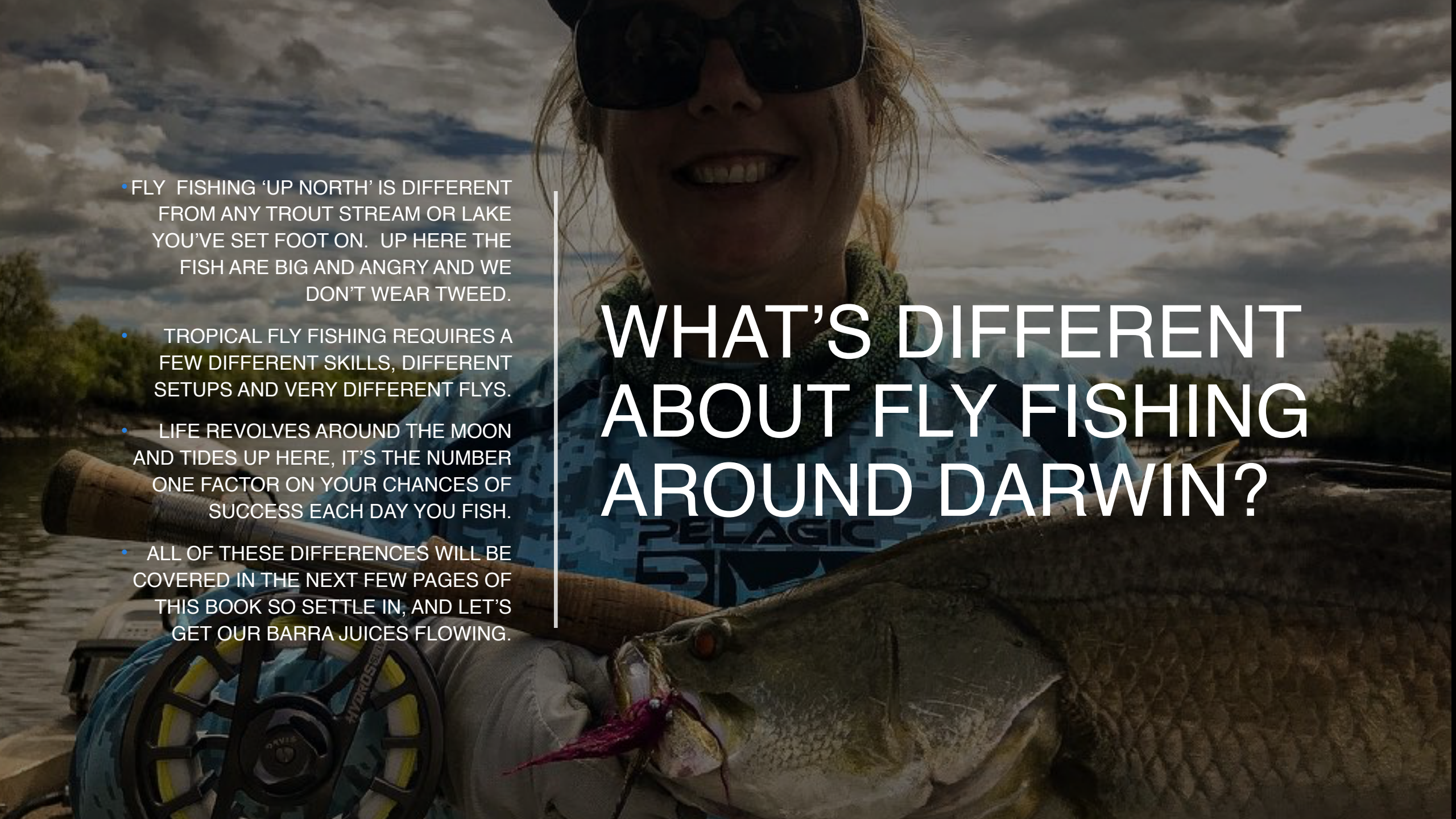
BAREFOOT FISHING SAFARIS

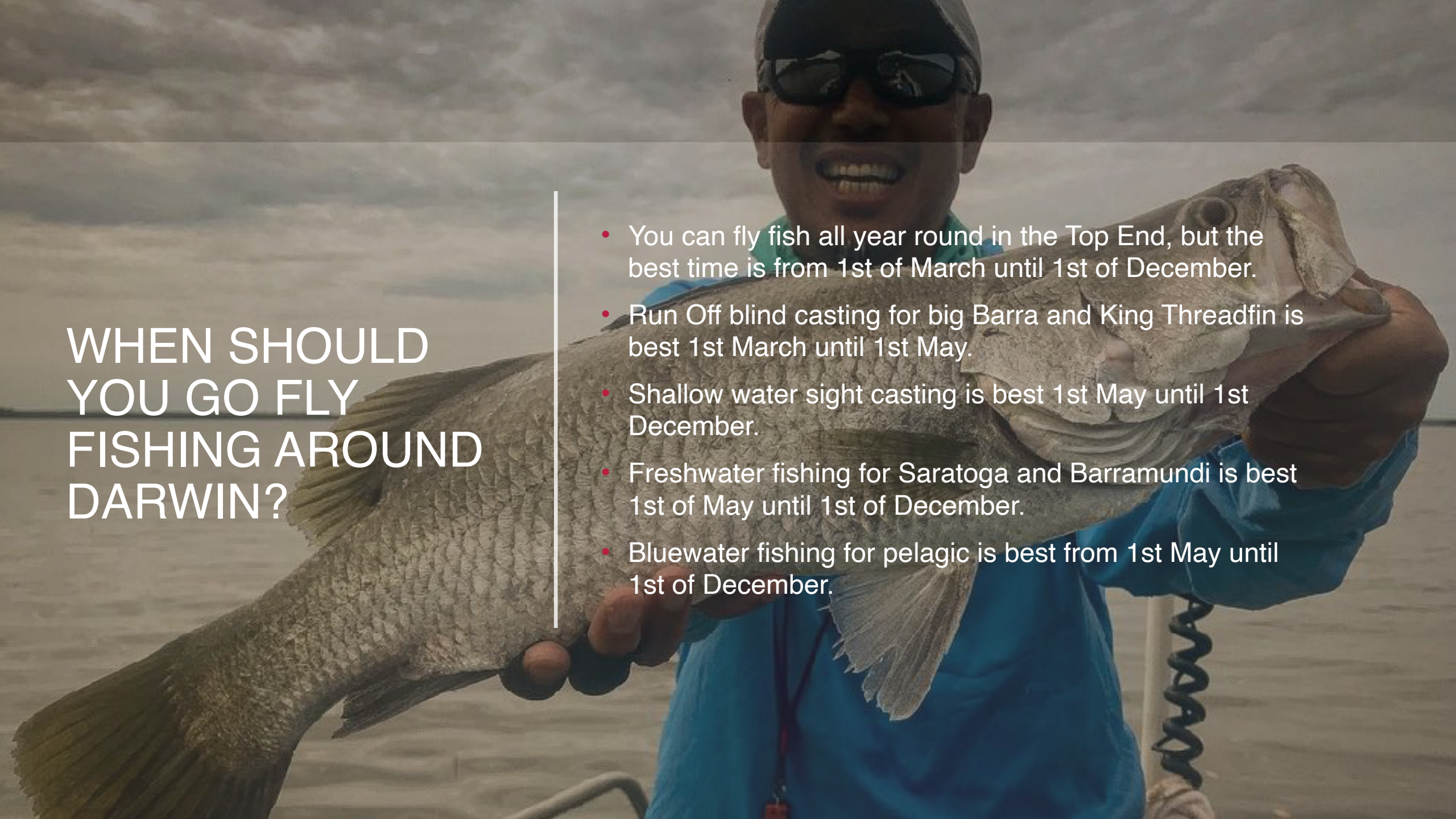
Fly Fishing Black Book



- FLY FISHING 'UP NORTH' IS DIFFERENT FROM ANY TROUT STREAM OR LAKE YOU'VE SET FOOT ON. UP HERE THE FISH ARE BIG AND ANGRY AND WE DON'T WEAR TWEED.
- TROPICAL FLY FISHING REQUIRES A FEW DIFFERENT SKILLS, DIFFERENT SETUPS AND VERY DIFFERENT FLYS.
- LIFE REVOLVES AROUND THE MOON AND TIDES UP HERE, IT'S THE NUMBER ONE FACTOR ON YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS EACH DAY YOU FISH.
- ALL OF THESE DIFFERENCES WILL BE COVERED IN THE NEXT FEW PAGES OF THIS BOOK SO SETTLE IN, AND LET'S GET OUR BARRA JUICES FLOWING.