

# Aboard Sengo

Aboard Sengo

September 2016

## Cairns

Catching up with visitors from Melbourne meant we had time to do a few 'touristy' things in and around Cairns

2

## Cooktown

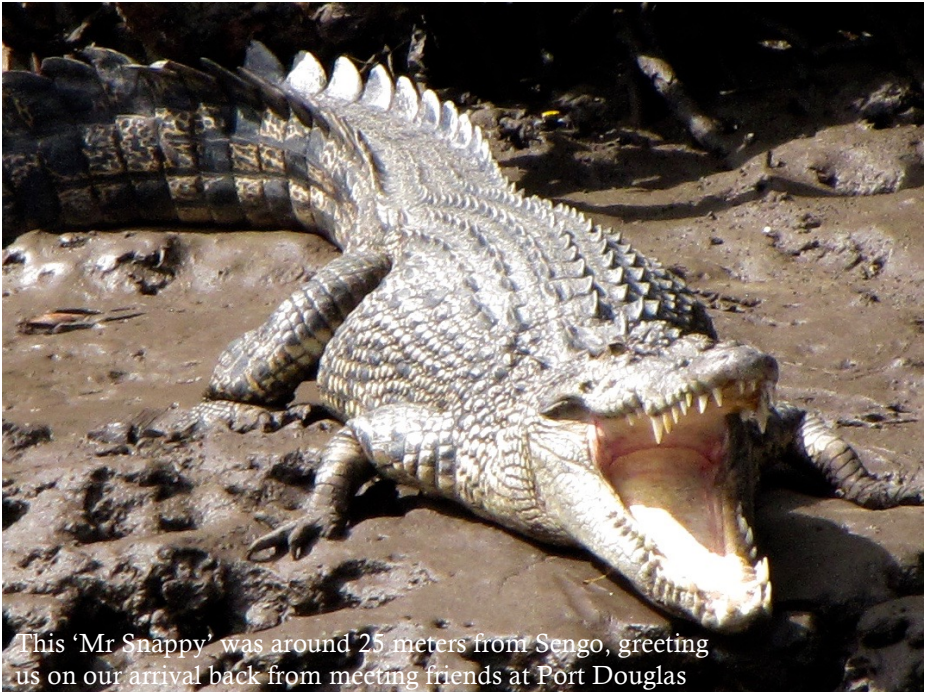
An unexpected visit to Cooktown re-acquainted us with this quaint little outback town.

6

## Lizard Island

Arrival at the 'pinnacle' of the coastal cruising circuit - better late than never.

8



This 'Mr Snappy' was around 25 meters from Sengo, greeting us on our arrival back from meeting friends at Port Douglas

## Croc Country!

In September we travelled around 161 nautical miles from Cairns to Lizard Island, went island hopping, had issues with carrots, and made an unexpected visit to the vet. The days are getting hotter; and so are the nights!

Oh, and to top it off, it is Crocodile breeding season!

## Leaving civilization behind

We spent all of the first half of September in Cairns (catching up with visitors and socialising with other boats), followed by a few days in Port Douglas (catching up with more visitors and socialising with other boats) and then a few days in Cooktown (restocking and a visit to the vet), finally ending the month at Lizard island. Cairns, Port Douglas and Cooktown are the last towns of any note on the coast in Far North Queensland; Cairns is a major centre; Port Douglas is mainly a tourist town and Cooktown is a country outpost that supports a year-round fishing industry as well as the vagrant winter tourist. We had been to all towns before, Cairns and Port Douglas in 2002 and Cairns, Port Douglas and Cooktown in 2012. We stocked up on food and spares where we could and we are grateful for the advice and support of locals; particularly Steve and Dave in Cairns, and Ali and Colin in Port Douglas. Sailing the East Coast of Australia is, in the main, a relatively simple fare in terms of the ability to get supplies; until you get remote. We were going remote; at least for a short time, and it meant that we couldn't just pop across to the supermarket if we ran out of food; there just wouldn't be one.



