

Aboard Sengo

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April 2020

Moonscapes and Dunescapes

Time spent near
Jumpinpin

From page 7 & 31



Stretching the Legs

Our walks are getting
longer...

From page 26

Soldiering on... with lots of others



Soldier crabs, Horseshoe Bay, South Stradbroke Island



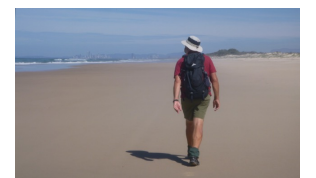
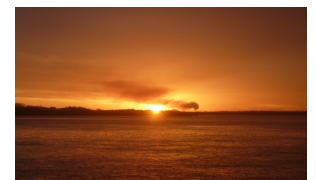
In April, apparently, across the country the boating fraternity has been in various forms of lockdown; from a total ban on any boating in Victoria, to just a ban on 'recreational boating' in Queensland (fishing was allowed). But you wouldn't have guessed it. We were hoping for some quieter waterways around the Gold Coast over this restricted period; but that was not to be.

Queenslanders, we discovered many years ago (on a 4WD trip from Melbourne to Cape York after constantly shaking our heads, swearing, and in several cases taking drastic action to avoid collisions with many careless and reckless outback (and city) Queensland drivers), just don't give great credence to a lot of rules. We still see this behavior on the roads to this day. Whilst we know many boaters in Queensland that do respect rules and directives, we have come across many who don't. And because there are so many boaters in Queensland I think the government gave up trying to police any indiscretions during this uncertain period. When we were in Paradise Point for supplies, it wasn't only live-aboards (who I might add could justify being on boat – we were technically 'at home') who spent the weekend anchored near the waterway parklands of the town. When we were further

away, in an attempt to get away from civilisation, civilisation came with us; the popular anchorages along the northern section of South Stradbroke Island full to over-brimming. We saw Fisheries and Police boats essentially travel straight through these overcrowded areas, stopping only the obvious boats (small vessels with family and no fishing lines); the rest they left alone. My guess is that perhaps ten per cent were legitimate – the majority were 'recreational' and clearly didn't care they were breaching the rules. The defacing of the Covid-19 sign that I took a photo of on the 30th April gave me even more of a shock; I knew the locals were self-centred – I didn't think they were as bad as Trump's Americans.

At the end of April the Queensland Government flagged an easing of the Recreational Boating restrictions for the start of May.... we will see very little difference with regards to any activity on the water.

We spent the month trying to get away from the general population; which wasn't all that successful. We did manage to catch up with a few boaties – at an appropriate 1.5 plus meters, of course – most of them via the end of a tender bow-line or the

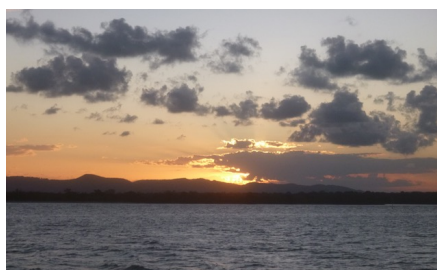


extent of a yacht's freeboard. We also managed a good deal of exercise, as well as the usual, and mundane, boat jobs.

Exiting The Boat Works

1st April 2020. The 'computer geek' was on time (ish) - Andrew's computer was having conniptions - but the guy to fix the generator was nearly an hour late; which meant the wind was blowing more than I preferred to get us off dock. Both boats that I was going to elicit help from for this exercise weren't at home so we grabbed help from The Boat Works staff. Extraction went smoothly and after a gentle motor down the Coomera we settled for the night into the area we call 'Browns Gutter'. There is one permanent boat here but few others visit so we figured we'd have plenty of swinging room to test out the new anchor. It went down a bit more vertically than the last one - it is after all heavier (albeit smaller) - but bit first go.

I read this morning that being obsessed with the news of recent weeks is a sign of anxiousness over the Coronavirus. To still keep informed it was suggested that the news is checked no more than twice a day. In order to do that I had to find something else to do. Reading is always on the cards but we are running out of physical books (and I was a little wary of doing a book swap in The Boat Works laundry after I heard a tenant of one of the ensuites cough their guts out on Saturday morning). This means our unread stock is down to books Andrew has picked up at book swaps, which invariably means war publications - usually quite a bit violent, and again probably not the best subject to be concentrating on at this point in this time...but it is not a time to be fussy.



In between reading I tackled the front cockpit. The ceiling was getting decidedly mildewy so I mixed up a brew to wipe that down, washed the area under the bean bags, the seats and the floor, and discovered that the bean bags were retaining water. It has been exceptionally wet and humid over the past couple of months and I didn't realise that water was getting in the beanbag outers. Stripping these down, I decanted the inner bag of beans to dry and turned the outers inside out to release the water and help dry them out. I can see a repeat of August's monumental cleaning job coming up (and the attempt to retain billions of little white boubles!)

2nd April 2020. We moved this morning into Paradise Point. Whilst we technically had enough food to get us by for a week or more, today was Thursday and despite there apparently being restrictions on the Broadwater for boating (after all, the instruction is to stay at home) weekends always start on Friday's here and I worried that if we didn't get a spot today that we wouldn't get one tomorrow. We had an appointment at 0800 in Paradise Point tomorrow and it was best to be close to shore.



After motoring past **Neros**, the boat that hit us the other night (and I note had left by the time we had settled), we discovered most of the space for anchoring was at the notorious north end, where we seem to have had our last two horizontal anchor issues! We investigated close to the jetty but its proximity, and the proximity of a Lagoon catamaran made us turn around and return to the practically empty north section. Ah well, I thought, it is a different anchor - hopefully this one will behave differently here. No excess wind-over-tide for the rest of the day meant any confused movement at substrate level was minimal.

After the merest of rain showers we headed to shore and took a pleasant stroll around our usual waterway path at Paradise Point; concluding the simple 45 minute stroll with a flu jab and a bit of shopping.