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT FLY FISHING AROUND DARWIN?



A man wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, sunglasses, and a grey cap is smiling broadly while holding a large, silvery-grey fish. He is on a boat, with the water and a cloudy sky in the background. The fish is held horizontally across his chest, with its head to the right and tail to the left. The fish has a prominent dorsal fin and a large mouth. The man's hands are visible, holding the fish's body and head.

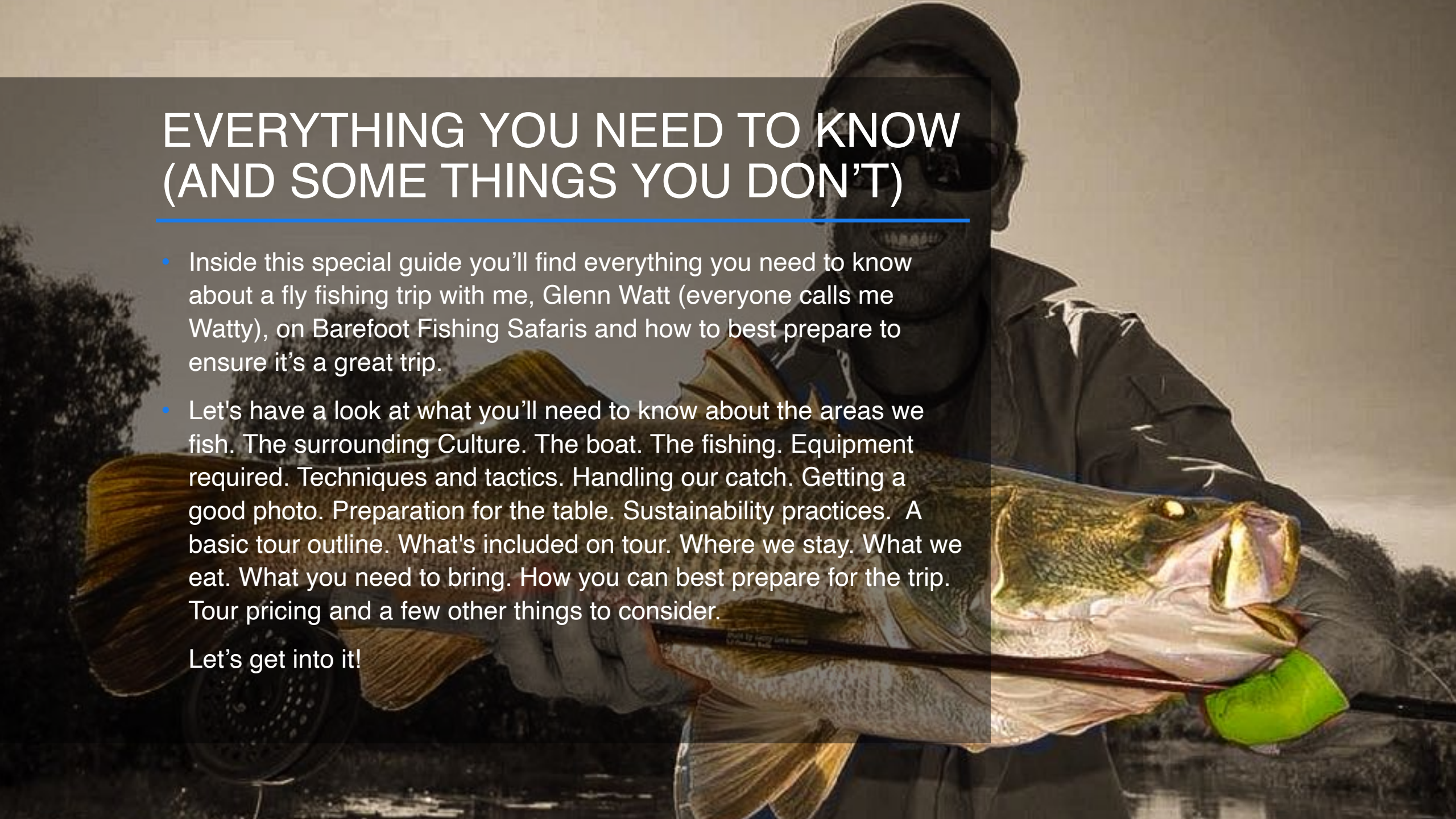
WHEN SHOULD YOU GO FLY FISHING AROUND DARWIN?