Sengo: Trinity Inlet, Cairns



Sunset: Trinity Inlet, Cairns

## Being the Good Samaritan – returning the favour

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2016

In Tin Can Bay in April (See Aboard Sengo April 2016) we had the embarrassing situation of being in the position where we had to ask for a tow. In our case the fuel line of the tinnie had issues and the current was quickly taking us upstream, and had we not hailed a passing boat we would have very quickly found ourselves in trouble and isolated. Today, the Universe gave us an opportunity to pay it back. We were actually about to pop in (unannounced) to a Leopard Catamaran we had met a few days earlier. They were anchored close to the shore along Trinity Inlet, close to the turn-off around Admiralty Island, and we were a matter of meters off their stern when a fishing tinnie caught our eye. The immediate recognition of a large orange sheet with a very large black 'V' on it hanging over the side warranted further investigation. A 'V Sheet' is an international sign for distress so we moseyed on over to see what the problem was. The tinnie was bigger than us; the engine was physically twice the size of ours (and the horsepower probably much greater) and the occupant had the top off it. Clearly it wasn't working. The owner's comment of 'I was hoping for something bigger going the other way' didn't put us off. We tied the distressed fishing vessel to our tinnie, turned around and towed him back to the boat ramp. We left him on the edge of the ramp pulling the beast out of the water; there were other people at the ramp that could help him with that. Like April, no names were exchanged; just a helping hand.





# In and Around Cairns - 01<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016

We had two lots of visitors that came up from Melbourne so we were marooned in Cairns until the middle of the month. Whist there we did a few touristy things, as well as visited some of the local attractions; I have included brief descriptions of a few of these.

## Mareeba Wetlands

We discovered the Mareeba Wetlands (on the Atherton Tablelands, an hour or so's drive from Cairns) by accident in 2012, on our way back south from visiting Cape York by 4WD. The then newly constructed visitors centre, sparse and open, had a breeding aviary of Gouldian Finches open to the wild.



The birdlife was prolific, the sun was shining and we walked around the entire wetland area. The place wasn't at capacity, a kitchen area within the visitors

centre was not yet open, future accommodation had not been built but big plans were laid by the Foundation Trust that owned the property. The Gouldian Finch breeding program seemed successful. Individual birds flew in and out of the cage when they wanted to and the staff was hoping a pair had set up their own nest on the other side of the wetland. We

were asked to look out for it and report back if we saw it.

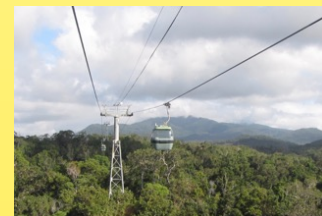


Gouldian Finches were once common around this area but habitat change and capture for the pet trade wiped them out. The

breeding stock was sourced from Croydon in outback Queensland as it was believed that the population there was as pure a strain as could be got from the wild. Now the dynamics of breeding genetics are a little more understood, the black heads dominant in wild populations give rise to the domination of red heads in domestic breeding stock, and the Wetland Foundation is very cautious about which birds get released. As a result of this, I am sad to say, the breeding cage for the Gouldian Finches at the visitor centre is now fully meshed in and birds are now no longer allowed to come and go as they please. (cont...page 4)

## Karunda Scenic Railway & Skyrail

Yes, this is very touristy. And yes this is expensive but if you are into historic trains



it is a interesting ride. There is commentary throughout the trip (and nibbles if you pay extra for the Gold Class) and the train stops where you can get out and admire Barron Falls (no longer in its glory as the Barron River is dammed at the top, but probably still a spectacular site in The Wet). The history of the development of the line is fascinating. (A small hut at Freshwater Station has interpretation explaining the history as well and is accessible without paying for the train trip). Karunda is purely a tourist/artisan town with a few extra attractions thrown in. The Australian Butterfly Sanctuary is interesting; you get taken on a short, guided tour of the small facility where the process of breeding the butterflies is explained. If you decide to take the return Skyrail journey on the way back down from the Tablelands you get to stop at three interchanges; where you can stretch your legs, take a short walk on provided boardwalks and at one spot admire Barron Falls from the opposite side that you admired it on the way up (If heights don't worry you, you can book a



Diamond Car where the floor is glass and you get a look at the rainforest from above).