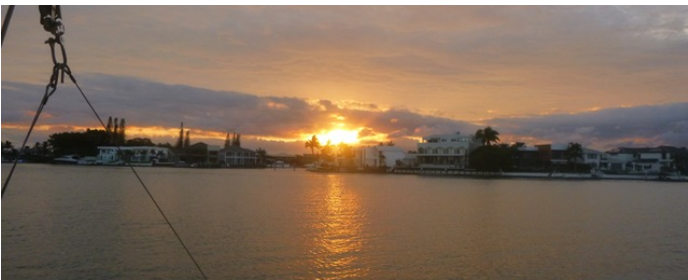
With social distancing rules it was inadvisable to hang around the pharmacy after our injection. We had no major issues-I did however have a really sore upper arm in the evening

Job of the day: continued cleaning the inside of Andrew's beanbag, discovering a tear which hopefully can be fixed with some of the seam sealant that we'd used for our Gore-Tex hiking jackets.

3rd April 2020. With my sore upper arm after the flu jab I wanted to avoid boarding and preferred the option of a walk but I didn't realise that Andrew had problems with his feet. He suffered through the 45-minute stroll around the Point again and managed some relief late afternoon with our electronic massager.



4th April 2020. We got two short paddles in today - only 15 and 20 minutes but it was better than nothing. There was more clove-oiling of beanbag outers and putting the inners where they could dry out.



5th April 2020. We managed a 45- minute paddleboard in the early morning while conditions were still mild but later toward lunch time the wind picked up. Most of the rest of the day was spent as a lazy day on boat. As expected, small craft had come in and occupied the anchorage, probably in blatant disregard of the social distancing rules, but you get used to that here. Sometime in the afternoon I casually looked up from the book I was reading and got a shock. Off to our stern was a boat that was progressively getting closer. 'Not again.' I thought....

The boat was 'sort of' under control – maybe. It turns out the anchor windlass had stopped working – and the skipper was trying to get it fixed on the run, but in the mean time he was getting closer and closer to us during this process. In the end he hand pulled the chain in – but then the boat got temporarily grounded. The skipper lept into the water to direct the proceedings; his teenage daughter was at the wheel! She was understandably having a hard time controlling what was, compared to her, a very big boat. I will give her credit, she may have temporarily run the boat into the sandbank, but she missed us – for which I am grateful. In the meantime, the skipper's, son – who looked several years younger than his sister, was helping with instructions up the front. I suspect all humans on this boat were a little stressed. The dog however couldn't care less – and spent most of this exciting time snoozing out the back, eventually waking up only when the boat was angled into the sun.

Of course once I'd realised what was happening, the paddleboards came in quickly (they were hanging out the back), and I again pulled fenders out of the front bow locker ...this is becoming a habit! (see Aboard Sengo March 2020). Fortunately there was no collision and the situation wasn't one of negligence...we could only feel sorry for the skipper – who probably only wanted a nice day out on the water with his kids....

The 6th April 2020 was a fairly non-descript day. We did however manage an hour's paddle board, this time heading north to the Coomera River, and resting (illegally according to the signs) on the marina dock outside the high rise flats before returning. I used the recently acquired 'rail blazer' attachments to mount the Panasonic waterproof camera onto the front of the board. The footage isn't brilliant (actually the first part of the footage is non-existent because I clearly didn't press the 'on' button hard enough) but it was a start. Recordings of our 'boardings' will look better when the scenery is more spectacular. The rest of the day was spent on the computer, domestics and reading.

7th April 2020. The wind was up a bit this morning. Paddle boarding was not an option; but a walk was and we completed our normal Paradise Point circuit, clockwise this time to avoid passing the majority of those on the route (the majority were going clockwise). Before heading back to boat we restocked with fruit and vegies.

Jobs of the day; 30 minute rust run, diluting soap so we could use it from a pump pack, put away two lots of washing, clove-oiled a mildewy bedroom wall

8th April 2020. The last time I took time to take photographs of a super moon was February 2018 in Fremantle. Recently I have been thinking about trying again and there have been several times over the past few months when we have supposedly had a super (or super-ish) moon but each time my enthusiasm has been dampened by the weather. Every single time it has been cloudy. Tonight was no exception, and you can add rain into the mix. The frustrating thing was that I'd actually sat down to a Tutorial on Youtube today to get the settings for my specific camera for hand held shots – yes there may have been some extra shake because we were on boat.. but I didn't even get the chance.

We got no exercise today. It had been blowing at an uncomfortable level all day; certainly too strong for a paddle board and to some extent largely a bit strong to get to shore via tinnie - it could be done but with wind against tide and the machinations that Sengo was travelling, and indeed how she had travelled overnight with the very low tides, we thought it best to stay on board in the morning. We also thought it best to move after lunch, we were due to move tomorrow anyway (to stick to the 7-day limit in any one spot south of the Coomera River) but by the time we lifted anchor we were going to get to our Plan A destination (back at Tiger Mullet Channel) at around low tide. So instead we anchored just south of the main anchorage at Jumpinpin, with the initial idea to wait for the tide to rise enough to be confident of Whalley's Channel (usually an all tide channel but can be