- You can fly fish all year round in the Top End, but the best time is from 1st of March until 1st of December.
- Run Off blind casting for big Barra and King Threadfin is best 1st March until 1st May.
- Shallow water sight casting is best 1st May until 1st December.
- Freshwater fishing for Saratoga and Barramundi is best 1st of May until 1st of December.
- Bluewater fishing for pelagic is best from 1st May until 1st of December.

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 fly fishing trip with me, Glenn Watt (everyone calls me Watty), on Barefoot Fishing Safaris and how to best prepare to ensure it's a great trip.
- Let's have a look at what you'll need to know about the areas we fish. The surrounding Culture. The boat. The fishing. Equipment required. Techniques and tactics. Handling our catch. Getting a good photo. Preparation for the table. 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 a few other things to consider.

Let's get into it!



FISHING LOCATIONS

- Depending on weather conditions and tides we might find ourselves moving around a little to get the very best fishing.
- Locations we fish vary depending on the time of year, weather, tides and your goals. Some of the most productive areas are:
 - Darwin Harbour
 - Dundee Beach
 - Bynoe Harbour
 - Vernon Islands
 - Mary River
- If you decide to book a trip a big focus of the trip plan revolves around matching up all these factors, to provide you with the best, individually tailored experience the top end can offer.



THE CULTURE

- The Traditional Owners of all areas we fish welcome recreational fishers to their Country.
- 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 many 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 BOAT

The ultimate tropical fly fishing vessel

- 7.5m long
- 26cm draft
- 175hp Yamaha 4 stroke
- 560km fuel tank range
- Bob's Machine Shop jack plate
- Zipwake trim tabs
- 80lb MinnKota Terrova electric motor
- Front and rear cast decks
- Huge under floor storage with fridge and esky
- Lowrance 16 inch live sounder with active target



THE FISHING

- Let's dive a bit deeper into the details of what you can expect when you chuck the long wand on a plane and head north.
- This section of your handbook will cover:
 - Fishing seasons and weather
 - Moon and tides
 - Techniques and tactics
 - Equipment required
 - Flies
 - Casting your fly
 - Fighting large fish to the net
 - Handling our catch
 - Getting a good photo
 - Preparation for the table
 - Sustainability practices
 - Safari itinerary outline
 - What's included
 - Where we stay
 - What we eat
 - What you need to bring
 - How to prepare for the trip
 - Your health and safety
 - Pricing for 2024
 - Booking terms and conditions



WEATHER

- Conditions vary through the year more than you might think. It's not just hot all the time.
- 1st of March - 1st of May it's hot and steamy. The Barra love it, but if you aren't used to it you need to take some care.
- 1st of May - 1st of October is dry season, it's much cooler and dryer, great for mixed Barra and Bluewater fishing.
- 1st of October - 1st of December is the build up. It gets hot and steamy again. Barra love it, but make sure you drink plenty of water (and beer).