Looking down

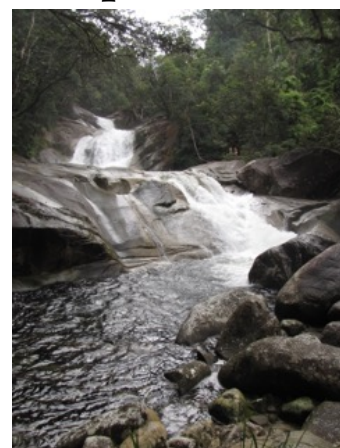
## Mareeba Wetlands (..cont)

However the breeding program is progressing and since 2002 the Foundation has released hundreds of birds (according to their interps) and a notice asks readers to report any sightings within a thirty-kilometre radius. There are several boards adjacent the avery describing the avery, the history and the program (named after the current federal politician (who has clearly been in office since at least 2002)). Unfortunately the interps writing is small (fair enough, there is a lot of information to convey) but it is also in written in red. Red (and green) are probably the worst colours in which to present large swathes of text and information. Red is hard on the eyes after a while, as well as being one of the colours not easily discernable by those with colour blindness.

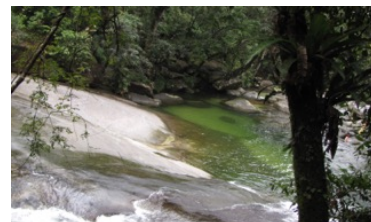
Overall, on this visit we were disappointed. There were very few birds - an unidentified honeyeater flitted round the visitor centre entrance, and there was nothing on the wetland lake itself. The kiosk was open but sold only a couple of light lunches (and of course had the obligatory ice-cream freezer outside it) and there was a small section of souvenirs (no polo-shirts or I might have considered buying one). The establishment now runs boat trips around the wetland but the scheduled departure for a few minutes before we arrived had not gone (what was the point, there were no birds) and a staff member seemed only too happy to converse with a couple who had turned up to stay at the lodge but seemed to ignore us (a smile of acknowledgement would have been enough). The vegetation around the car park and visitors centre is dry open schlerophyll woodland and I can't see that exploration is encouraged, as there are signs saying that you can't access some tracks unless you are a guest. The visitors centre does, have a good spot though, right on the edge of the wetland, and you can take a refreshment overlooking the water.



## Josephine Falls



Like Babinda Boulders (see Aboard Sengo July 2016) Josephine Falls is a popular swimming spot for both locals and tourists and is situated in the Wooroonooran National Park 75 kilometers south of Cairns. The track from the car park leads you to three spots where the adventurous can strip down and go for a swim in the refreshing mountain stream in amongst the boulders. Also like Babinda, there are warning signs that the area can be extremely dangerous. Picnic tables and a toilet block are available at the car park. The track to Mount Barte Frere (Queensland's highest mountain) also starts here so if you want some strenuous exercise before your swim....







The lookout from the pinnacle of the Red Arrow Track; overlooking the Cairns Airport.

## Red Arrow Track

The Red Arrow Track is one of three waling tracks in the Whitefield State Park adjoining the Botanic Gardens precinct in Cairns. It is the shortest, and apparently the easiest (you have to walk up the Red Arrow track to get to the Blue Arrow track (Blue Arrow is 4-5 hours) but it is still steep and hard going and will take an hour or so). The track is essentially a loop and at the lookout you can return the way you came or go down the complimentary track. Of interest is the intepers along the track saying there are several species of imported weed bamboo plants here. And then there is another sign saying it is illegal to remove them!!! Really!

## Botanic Gardens

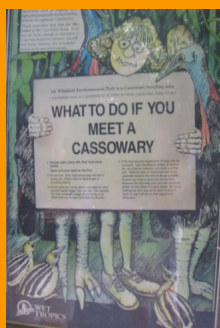
The Botanic Gardens precinct, including the Flecker Gardens, the Centenary Lakes and the Chinese Gardens (as well as the Tanks precinct) is located on Collins Avenue a few minutes drive north of Cairns city.