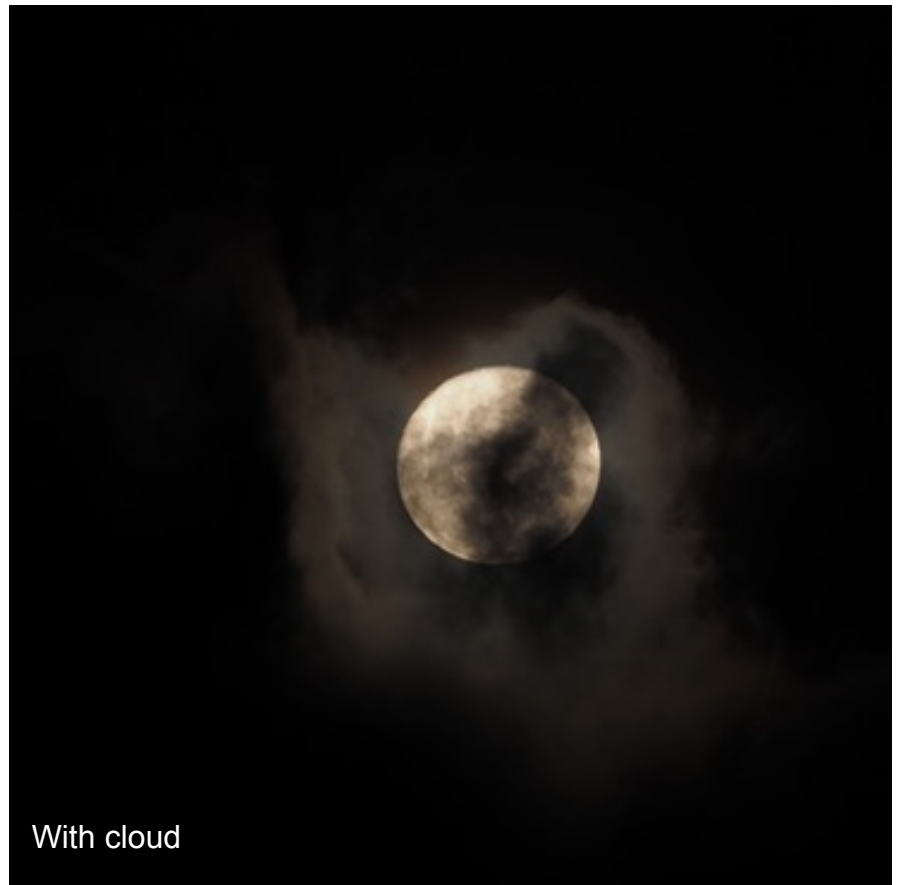


shallow). In the end however, we decided to hang here overnight. The southern fetch was longish but not undoable and the most uncomfortable problem was going to be the passing boats; we were just outside the 6-knot zone.

Apart from a 20 -minute rust run, and some reading, I'd spent the afternoon decanting the baubles out of the inner of one of our bean bags. Having done this before, with a soup spoon, I managed minimal spillage (all accounted for) and the content went into 9 bags. The inner will be disinfected, washed and dried before being refilled and stuffed back into its outer. When we get new boat covers I will get an extra option out the front cockpit of full clears. I used to wonder why people had them; having now cleaned and scrubbed soft furnishings and covered deck of dirt and mould I now see the point. An option to block the rain out when it comes will save me a lot of time and frustration.

9th April 2020. I could see the colour start to peak over the horizon through the gaps in the dark silhouetted clouds. I knew the moon was coming. The frustrating thing was that despite the sky being predominantly clear and a good deal of it visible, where the moon was coming up was under a rather persistent cloud, and just as you thought the moon would pop up over the top of the cloud, the cloud got bigger and darker. Eventually I did get a shot (or two) but I was fighting clouds all evening for a chance for it to shine through. (And I would have loved to include the horizon but it was just not meant to be)

Today I didn't have quite as an industrious day as yesterday. An internal beanbag mesh was washed and I read a bit, but between checking news updates I was battling a stiff neck, the soreness was only eventually fixed by again using the electronic massager.



With cloud



Without cloud



10th April 2020. An hour's stroll. We weren't expecting to be seeing people and I am sure those camping on the island weren't supposed to be there, but we skirted around their shelter and didn't engage.

Our first task when we got ashore had been to negotiate the 'inlet' just south of where we'd landed the tinnie on South Stradbroke Island, before heading inland for a short time to find the old vehicle track. I admit I referred to the satellite view of whereis.com on several occasions to keep us in the right place. Bird song was reasonably plentiful but we hadn't brought our binoculars and the only camera I brought with me was the small Panasonic Lumix.

Birds seen grey fantail. White ibis, great egret

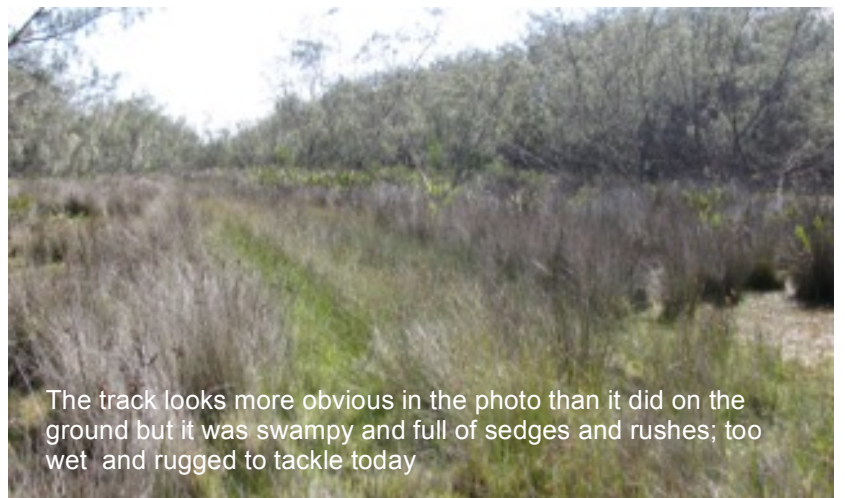






11th April 2020. A 2.5 hour stroll – Today's aim had been to land on the beach as we'd done yesterday, negotiate the 'inlet' to the south as we did yesterday, and turn left when we found the 'road' instead of yesterday's right. The whole idea of negotiating the inlet and then heading inland before accessing the road was so we would miss the swampy bits, assuming initially that they'd have to be crossed first. Instead, after heading south and then inland we found that the swampy bits were in fact the road and we could have waded straight into them from where we'd landed!

Alan Lucas' 2014 Coral Coast cruising guide makes comment of the track on this island (with rubbish bins). The track is overgrown, and sometimes very much less than obvious; in one spot we headed up what we initially thought was an animal track between overlapping trees. The satellite image photo on whereis.com shows a sandy track for a long straight stretch just north of our anchorage; but Google Earth clearly has a more recent photo (this I found after we'd got back). When we got to the long straight stretch we found it was no longer sandy - recent (and perhaps not so recent) rain had resulted in the tyre tracks being swampy and the entire section (as far as we could see) being filled with sedges and rushes. Deciding that perhaps shorts and adventure sandals were



The track looks more obvious in the photo than it did on the ground but it was swampy and full of sedges and rushes; too wet and rugged to tackle today



perhaps not the most appropriate attire to go pushing through this we instead decided we'd take one of the offshoot tracks that led to the beach on the east coast. The southern link from our turn around position (there was a more northerly option) was more obvious and we wandered east, coming out on the seaside of the island for a long beach stroll.

We weren't the only people on this beach – there was a couple (humans) to both our north and south, although both groups of people were a fair distance off. I think aspirationally Andrew thought about walking to the point at Jumpinpin and back down the west side of the island to our tinnie but I put a stop to that. To get back to our tinnie, based the distance covered on our last 15 minute beach stroll, was going to take us at least another 1.25 hours and that wasn't including any time for negotiating around



a high tide. We'd been wandering for around 1.5 hours and I'd brought along two apples, not nearly enough to sustain us in the sun for this further projected time ashore. Turning around I resolved that next time I'd pack more snacks. And more water!