97%

51

FISHING
EFFICIENCY

MOON
PHASE

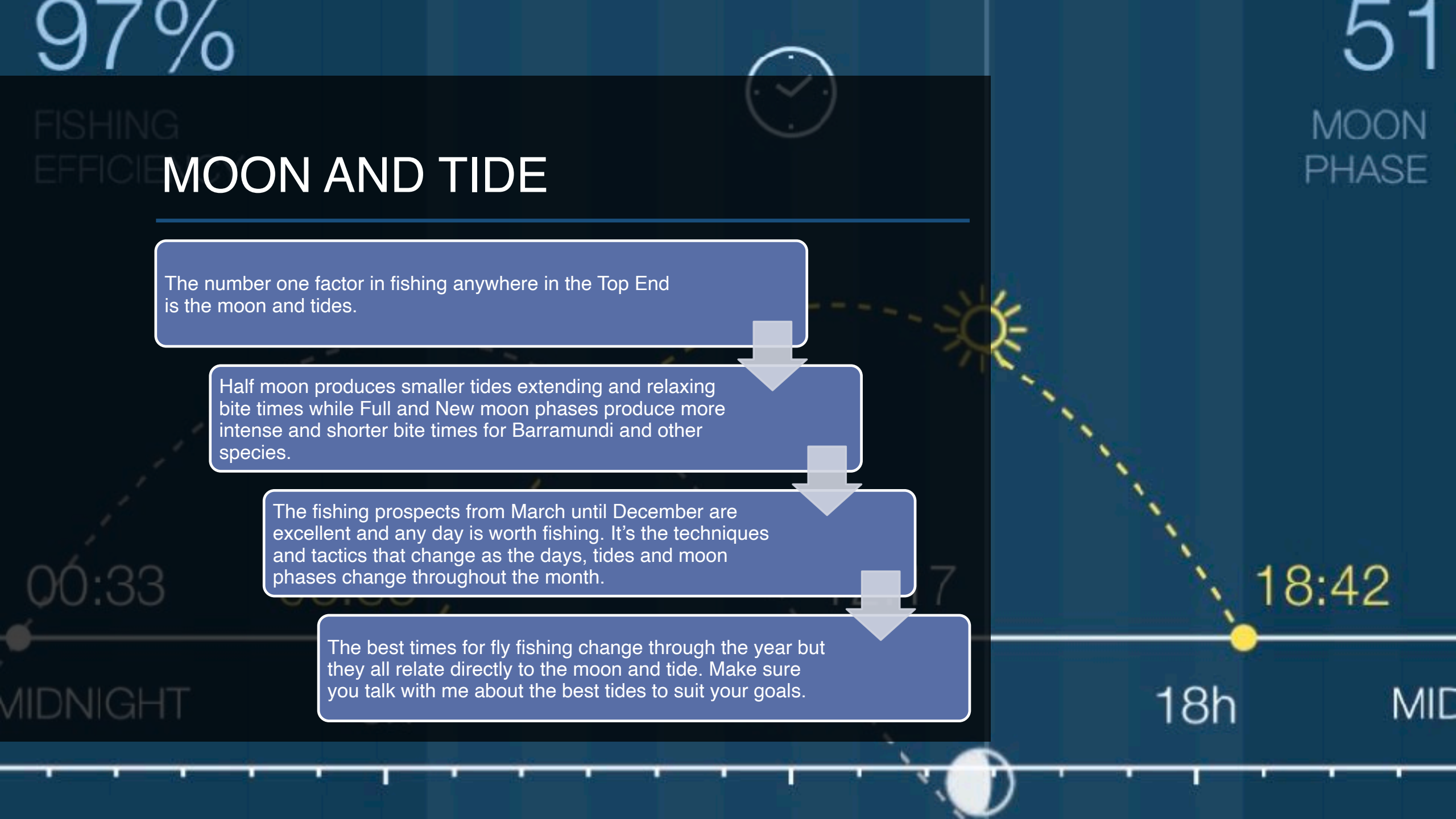
MOON AND TIDE

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.

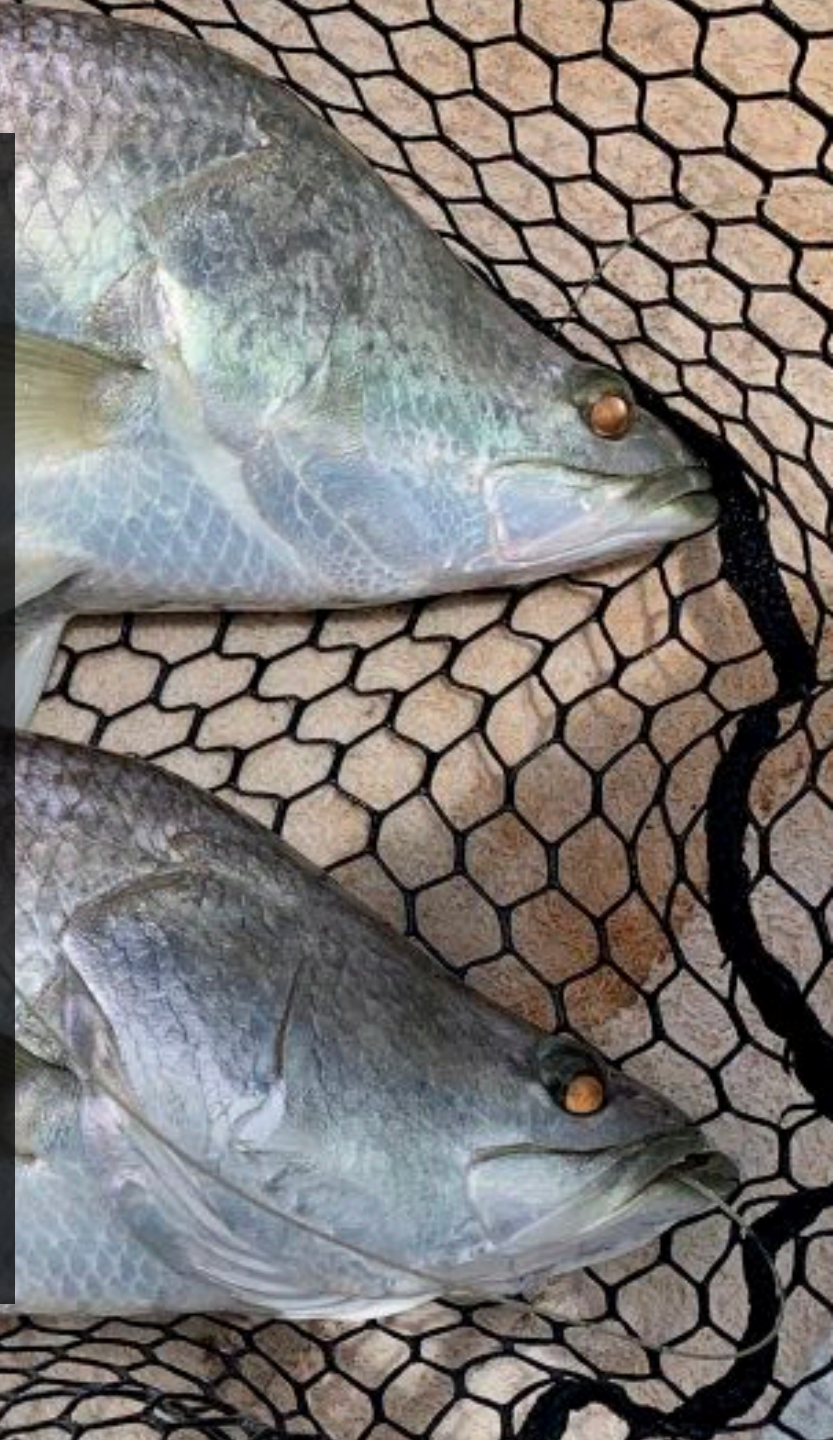
The fishing prospects from March until December are excellent and any day is worth fishing. It's the techniques and tactics that change as the days, tides and moon phases change throughout the month.