The small formal Botanic Flecker Gardens are lovely, although I only really walked around just inside the external fence line. Of interest is the section with aboriginal rainforest food and useful plants with appropriate interps boards explaining the uses of the plant or its parts. The Boardwalk in the Centenary Lakes is delightful, through an area of remnant rainforest/lowland forest and at either end of this section there are picnic tables and BBQ's.



Boardwalk Centenary Lakes

**What to Do if you meet a Cassowary!** Stay Calm, don't run, don't turn your back on the animal, don't raise your hands above your head to appear bigger. If the animal seems aggressive hold something out between the two of you, backpack or similar. For those who only go walking with a phone or iPod, lets hope you don't meet an aggressive bird!



## Only in Cairns...



...do you get thong (flip flops for those non-Aussies) vending machines at the Airport, each painted with Australian Aboriginal designs..

AND

A Papua New Guinean Dance Troupe displaying their skills in the paint shop aisle at a Bunnings (Hardware) Warehouse.







Board walk Green Island: Banded rails frolicked in the undergrowth, some with fluffy black chicks

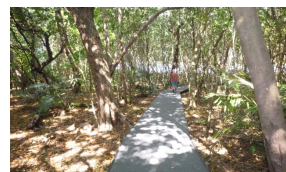
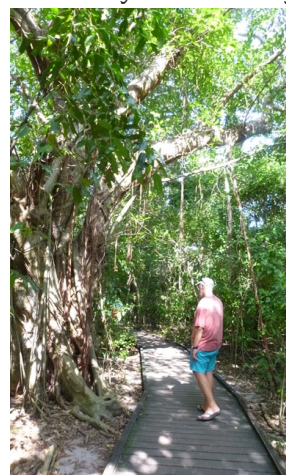


## Green Island – 15 September 2016

Green Island lies around fifteen nautical miles north-east of Cairns and is a popular day trip for tourists, or for those with a bit more time you can stay at the resort. Our visit was brief. We had planned to leave Trinity Inlet, Cairns at around 0730 but as I started to pull the chain up I knew we would be delayed. Due to our protracted stay and clearly very good conditions, our chain

had become the substrate for a creamy, greeny, slimy algae. Forty minutes later (and a few scuffs on Andrew's hands as he was scrubbing) we finally started our journey. We arrived at Green Island around lunch-time but it wasn't until after 1400 that we took the tinnie to shore. By the time we came upon the Crocodile farm it was 1500 and as they close at 1600

we decided the \$19 entry fee wasn't worth it for an hour, so we



continued on our walk. The track along the northern section of the island is well maintained (the island has hundreds of visitors per day via ferries from Cairns) and includes some boardwalk sections and plenty of interesting interpretation boards. Where the track ends on the beach we continued to our right, aiming to come back around to the jetty area and our tinnie via the western route. And we almost made it - until I discovered the Lumix camera had fallen out of my pocket, and instead we retraced our steps, finally walking the beach in the opposite direction to get back to the tinnie. The 'touristy' area had closed down by the time we got back to it so we moseyed on back to Sengo.

## Port Douglas – 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Our return visit to Port Douglas was always going to be short, but we were looking forward to it. We were popping in to catch up with more friends from Melbourne but we also planned to touch base (and succeeded) with *Indigo* and *Mambare Bay* and a whole bunch of people associated with these boats. There was also the much-needed Thai massage that I ended up waiting 45 minutes for at the Port Douglas Sunday Market.

The days were hot, and it was hard to find relief without downing a cold drink somewhere. Being in the sun was just not fun. Except for one of our visitors. This sun-lapping reptile was waiting for us on an adjacent bank to Sengo when we returned. Less than thirty meters away we suspect he/she was around three meters in length. Scary enough when we could see it; a little disconcerting when the reptile gave up and headed into the water. The depth under our keel was only around one meter.