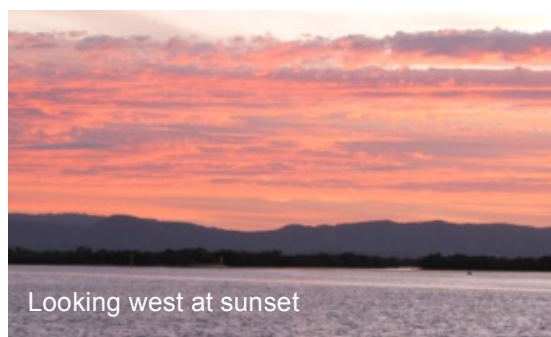
Bird life seen: rainbow bee eater, white cheeched honeyeater (I think – it was a quick glance but there was a lot of white on its face), whistling kite (and a couple of unidentified birds of prey), pied oyster catchers, silver gull. Lots of honeyeaters and other small non-identified birds were seen flitting around and heard during the duration of the walk. Oh and of course our semi resident welcome swallows on boat.

Photos were taken with the small Lumix and the old Cannon bridging camera – with batteries that worked this time (as opposed to our Jumpinpin excursion last month) – occasionally. It has been a while since I've used this camera and I have to get used to it again – today's glitch was its habit of wanting me to put the date into it every time I turned it on! Which means, because I am just pressing a button to get past this function quickly, the metadata has the date listed on each photo as 1st January 1980!

Back on board we mucked through the decanting of the inner of the second bean bag so I could wash and de-mould it. It was a pity we hadn't completed this task a few days ago – tonight was the first night in a very long time (we think the last time was the Kimberley!) where both the temperature and the sky were right for a bit of star gazing. After commenting on the 35 anchor lights in the anchorage north of us (!!! I suspect most of whom shouldn't be here) stargazing, and noting two shooting stars, we headed back inside.

12th April 2020. Easter Sunday; an irrelevant date for us but to get into the 'chocolate' spirit I made a chocolate cake – no eggs and no butter. It was good enough that we didn't really stop eating it and it became morning tea, lunch and for me dinner. I didn't get a rust run done today but did manage to do a bit of a stock take and clean out of the main kitchen pantry cupboard.

I also washed the second bean bag inner and it dried out the back all day in the 'breeze'. It was too windy for any exercise or off boat excursions.



13th April 2020. We were hoping the rabble would mostly have gone home by the time we got back from today's excursion but by dark there were still at least 25 boats in this anchorage. The day's winds had been calm, high tide at 1200 and my proposal of a paddleboard around this time was frowned upon by Andrew, who I think just wanted a break from a gluing and vacuuming job he'd finished half an hour earlier. Instead, after lunch we went for a walk – my idea had been to follow the beach as much as we could down to Tipplers and back. We didn't get anywhere near that far and the reality on the ground, as noted a couple of entries ago, is different to the satellite photo on whereis.com. We wandered over sand, through inlets, mangrove mud, past what was obviously an old camp ground (the bush is taking over a picnic table) and finally east over the dunes (which have almost come across the entire island at one point) to the eastern beach where we made our way north then back down the track we'd used two days ago to where our tinnie was anchored.



Birds seen, Brahminy kite, wedge tailed eagle, rufous whistler, (sp?) pigeon, crow, silver gull, (sp?) tern, pied oyster catchers, white faced heron, egret (sp?), wattle bird (sp?), willy wagtail, magpie. Several macropods were also spotted in the bush and on the dunes



but as they were at a distance we are not sure which species; there are two on the island.

In the morning I had washed down some panelling in preparation for some polishing but was too weary when we got back to start that today.



Sand creeping across the island shows how vulnerable this place is; whereis.com has a satellite photo of a small section creeping from east to west across the island; we came across a much larger section and didn't get to the end of it before traversing east. On our cross over we saw the remnants of what the sand has enveloped on its journey: old bush, road markers and old fence lines, still with the evidence of weathered and rusted barbed wire laying across the surface.



14th April 2020. It was a nice day but Andrew was not in the mood to do much after fighting with a heap of recalcitrant escaping ball bearings trying to fix the drawer below our bed, and decided that the best thing for him to do all day was read. I managed to do some washing, polish around the outside of the big bridge deck windows, wipe down both sides of the mesh to the front cockpit, clean the outside of the front cockpit windows, continue to read the short history of the second world war, and start to fill the second bean bag inner. After the inner is filled and has been aired a bit we can get our front cockpit back – it won't be perfectly clean but it will be a lot better than it was and I can relax out there not thinking about the all the cleaning that needs doing...the back cockpit is the next big project!

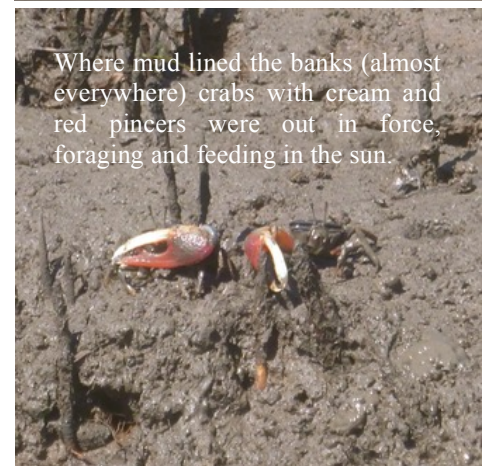


Heading for the Ballet; our attempt at Swan Lake

15th April 2020. Little did I realise when I convinced a seemingly not-so-enthusiastic Andrew to go for a paddle this morning, that he'd have such grand plans. As per the past few days we had got out of bed once it was well and truly light and the morning was getting away from us. We had missed the good weather opportunity yesterday for some exercise and as today presented with ideal conditions to get off boat, I wanted to make sure we didn't miss today as well. However the insides of both my feet had the start of blisters after the sand had rubbed around between my adventure sandals and my skin two days ago on our cross-island, sand-hopping trek, so walking was not my preferable option. That left paddling.