The best times for fly fishing change through the year but they all relate directly to the moon and tide. Make sure you talk with me about the best tides to suit your goals.



TECHNIQUES AND TACTICS

- The tactics used through a fishing season vary from blind casting color changes in swollen rivers right through, to a gentle presentation, to a cruising Barra on a shallow crystal clear mangrove flat.
- Depending on your fishing goals, you'll use a range of different tactics and techniques to get the best fishing each day.
- As we will discuss in the next few pages it pays to have a few different outfits ready to go as the tide and conditions change through each day. You will often fish surface, subsurface and fast sink in one day, depending on your goals and the plan of attack.
- It's also important to be able to cast and fish these different outfits properly, let's discuss that in some more detail as well.



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 it's best to keep it simple.
- There are 2 basic setups in my kit, when fly fishing the Northern Territory's fresh, estuary and inshore reef systems.
- 9wt rod and reel, with a few different lines.
- 11wt rod and reel, with a few different lines.

Let's cover them in some more detail.

RODS & REELS

- Like I mentioned before you can get away with 2 outfits here in the top end. A 9wt and an 11wt work well and cover all bases.
- If you are looking to purchase new gear before your trip, Barefoot Fishing Safaris have a sponsorship agreement with Nervous Water Fly Fishing where you can receive a 10% discount on any online purchases.
- Best 9wt - Thomas & Thomas Sextant
- Best 11 wt - Thomas & Thomas Exocett SS 350
- Best reels - Shilton SR9 & SR12



LINE

- If you were only to bring 1 line to the top end it would be an intermediate sink tip like the Cortland Ghost tip. But lets face it, we love having more gear than we really need so let's dig in.
- Best floating line - Cortland Tropic Compact
- Best intermediate line - Cortland tropic intermediate
- Best fast sink - Cortland Tropic heavy sink

Note: Barefoot Fishing Safaris is sponsored by Nervous Water Fly Fishing where you can make online purchases with a 10% discount code to save yourself a bit of money. The code is Barefoot10