Sunset Port Douglas, public jetty





## Leaving Port Douglas

19<sup>th</sup> September 2016

We were told the coastline north of Dunk Island is supposed to be spectacular all the way to the top; it is a pity it has, in the main up until now, been under haze. It was especially so for our very slow trip to Cape Tribulation; an anchorage not even on our radar until we tried to sail in no wind when we left Port Douglas. Our original destination had been Hope Island East but with three knots apparent from the hind-quarter, even with the spinnaker up we were not going to make it. We did fairly well for practically no wind and a heavy boat but when the apparent wind gauge read zero point zero knots, both we and the spinnaker gave up. We motored the rest of the way. (The trip had taken six hours; half motor, half spinnaker).



## Hope Island East

20<sup>th</sup> September 2016

In contrast to the day before the spinnaker run to Hope Island East on 21<sup>st</sup> September was delightful and we picked up one of the public moorings at around lunch time. After a fresh salad for lunch (and a rest) we headed ashore. Hope Island East is a small Island with room for three camping (permit) spots only,



two of which were occupied (by the same group). We tracked across the island, past the toilet, and out the other side, heading back to the tinnie around to the east. For a small island, the birdlife was prolific, and it didn't seem to matter that the campers were playing loud music (most of which was pleasant to hear: generally 80's rock). The birds encountered were the varied honeyeaters (lots), egrets, reef egrets, c terns, silver gulls, a pair of white-bellied sea eagles, a collard kingfisher, whimbrels and what was possibly a tattler. We had had a running joke about the pied imperial pigeon (migratory) as once we had started seeing them at the start of the month, we never stopped. Sure enough, come near to dusk, hundreds of imperial pigeons descended on the island in groups of up to ten at a time. So much so that the dominant background noise on the island became their constant coo- cooing. Their noise even dominated the squawking of the resident fruit bats (flying foxes). We had been told the fishing was pretty good and Andrew was keen to go. However, by this time it was mid afternoon and we had other things planned. We went back to the island for a refreshing swim (we haven't swum in the ocean for some time) and then I rounded off the afternoon with a muffin run. Fishing was relegated to an early (0700) start the next day.

Hope Island East, along with Hope Island West make up the Hope Islands. Hope Island West is much larger than Hope Island East and is an important bird rookery. Subsequently, Hope Island West, like Woody Island at the Low Isles, is closed to visitors from September for the bird breeding season



Hope Island East

# Cooktown

21<sup>st</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016

The early morning was sunny, but windy. Well, windy enough for Andrew to lose his enthusiasm to go fishing. So instead we waited for 0930 (so we could see our way out of the reef) and headed north. Initially we were going to skip Cooktown. From a tourist point of view we had been here before; in 2012, by 4WD when we drove to Cape York. From a provisioning point of view we thought we had covered our bases – until we discovered our carrots! Usually one should not go into long term traveling and storing of food blindly and cans are all well and good but we were trying to eat fresh food for as long as possible. We sourced one of our reference books and followed the instructions for storage. On a check of the vegie stocks the day before I had discovered our carrots were not very happy at all. Having stored them under the floorboards in the bilge we had diligently wrapped them up in paper. However, we now read (on the internet of all things) that they should not be stored in wire racks (which is what we had them in) and I guess wrapping up more than one together wasn't all that good for them either. They were a black and white, mouldy mess – every single one of them! As carrots were a staple in the menu, at least for the next couple of weeks, the decision was made to head to Cooktown to do one final food run. (And we decided we would stock up on a few more cans of vegies as well!).

As it turned out, our detour to Cooktown was quite fortuitous. Cilla was struck down by some sort of spasm, pinch, arthritic attack – we are not quite sure which, but she was suddenly immobile, and couldn't move her back right leg (her back left leg is dickie anyway and has been for years) and she

## James Cook Museum

Situated in the old St Mary's Convent (restored in the 1960's) the James Cook Museum is as you would expect from a country museum; a bit of local Aboriginal, European and outback history. The first gallery, built in a modern back addition to the old convent is the James Cook Gallery and its interps largely exists of diary entries by Captain