I gave Andrew the choice of boards or the kayak, however the kayak was always going to be the preferable option. By the time we got going it was about low tide so the incoming current would be leading us south – and the current is quite strong here. Whilst we would paddle against it for the first half of our paddle it still left us with the prospect, if we were on boards, that if it was too strong each of us had to manage on our own (we have been caught here before; in 2015 we deliberately paddled the tinnie back from shore to Sengo (it wasn't far) and missed; the current was that strong we had to put the engine on). With the kayak however there would be two of us to manage the load.

So we maneuvered the kayak into the water, got on board without too much fuss and headed north toward the Jumpinpin bar and crossed west toward the yellow mark on the western side of the



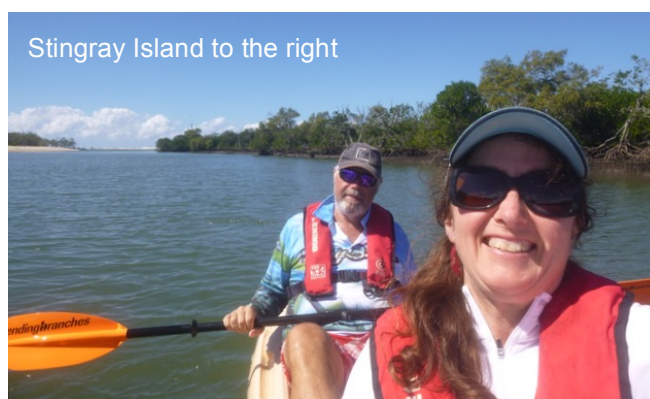
Where mud lined the banks (almost everywhere) crabs with cream and red pincers were out in force, foraging and feeding in the sun.

channel once we leveled with the northern end of Horseshoe Bay. It was here that Andrew told me he wanted to explore Swan Lake (a fish sanctuary), an area I thought was further north. I should have been attune to his bigger ideas as he had made sure we had some food and double the usual amount of water with us before we'd left.

There was nothing resembling even a small inlet near the yellow mark but a bit north-east seemed to be the outlet of a creek. We turned up here and rested on the sandy beach just inside the bar to this narrow waterway. Eventually we continued up the waterway, keeping right when a smaller branch of water presented itself left and then turning left at the second junction, returning out the first missed left-hand branch. After a break and some food, again just inside the waterway's entrance, we found paddling back to Sengo was helped by the incoming tide, but not by the south easterly wind, were the resultant waves presented us with minor challenges and we had to dodge the moving power boats; and at least one meter-long shark who jumped out of the water within five meters of us! We were back on board around three hours after we left

Looking up Google Earth when we got back to boat, we found we hadn't even touched Swan Lake and instead had started to circumnavigate an area called Stingray Island before we turned back.

Birds seen: Collard kingfisher, whistling kite, white bellied sea eagle, brown honeyeater, pelican, striated heron, egret (?sp), azure kingfisher, white breasted wood swallow, and lots of small, quick and non-descript birds too far away to identify.



Stingray Island to the right



Nest and owner



Near Stingray Is.

It must have been a big flood to bring this piece of jetty up here – but not as big an event as the section of jetty we saw a few days ago that lies on the dunes in the middle of Stradbroke Island – that had to be due to conditions of cyclonic proportions – or someone's joke – but why would you bother.



In the dunes!

17th April 2020. Having not taken advantage of good weather yesterday (instead doing some domestics and cleaning) I was determined to enjoy the sunshine this morning, even if the wind was a slightly blowy westerly. I had thought about the prospect of walking all the way to Jumpinpin along the beach but we didn't quite get there, instead making it to (an almost empty) Horseshoe Bay before tuning around. The interps board at the southern end of Horseshoe Bay marks some areas that for conservation (bird habitat) reasons the government would prefer you not to walk (quite rightly) and offers suggested walking and driving options around the area. If we followed the marked route then the way around to the inner point of Jumpinpin was going to be a long one but if we walked straight up the western edge of the bay, (not included in the conservation area, the dunes to the eastern side of the bay are however), we would have a direct route. Whilst most of the bay was 'empty' at low tide, the inlet into the bay at the northern end was well and truly full of water and it would have been a swim to get across it. Our options from here included walking around the remaining water in the bay - large enough to have a boat moored in there, going back to the edge of the area and following the tracks around, or heading back to boat. We'd been away an hour so we headed back to boat, and although expecting to find the incoming tide underneath our tinnie found it still beached. We spent a little time on shore admiring the birds in the bush ashore before maneuvering the tinnie across the sand and heading home. Had we waited a few more minutes we would have been quite close to some beach curlews that arrived, temporarily, on the beach near our landing spot. It was a nice walk but as I spent the majority of it with no shoes on I guess both the chiropractor and the podiatrist would not be pleased.

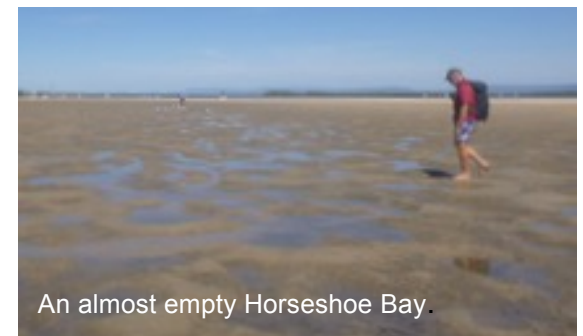
At around 1400 the weekend hordes started arriving, two of them anchoring in shore of us outside the 6 knot zone.



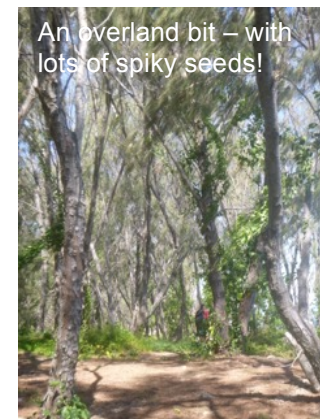
Heading North.



South end of Horseshoe Bay



An almost empty Horseshoe Bay.