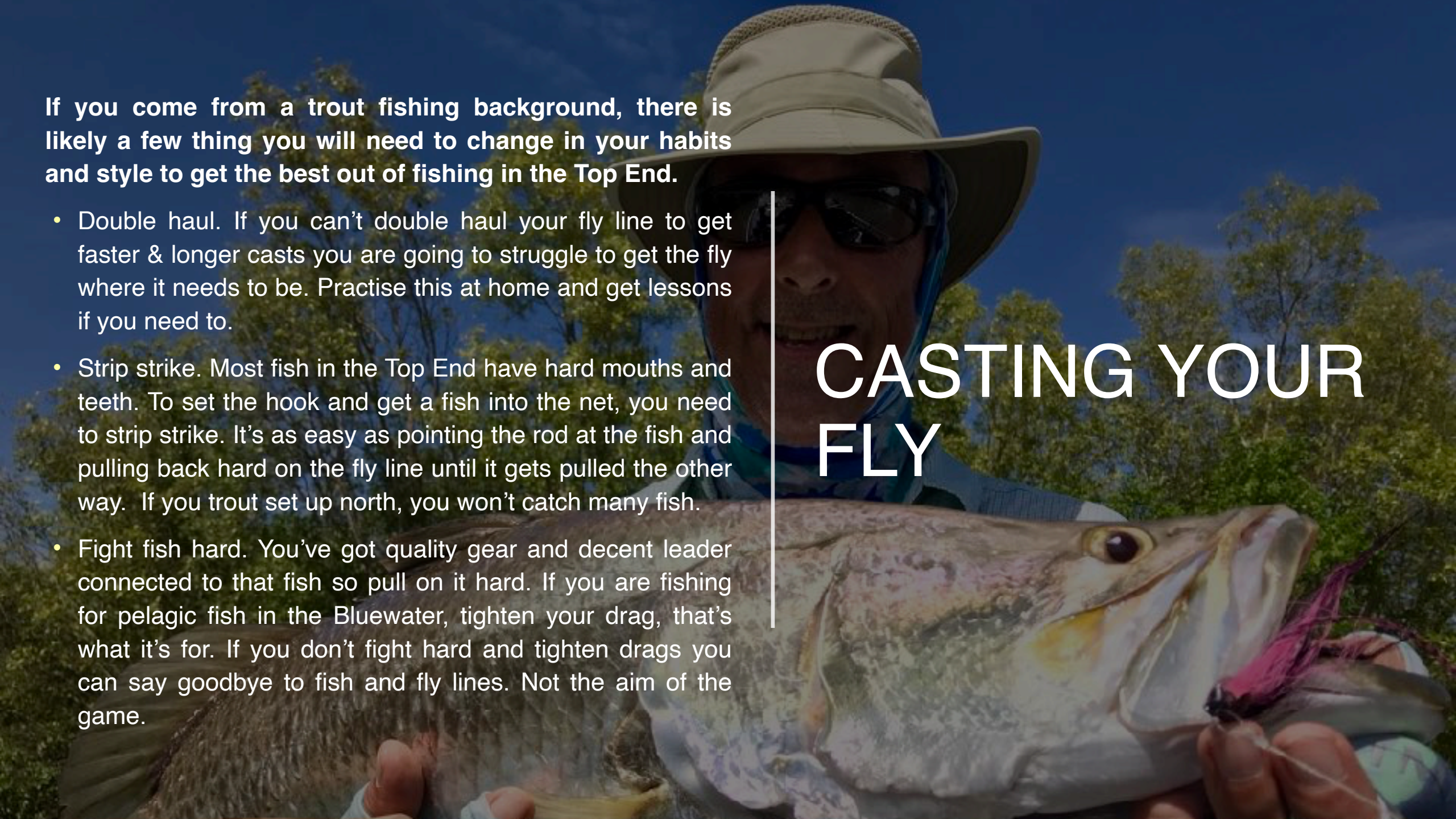
LEADER & TIPPET

- You don't need to get too technical with your leader setups here in the Top End.
- On your 9wt you can build knotted tapered leaders if you like but a straight through leader of about 6-8ft does the trick just fine.
 - Floating line for surface fishing - 30-40lb mono straight through.
 - Sink tip, intermediate or heavy sink - 30-40lb fluorocarbon straight through.
 - Loop to loop cats paw style connections work well.
- On your 11wt upgrade to 40-50lb mono and flouro.
- Of course you can fish lighter than this if you like but the chance of getting chewed, bitten or busted off increases greatly.



FLIES

- Fly selection is as confusing as you want to make it.
- There are many very successful fly fishers in the Top End who throw one fly only. A white Clouser Minnow in 2/0 tied with red thread and medium dumbbell eyes, this will catch fish most days. HOWEVER...
- If you really want to get the most out of your fly casting, and fishing it's best to cover a few bases and scenarios.
- When you book a trip with Barefoot Fishing Safaris I'll share with you a detailed explanation of my fly box, why each fly is there, how to tie them, and how to fish them.
- If you would like to purchase flies to take home with you let me know and I will tie you up a box of the best flies in the Top End.
- I will also supply all flies for you throughout your trip if you prefer to do it the easy way.
- If you want to play around with a few of your own ideas some common patterns to look at are:
 - NYAP popper
 - Spawning shrimp
 - Gurgler
 - Squid fly
 - Barra bunny
 - Surf candy
 - Clouser minnow
 - EP baitfish

A fisherman wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses is holding a large, silvery fish. The background shows a clear blue sky and green trees. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

If you come from a trout fishing background, there is likely a few thing you will need to change in your habits and style to get the best out of fishing in the Top End.

- Double haul. If you can't double haul your fly line to get faster & longer casts you are going to struggle to get the fly where it needs to be. Practise this at home and get lessons if you need to.
- Strip strike. Most fish in the Top End have hard mouths and teeth. To set the hook and get a fish into the net, you need to strip strike. It's as easy as pointing the rod at the fish and pulling back hard on the fly line until it gets pulled the other way. If you trout set up north, you won't catch many fish.
- Fight fish hard. You've got quality gear and decent leader connected to that fish so pull on it hard. If you are fishing for pelagic fish in the Bluewater, tighten your drag, that's what it's for. If you don't fight hard and tighten drags you can say goodbye to fish and fly lines. Not the aim of the game.

CASTING YOUR FLY

A man in a white shirt and hat is holding a large fish on a boat. The fish is silver with a yellowish tint to its scales and fins. The background shows a body of water and a line of trees under a cloudy sky.

FIGHTING LARGE FISH TO THE NET

- It's 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 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.
- 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 techniques. 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 first toward the net without lifting 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 pulling some line from our fly reel.
- The wet towel goes on the deck followed by the fish and we can celebrate!



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. I'll 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 centre of your chest, just below shoulder height with the nose slightly toward the camera to get good depth in the pic.



Alan with a nice trevally in the morning light.

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.
- 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

- We all love a feed of fish, especially when it's fresh!
- There are some key steps to remember when preparing our catch for the table.
- 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 honourable death and quality fillets.
- I'll 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 need to drink a few extra beers to fit them in the esky.



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 won't successfully release.

3-5 Barramundi 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).

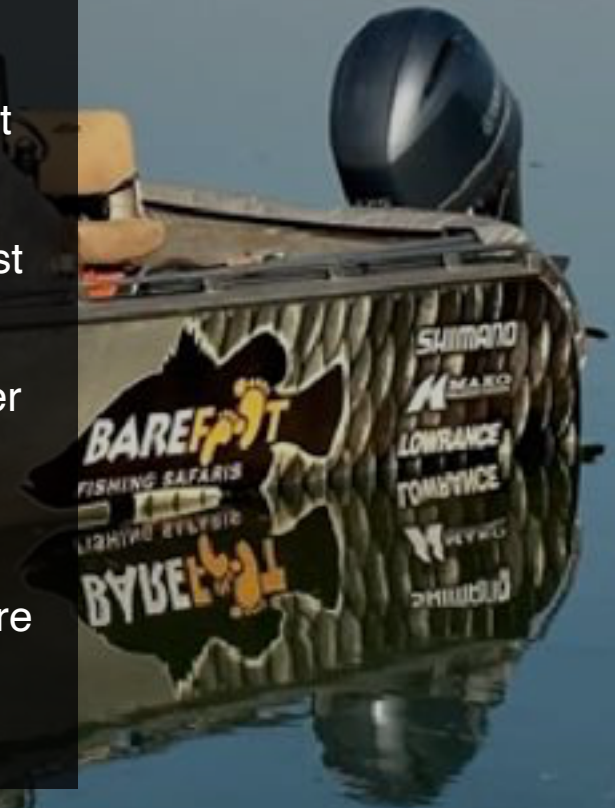
3 Golden Snapper, 2 Black Jew Fish per person
All Mangrove Jack will be released