James Cook Museum

Cook, Joseph Banks and others written at the time of their unplanned arrival at Cooktown; due to the foundering of the ship Endeavour on the (now called) Endeavour Reef. We had been told a few years ago when we were up here via 4WD that the museum was worth visiting and we didn't get here. Fellow sailors have since reiterated this. I like the fact that the aboriginal interpretation/story of the invasion and subsequent encounters with Europeans is included and the interps is reasonably well written. Unfortunately it is an old building and echoes loudly (small children should be asked to be more respectful of others trying to read). Some rooms have interpretation boards far too high up the walls – you can't even step back to ease the strain on your neck as there are display cases in the way; and at least one interpretation board was written and put in the wrong spot, or the intended direction is wrong (it directs you to a mural in the middle of the room where there is only a glass case of artifacts). The unlabeled and unclassified bottles look sloppy and dentist equipment and other items are essentially unlabeled. I guess it is a work in



Endeavour's anchor

progress. It is run by the National Trust and we know they are doing their best; they will be probably surviving on government grants ..and public donations.





was physically telling us she was in pain. She could hardly move. A frantic call to the local vet (the northern most one in QLD) secured us an appointment for the next morning. I stayed in the front cockpit with her all night where she slept more fitfully than I did and low and behold she got up and walked normally (well, normally for her) the next morning. Cats! Anyway, we kept the appointment, where we were picked up at the boat ramp and driven to the surgery and then we were of course driven back again at the end of it. The vets are great, They themselves are sailors (having spent five years on board) and have currently settled in Cooktown. The practice is called SeaDog Vets ([www.SeaDogVets.com](http://www.SeaDogVets.com)) and they clearly have empathy with those with a transient lifestyle. Setting back into Sengo we had a cuppa, I did some washing and we had lunch. After lunch we went exploring; checking out the piers, the laundry, the lure shop, the camping store and the IGA supermarket.

We were told that Cooktown has a market on Saturdays and that the fresh food is local and pretty good so we made the decision to stick around a few more days, stock up on fresh food at the market, cans at the IGA and do any other bits and pieces that needed doing. Saturday morning came. I was up at 0600 and by 0630 I was washing the deck. The local who had told us about the market suggested we should probably just about see it from where we were anchored. There was a green expanse of foreshore in front of me and I was therefore expecting the activity to be there. No market – no stalls, no scurrying of people trying to set things up. 0700 came and then 0800. I still couldn't see anything like a market. The only thing I could see was a bit of movement near the play equipment next to the bowls club. If I had been a bit more alert I would have checked this out with the binoculars as by 1000 when we finally got to shore we found the market next to the bowls club (in front of the play equipment) and basically all the fresh food had gone (and the tiny bit that was left was not worth buying as long term storage). So after all that we got our extra fruit and vegies at the IGA anyway. We spent the afternoon back at Sengo, packing away our new set of canned food and the extra load of vegies into the bilge – and ironically – no carrots! At 6pm we went Groper Feeding.

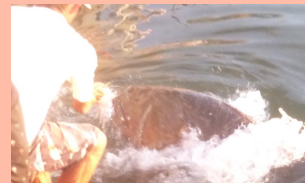
### Yellow Cabs in Cooktown....

You can't miss this car. It is big, bright and yellow and belongs to SeaDog Vets. Andrew is in the front passenger seat mushing Ruffy. Ruffy came in 'his' car to pick us up from the boat ramp to take Cilla to the vet



## Grouping around Groupers

At around high tide on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings there is a gathering of some very large fish at the base of the Cooks Landing Kiosk. The participants, two very large stingrays and several (up to nine) very large Groupers are waiting for a feed. This is purely opportunistic on their behalf, as there is not always a fish carcass to give them and of course if no one turns up (as in the other four days per week) they casually go about their business and find their own food. Both stingrays were there when we arrived on Saturday night, gently taking fish scraps from the locals, and two huge (but apparently not the biggest as they would have been out on the reef spawning) groupers, whose table manners are a bit less refined. The owner of Cooks Landing discovered these magnificent beasts when he was diving when he was putting the posts in for the new pontoon, so this spot has always been their home. There is prolific fishing off the adjacent public wharfs and occasionally a grouper gets hooked, but they are too big to be reeled in and the line breaks, so the extra feeding provides them with a helping hand to remove the attached line.