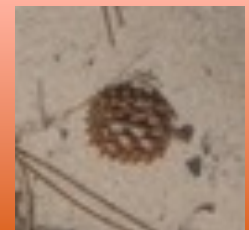


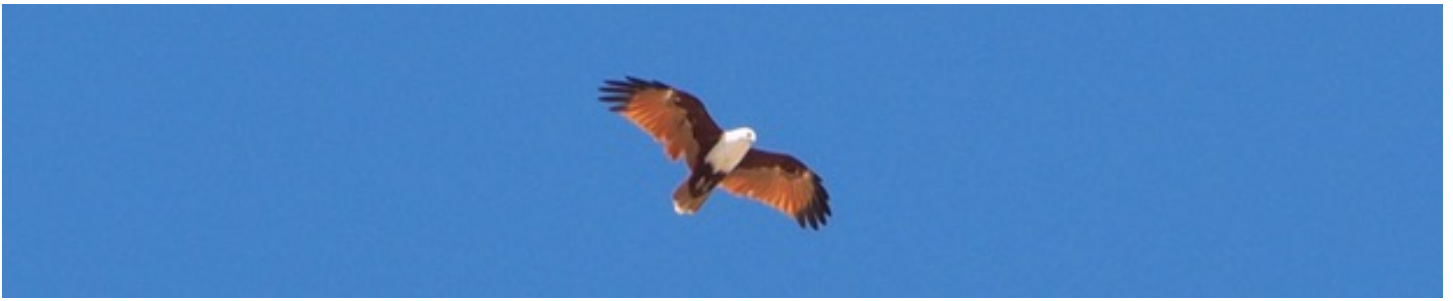
An overland bit – with lots of spiky seeds!



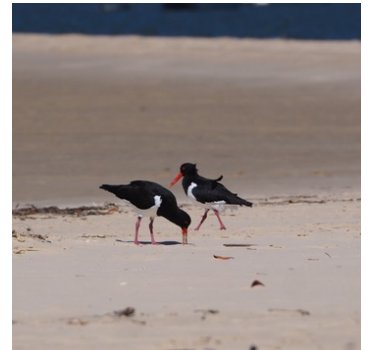
A minor inlet

Toughening the bottom of your feet is one thing; undergoing torture is quite another. These seed pods are spiky and painful to stand on and there were plenty of them on the non beach sections of today's wander (where there was no beach to walk on and we had to head slightly inland). We had brought footwear for these sections of our walk but didn't initially put it on. Andrew put his thongs on with around 50 meters to go on the way north. I however left my adventure sandals off and suffered through the 'bush-bashing' with bare feet; we both put our footwear on for the return tramp south.





Birds spotted. Whistling kite, white bellied sea eagle, Brahminy kite, pied oyster catcher, silver gulls, rainbow bee eater, double banded plover (?), crested terns, beach curlew, welcome swallow (on Sengo)



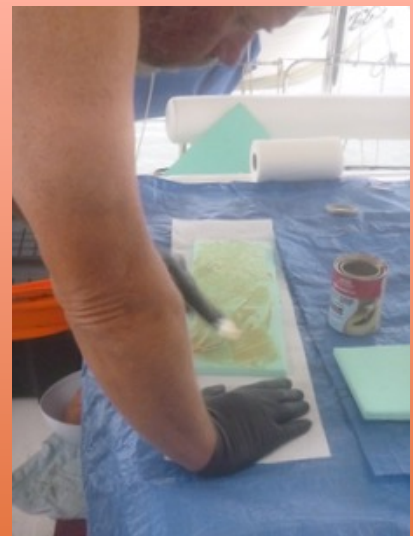
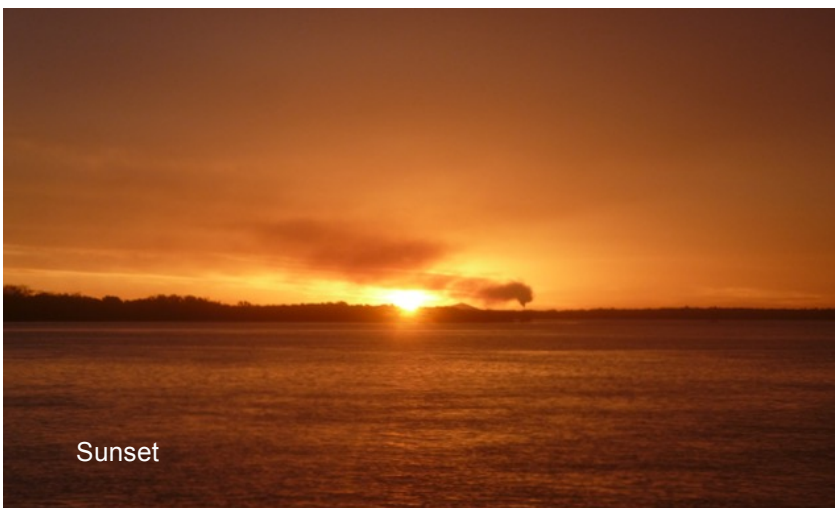
I am enjoying my new zoom lens but haven't yet quite got the hang of photographing birds in flight.



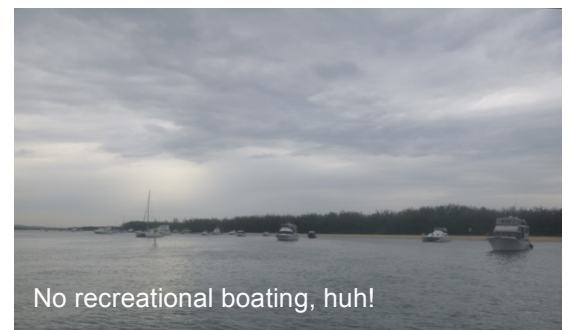
18th April 2020. Curious pre-dawn light on cumulous hiding behind the stratus was noted as it turned from pink to a pale yellow, but not captured on camera, as I was otherwise occupied washing down some vertical sides in preparation for a polish later. The ocean could be heard pounding the coast on the other side of South Stradbroke Island and this dominated the normal early morning twittering of the bush birds ashore.

There was just a hint of a breeze at 0625 as I checked outside to firstly capture the now rising sun on camera and shoo away the group of welcome swallows who seem to want to make Sengo their home. There had been some discussion of a paddle to Tipplers but it didn't eventuate and the overcast morning did lead to some showers in the middle of the day. Potential showers (including a thunderstorm) were predicted for the afternoon but they seemed to clear up by around 1500. We didn't get to shore either today but spotted

the beach curlews back on the beach around 1600, and they were accompanied by three kangaroos. At one point during the day there were 33 boats in the anchorage, plus jet skis and small fishing tinnies. Some had headed home by evening and thankfully it was a quiet night



Andrew decided to make his own sitting mat for his day pack; it doubles up as a pack back stiffener.