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 the following outline:
- You make your own way to Darwin.
- Pickup can be direct from the airport, if pre-arranged, at 0630 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, unless staying another night.
- 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 on the way home. 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.
- Fly fishing gear can be supplied on a replace if lost or damaged basis (I never charge for lost flies).
- Lunches, morning tea, breakfasts and dinners in full package and lunches only for boat only package.
- Special dietary requirements can be catered for.
- Accomodation booking guidance is provided if you choose the boat only package.

WHERE WE STAY

- There are several great accommodation options for us to choose from (if we book early enough).
- All locations are within a 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, maintenance requirements etc. So you'll get some free time away from me each day as well!

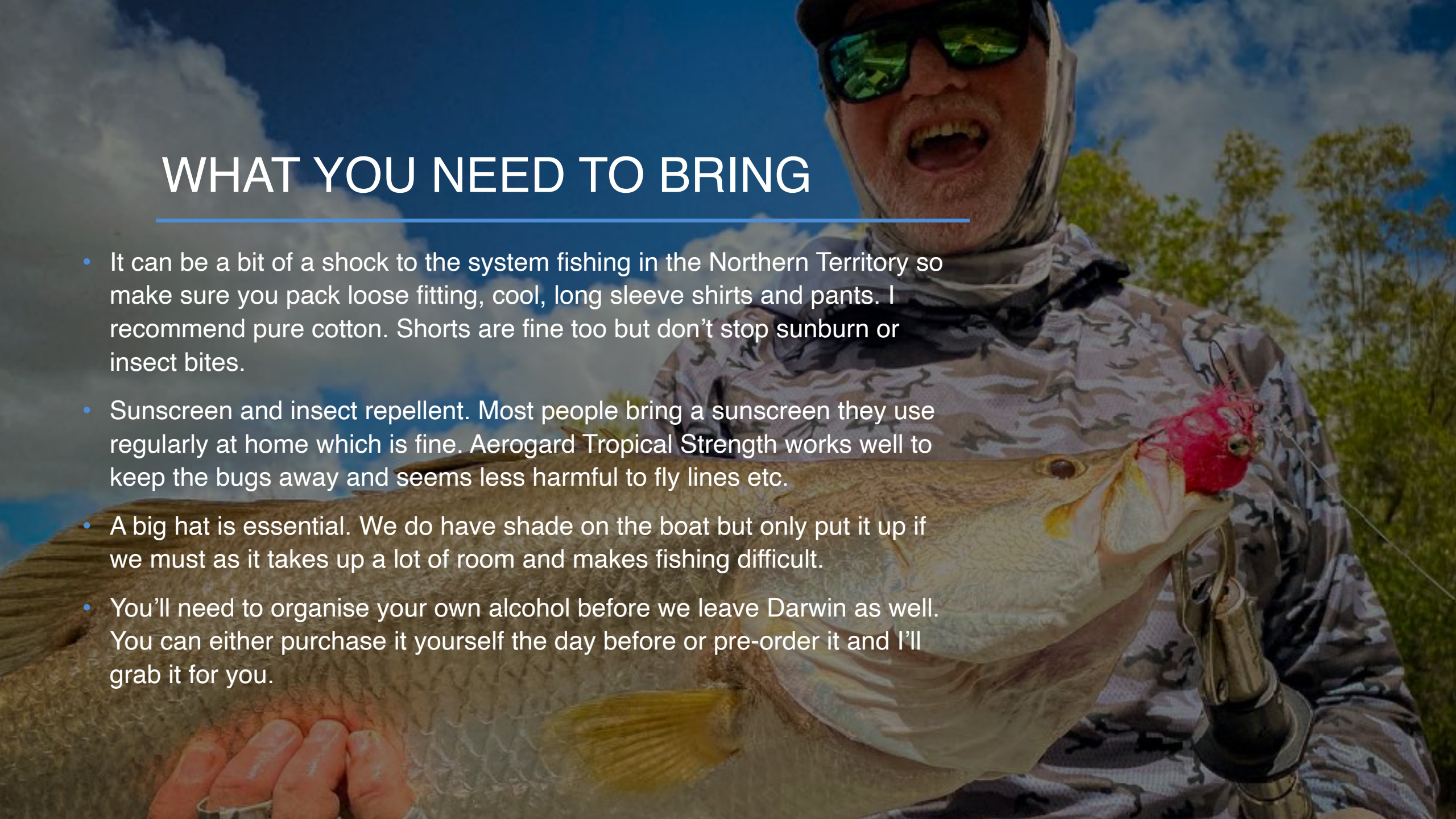
WHAT WE EAT

- Depending on the package, you choose your meals and 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 sausages in bread off the gas cooker. 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 25 litre Yeti 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.



