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Voyage 2018

Fitzroy Island to the Gulf of Carpentaria via Torres strait

At present I am anchored at Weipa in the Gulf of Carpentaria. As I am writing this a 16 foot crocodile is stalking the Yacht, he has become very cheeky, getting closer and closer every day, after all I am intruding into his home, hence I only head to the shore in day light hours as my small rubber tender may become a teething ring for this prehistoric creature.

To date I have sailed 2,687 nautical miles, mostly solo, with the last several weeks accompanied by my son Brandon who had sailed from Mackay Queensland into the Torres strait. What an incredible moment Entering Albany passage and into the Torres strait after nearly 7 months sailing from Bass Strait then into the Tasman sea along the coral coast

rounding the tip of Australia with Papua New Guinea border only a short distance to the north and the mainland of Australia to the south.

“Its normal pace, even with the threat of a gale. How long will it last, this peace I have found at sea? It is all of life that I contemplate- sun, clouds, time that passes and abides. Occasionally it is also that other world, foreign now. The modern, artificial world where man has been turned into a money – making machine to satisfy false needs, false joys??”Bernard Moitessier



Start of the Wet season



Turtle Hunters



Brandon relax mode Kite sailing



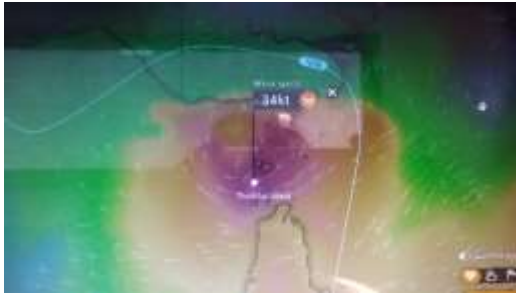
Dry and rugged Flanders Island



Aboriginal Paintings note pearl luggers



Well on Flinders Islands



The reason escaping Torres strait



Moment of triumph rounding the top



Prince of Wales Island



Morris Island

Brandon flew home from Horn island near Thursday island in the Torres strait, near enough to the PNG border our destination, but due to the monsoonal season, and a low forecast over the Torres strait and my insurance company refusing to insure this time of year, I made the decision to head for safe haven at Weipa in the Gulf of Carpentaria. My old mate Jeff Mullenger flew into Horn Island and accompanied me to Weipa sailing the 170 nautical miles catching monster Wahoo on the way, and dropping anchor in croc infested creeks with these large reptiles passing the yacht in some cases only by a few feet. The Gulf of Carpentaria has less vessels than the east coast of Cape York, we did not see a single vessel with the exception of the border force helicopter who flew over us and radioed requesting all relevant information of were Never Die Wondering has been and were we are going etc. Jeff flew out from Weipa and I have arranged for my yacht to go onto a hard stand for the wet season, and I also will fly out and return just after the wet.



Albany Passage Gateway



Anchored at the tip of Australia



Gulf sun set



Finding Aboriginal Paintings



Magnificent Coral Coast



North of Cooktown



Stalkers in the Gulf

In all honesty this has become the greatest of adventures of which also has been mentally, physically and emotional exhausting. There has been enormous highs with also enormous lows. My son and I sailed October and into November hardly any communication what so ever as we sailed into very isolated Territory. My wing man Doug Matthies from Metung only would know where we were via marine traffic, and that was sometimes two weeks behind?, mates like Dougy who encouraged me the entire 7 months, especially in those lonely solo moments in terrible conditions, with their positive talk of encouragement was essential in keeping my mindset positive. Emergency repairs to steering and the fear when a fire had started aboard from wetness to a wire plug, that we quickly extinguished, being at sea with no sight of land in these circumstances, gives you a huge jolt of fear.

Brandon was filming a large tiger shark 5 meters that was swimming back and forth along the yacht while his partner another 5 meter was following behind my small 2.7 meter rubber dingy with me in it, that I quickly return to the yacht for safety?.



1.2 meter Wahoo



Thursday Island arrival



Brolgas on sun set



Isolation of Cape York

Melbourne cup day was spent at Punsand bay on the top of Cape York where locals raced bush horses along the beach that had been bought in a Calcutta, better than being at the Melbourne cup.

Recently while anchored one night close to a beach in the Gulf, Aboriginal women sat on the beach for many hours singing their traditional songs nearly to dawn, and amazing experience to witness. The region is a melting pot of cultures, Torres Strait Islanders and aboriginals from many of the different tribes around Cape York.

My son and I had island hopped along the east coast anchoring on isolated islands, where tens of thousands of pigeons from New Guinea were nesting, on one island a large single coco nut tree stood out as we sailed to the island and once on shore a sailor's grave was below this tree. Where by other modern sailors now leave trinkets etc on the grave.

“ There are two terrible things for a man:

not to have fulfilled his dream,

and to have fulfilled it”

So has the voyage ended or has the Journey just began, the dilemma I have is which way do I return with the yacht after the wet season, go east or go west, like the saying

“ its not the destination but the journey”

if I head east after the wet season via the south pacific , new Zealand then home, or do I head west explore the gulf of Carpentaria then maybe PNG/ Indonesia islands and west onto the Kimberley's and west coast. I have several months to make that decision mind up.

I have more photos on my fb page go to fb via www.neverdiewondering.com.au

Never Die Wondering



Kind regards

Alistair Macleod

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