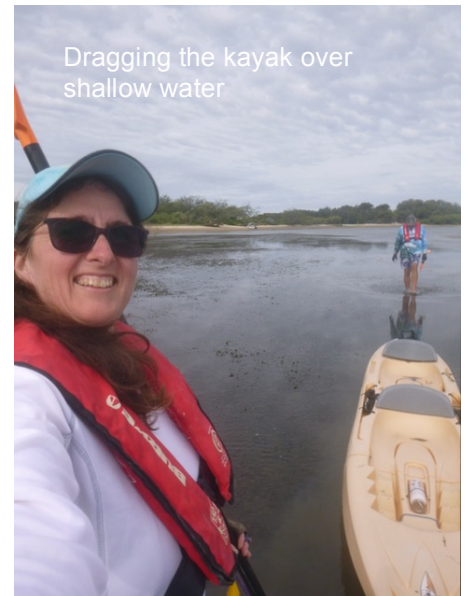
Out For Lunch

19th April 2020. 40% rain was due mid day (ish) but the rest of the day was predicted to be fine. The only issue regarding a suggested paddle to Tipplers camping resort for lunch was going to be the tides – we would be pushing in to it on our way south and depending on the timing, on our way north as well. But despite the forecasts, we figured being on the kayak we were going to get wet anyway so getting caught in the rain wasn't going to put too much of a strain on the situation. It took us around an hour to paddle from our anchorage to where Tipplers campground is on South Stradbroke Island. The campground is closed, as is the in seating at the café, but you can order takeaway. The reviews on the interweb warn that the prices are expensive but we were aware of that and enjoyed an overpriced burger each for an early lunch, sitting down to wait for it just as a rumble of thunder sounded overhead somewhere and I thought I saw a flash of lightening above the trees in the direction of Jacobs Well. The grey sky to the west did seem somewhat ominous but fortunately it stayed west and headed north so any precipitation in the sky missed us altogether. The iconic macropod that you see on photos of Tipplers' came in to greet visitors (he must have an internal clock) but you could almost see his confusion after he was the subject of the obligatory photographs by visitors but then everyone went away. After a few minutes of standing around the middle of the pedestrian hub he decided there were some great smells coming from our direction (I had now retrieved our lunch from the kitchen) and perhaps an opportunity for some food would be in our direction. Looking cute and tapping Andrew on the arm was just not going to get him anywhere – clearly he'd been previously spoilt – a very dangerous exercise for him, and for us noting the size of his claws! Andrew ended up giving him a nudge away from the table, after he almost got his nose in Andrew's chips! (We are quite kangaroo centric – I do miss greeting the mob every morning at our old land-based property.)





We headed home as the back of the storm system passed over, producing northerly winds that chopped up the water surface and made life in the front section of the kayak, at least for a short while, decidedly wet! After this winds and water surface were quite calm and pleasant, and it was an easy paddle north. However, the paddle back took a little longer than our paddle south – whilst we had a slight incoming tide it was not long past low water and the depth between one section of the gap between South Stradbroke Island and Pandanis Island was not enough to paddle through (not with our weights on the kayak!). On the upside our feet got a lovely mud bath as we hauled it along into deeper water). Birds seen; intermediate egret, whimbrel, pied stilt, pied oystercatcher, beach curlew, pelican, white ibis, white bellied sea eagle, Brahminy kite, whistling kite, tern (sp?), Australasian darter, pied cormorant, silver gulls and of course the welcome swallows back on Sengo



Dragging the kayak over shallow water



Q: What do you do for your 18th wedding anniversary in quarantine?

A: You go camping.....

20th April 2020. Well, not really. As with our other hiking gear, over the past couple of months we have spent an inordinate amount of time pondering the internet for options for upgrading our tent. Our aim, given our plans over the next few years to do some longer walks, was to replace our current 3-season, 2.8 kilogram hiking tent with something a bit lighter. Our current tent was bought around 15 years ago when we didn't know if we were going to get into hiking seriously, so it wasn't the lightest on the market and it was in the mid to budget range in both cost and quality. Our tent has been used in various conditions, been to the high country in Tasmania (ice overnight), had many high country Victoria trips and it even started a section of the Bibbulman Track in Western Australia with us (but as there are shelters on that



This little guy couldn't care less that we were fiddling around behind him.

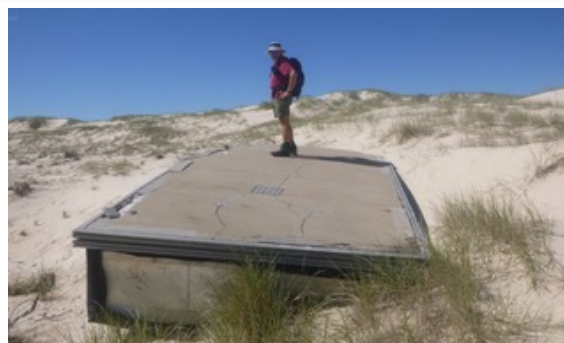
track and we were walking in a non busy period another hiker offered to take the weight off Andrew's shoulders (literally) and transport it to Denmark, our destination, for us). However, now that we've been upgrading our gear we are looking to lighten the load. So far, in terms of tents, this has been a visual exercise; our options for getting off boat at this point have been

limited and places to peruse some of the available options range from south of the Gold Coast to north of Brisbane. There are also some options that look promising that are sold directly from international manufacturers.

Having pulled out our old tent for a very brief inspection a few months ago the obvious flaw was the disintegrated window above the front door. This was a pane used to project out from the fly for ventilation. In theory this was fixable and today we decided that perhaps we'd better just see what state the rest of the tent was actually in before we made some concrete decisions. So we headed to shore to find a suitable test location. We hadn't forgotten how to pitch it and once it was up we had a good look at it. Apart from the fact we didn't know the state of its seams (they might have to be resealed) it looked pretty good. Could we justify spending a lot of money to buy another tent? If we split the tent, fly, poles and pegs between us we'd share the load. Was it just a matter of replacing the panel above the door?