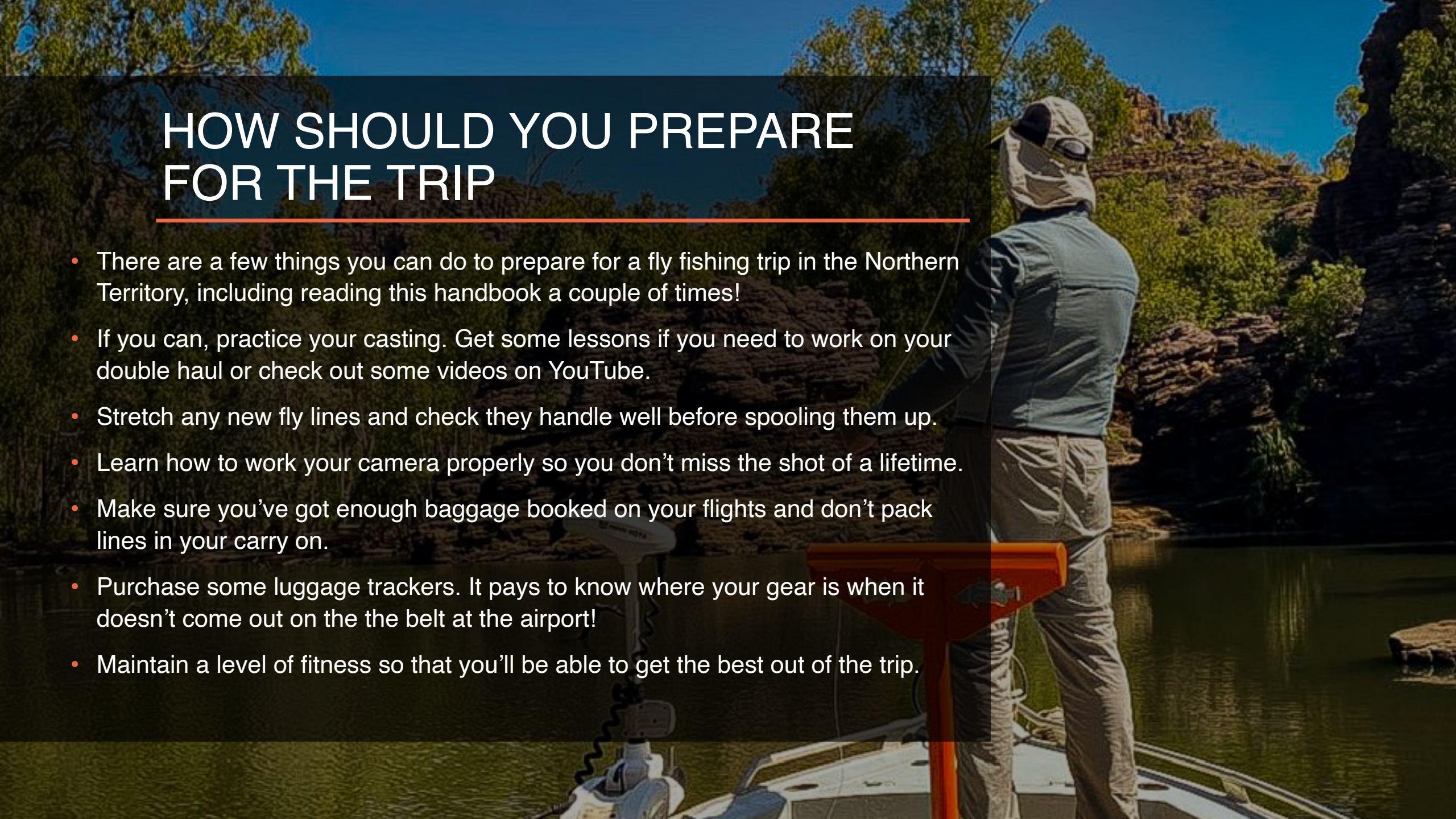
WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- It can be a bit of a shock to the system fishing in the Northern Territory so make sure you pack loose fitting, cool, long sleeve shirts and pants. I recommend pure cotton. Shorts are fine too but don't stop sunburn or insect bites.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent. Most people bring a sunscreen they use regularly at home which is fine. Aerogard Tropical Strength works well to keep the bugs away and seems less harmful to fly lines etc.
- 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 fly fishing trip in the Northern Territory, including reading this handbook a couple of times!
- If you can, practice your casting. Get some lessons if you need to work on your double haul or check out some videos on YouTube.
- Stretch any new fly lines and check they handle well before spooling them up.
- 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 on your flights and don't pack lines in your carry on.
- Purchase some luggage trackers. It pays to know where your gear is when it doesn't come out on the the belt at the airport!
- 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.
- I'll 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.



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 and bad weather 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 guidance in booking the correct accomodation.

full package fishing days	accomodation nights	2 anglers per boat & guide
3 days fishing	2 nights	\$3,450
	3 nights	\$3,850
4 days fishing	3 nights	\$3,580
	4 nights	\$3,980
5 days fishing	4 nights	\$5,750
	5 nights	\$6,150
6 days fishing	5 nights	\$6,900
	6 nights	\$7,300
7 days fishing	6 nights	\$8,050
	7 nights	\$8,450

boat only fishing days	accomodation nights	2 anglers per boat & guide
3 days fishing	2 nights	\$2,400
	3 nights	\$2,800
4 days fishing	3 nights	\$3,200
	4 nights	\$3,600
5 days fishing	4 nights	\$4,000
	5 nights	\$4,400
6 days fishing	5 nights	\$4,800
	6 nights	\$5,200
7 days fishing	6 nights	\$5,600
	7 nights	\$6,000

An aerial photograph of a white motorboat on a river. The boat is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the frame. The water is a deep green color, and there are some trees and foliage visible in the upper-right quadrant. A semi-transparent dark green overlay covers the right side of the image, containing the text and list. The text 'BOOKING TERMS AND CONDITIONS' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the overlay.

BOOKING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- 30% deposit required to secure dates. Balance due 90 days prior to start of trip.
- 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...