View over Watsons Bay western end from track up to Cooks Lookout

## Lizard Island

26<sup>nd</sup> September 2016

Our departure from Cooktown at the respectable hour of 0800 just happened to coincide with being close to high tide. We had delayed our exit for a day noting that Sunday wasn't to have any wind, and for a while we thought we might have a similar issue today. But the spinnaker went up and we reached our original destination of Cape Bedford in such good time that we decided to continue our smooth spinnaker run a bit further up the coast. It was still early afternoon when we put the anchor down at Cape Flattery.

27<sup>th</sup> September 2016

We started the 17 nautical mile sail from Cape Flattery to Lizard Island with around 9 knots boat speed and finished it with around 9 knots boat speed; a brisk trip dampened only by the avoidance of two cargo ships, where, of course we needed to turn off course and temporarily lose a bit of speed so we didn't hit them (or more importantly so they didn't hit us). We anchored on the outer of the Watson's Bay anchorage; where only six boats were currently anchored. The main reason, I thought at the time, was that the season for being at Lizard may be over, yet it is not the season of northerlies for heading south; that is October/November. We had two vessels decide to stop adjacent us; one a mid-sized catamaran who came from the



Cruise ship on mooring

north who quite frankly anchored closer than would seem prudent (we had a good chat to them later); and one small cruise ship, who picked up the adjacent mooring and I am very glad we didn't anchor any closer to it.

## Lizard Island

Lizard Island is a continental island (was once part of the mainland) and lies approximately 50 nautical miles north east of Cooktown. It is mostly national park, a small area excised for an exclusive resort and an airfield. The island is just over 1000 hectares in area and vegetation communities include mangroves, open scrub, enclaves of eucalypts, grassland, and scrubby dune vegetation. The island is not alone; Palfrey, and South islands and Seabird Islet lie just to the south of it, helping to enclose the area known as the Blue Lagoon.

Lizard Island was 'discovered' and named in 1770 by Captain James Cook, funnily enough because all he saw on it were a lot of lizards (I suspect the reference was to the large Yellow Spotted Monitor). Cook climbed the highest hill on the island (359m) in order to see if he could see a way out of the barrier reef. The way he chose is now called Cooks Passage.

The island was used traditionally by several tribes of aborigines as a ceremonial place and so when Robert Watson and Goerge Fuller set up a beche-de-mer farm here in 1879 the locals weren't that happy. Whilst Robert and George were away in 1881 a confrontation with the locals occurred and to escape Mrs Watson took her son and two of her Chinese helpers and floated off in a bath tub to what is now known as Watsons Island; where tragically they all perished due to lack of water.





At direction cairn at Cooks Lookout



View downhill from Cooks Lookout track



Looking at where we'd come from

## Cooks Lookout

28<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The walk to Cooks Lookout was tough, and in the heat as by the time we had decided to tackle the track, found a safe place to anchor the tinnie (half the beach is fringed with coffee rock which we would not have been able to pull the tinnie over at low tide), had a chat to the owners of another catamaran and some of the guests off the small cruise ship that arrived the night before, and reached the start of the track, we didn't start walking until 0920. The small, unadorned board at the start of the track did indicate it was steep ('at times extremely difficult'), but there was no indication of length. It took us just over an hour and a half to get up (with a couple of small stops) and the same time to get down. We hadn't brought our walking sticks but whist they would be useful on some sections, on others they would probably have been a hindrance as it is your hands you need to use to get up or down the rocks. The rocks as such are granite and have great grip for walking over – on a fine day. I would not even attempt this walk in the wet; you would be lucky not to slip. Captain James Cook

apparently climbed this mountain in order to ascertain a route out of the reef, having been waylaid in Cooktown because of the close encounter with part of it. The edge of the barrier reef can be seen from several spots on the track.



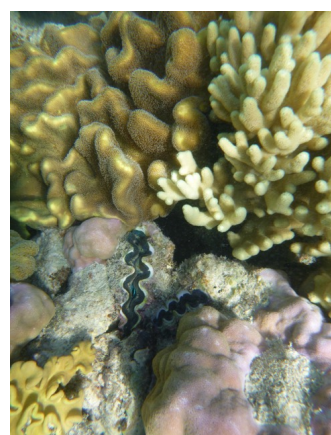
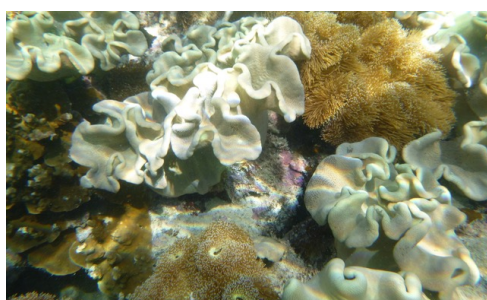
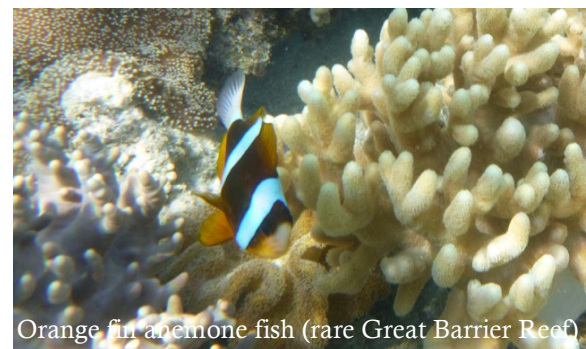
Whist Cruisers are not welcome at the Lizard Island Resort, they are welcome at the Marlin Bar, an establishment at the northern end of the resort beach. Apparently the bar is owned by a game fishing club and leases the premises back to the Resort. This month (September) it is open Wednesday, Friday and Sunday nights (and an exception of the Saturday of the AFL Grand Final (which is the 1<sup>st</sup> Oct anyway)). In October apparently it is open every night and Halloween and Melbourne Cup Day (November) are large events. We followed all the other dingies in for a drink at sunset.



## Snorkeling at Lizard Island

30<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Rumour has it there is a crocodile here; a crocodile that stopped friends snorkeling in here in May and we have since heard from someone who knew a person that was bitten by it (also around May, but he was apparently snorkeling at night!). Fortunately the closest we saw to a predator was a black-tipped reef shark (Actually Andrew saw him; by the time I looked where he was pointing the fish had gone). We chose the patch of reef closest to the shore at Watsons Bay and discovered the centre of it had the better coral. Like the coral at Low Isles (see Aboard Sengo August 2016) the hues are predominantly yellow and cream. Many fish species were a familiar sight to us, with only a couple of new types obvious. Sengo has of course been a 'fish attracting device' (FAD) for the past couple of days and larger species have been congregating at times below her hulls; including batfish and giant trevallies. The biggest fish on our snorkel today however (apart from the shark) were a school of large hump head maori wrasse. The most unusual sighting was of a sling jaw wrasse.







## Croc Count

Crocodile warning signs are becoming more prolific and prominent the further north we go (around population centres). The message is: 'Be Croc Wise'. Diligence must be constant but there are two periods when you should be extra careful: at night and in breeding season. September is the start of crocodile breeding season so we were conscious that our four croc sightings this month were from pretty close proximity.

Croc count for September: 4 (all at Dickscons Inlet, Port Douglas)

## Whale Count:

We officially saw no whales for September but they are probably on their way down south again. We did see a rather large lump with a fin like structure on it floating south as we were sailing north from Port Douglas. It was several hundred meters away from us and we had no inclination for a closer look but agreed it might be a large dead whale, however I am not counting it in the tally.

Whale Count for September: 0

## Winners and Losers

### Winners

The Tinnie – Whilst we were waiting, ironically for southerlies at Lizard Island (most cruisers complain they can't leave Lizard Island because of the southerlies), Andrew was industrious and completed a little project; the tinnie now has a lockable storage locker for the fuel tank and life jackets.

Losers - I don't think there were any losers in September.