However other factors have now come into play. Having upgraded our sleeping mats to something newer we now have to consider the dimensions of the floor space needed in the tent. I have purchased a standard (but shaped) mat; Andrew on the other hand has purchased a large size mat and we have found with the floor dimension of many of the newer, lighter 2-person tents the area just isn't wide enough. Having pitched our old tent it didn't look wide enough either. We left the tent pitched on shore, probably to the amusement of the wallaby that was hanging around,

and retrieved a measuring tape from Sengo to confirm this. The other consideration with looking at a new tent was to get one with more space – but if this tent fit our new gear perhaps we would reconsider. However – this old one wasn't going to fit our new mats let alone anything else. So it was back to perusing new tents online this afternoon, and the continual updating of a very comprehensive comparison spreadsheet Andrew has constructed to help us in the eventual new tent purchase. Which leaves the question: what are we going to do with the old tent?



21st April 2020.

This morning I answered the phone: 'I was told to ring you about the delivery'

'That's lovely,' I replied, 'What are you delivering?'

'Sheet metal and some corners. I'll need a forklift.'

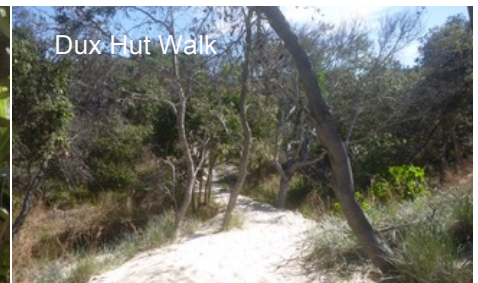
Clearly this guy had the wrong number.....what were we going to do with sheet metal?

Andrew was willing to try a walk today but we didn't know how his sore foot would take it. So dosed up on anti inflammatories we put our walking shoes on and headed off.

Just as we got to the beach we ran into a local couple and were reeducated about some geography. I always thought 'The bedroom' was the very shallow inlet north of Horseshoe Bay near the inside of the Jumpinpin bar. However, 'The Bedrooms.' is actually the area around the camping site on South Straddie adjacent Pandanis Island, according to 35-year veteran locals (from a boat). The once popular 'the bedrooms' campground (that we'd noted the other day with the overgrown picnic tables) used to have toilets as well. These days it is an overgrown mess. Their enquiry if we were using the track proved they hadn't used it for some years and didn't know it was overgrown. 'Oh, we stopped using it once the pippis ran out' I didn't mention that perhaps he'd over harvested them.

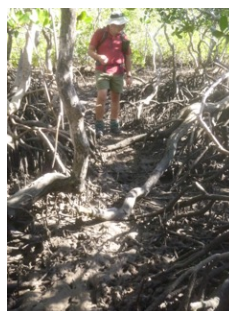
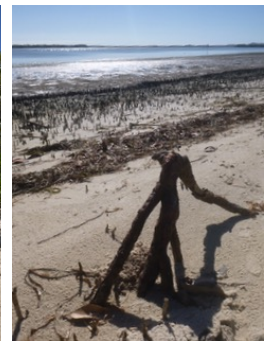
On 13th April we attempted to head to Dux Anchorage (or Tipplers) by walking south from our anchorage along the beach, which ended up





being via mangroves and ultimately we didn't get there, giving up and going up and over the dunes to the ocean side of the island before heading north and then back via the track we had discovered a few days before.

Today we headed initially north up the overgrown internal track, east along the track to the ocean and then south after fully checking out the section of dock that we had spotted previously suspended high in the dunes. We had no specific destination in mind but we turned west when we came to the SS1 sign, finding ourselves along the Dux's Hut Walk to come out behind the Southport Yacht Club Facility at Dux Anchorage. Rounding the fence here we arrived at the beach and took a break overlooking the anchorage; we note with 5 boats in it – it had had 9 boats a few days earlier when we paddled past. Fortunately it was still not far past low tide and we headed back north along the sand at the back of the mangroves until the convenience of this was no longer there and we had to negotiate the softer mud (and mozzies and midgies) of a larger mangrove area. We finally made it back to the encroaching sand dunes, where we had high-tailed it east on our last visit, and then through familiar territory to find



If the government is looking for their lost channel markers– we can tell them exactly where to find them.





ourselves back opposite Sengo with a tide still far too low to get back on board easily; the tinnie was still high and dry. We spent an hour admiring the birdsong, and getting bitten by the midgies, before dragging the tinnie the final few feet into muddy water for a trip back to boat. We had walked around 8.75 kilometers.

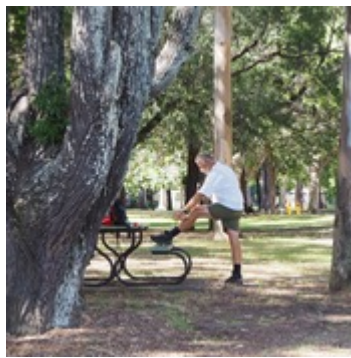
Birds seen: pelican, Brahminy kite, whistling kite, crested tern, fairy tern, pied oystercatcher, bronze wing pigeon (?), drongo, rainbow lorikeet, grey butcherbird, silver gull, white ibis, willy wagtail, white breasted wood swallow, Australasian darter, pacific black duck, intermediate heron, beach curlews, white bellied sea eagle



22nd April 2020. By 0810 the anchor was up and we were heading back into civilization. For how long was yet to be determined. We contemplated anchoring at Paradise Point and whilst there was room, at a squeeze, other options with more swinging room were preferable. But first a large supermarket shop was needed, which had us anchoring outside the Runaway Bay canal for a short while ensuring minimal tinnie time from boat to dock and back again. A chat in passing to fellow yachties reassured us timing to Coles was not currently restricted and after a small shop in the heath food store Andrew sent me in to battle the crowds in the supermarket. There was no sanitizer available but I was assured the handles of the trolleys had been wiped down. Restrictions on entry and exits weren't in place but there were large dots on the floor for the checkouts. Back to boat meant a quick lunch before a shift north, passing our Crab Island

anchorage (there was only one cat there), and Paradise Point, before settling in Browns Gutter.

A slightly longer tinnie trip is required to Paradise Point from here and today meant avoiding large bow waves emanating from big boats in the Main Channel, and surfing between them (pity I didn't get a photo) before heading up the Coomera River and south behind the Sovereign Islands into Paradise Point. A slightly late start meant that we got to the pathology for Andrew to get some blood tests at 1500 – the office had shut at 1430! After a quick shop it was back to boat for the afternoon. So in summary, the day offered minimal exercise but imperative activity; food shopping. Birds seen in transit – black cormorant, pied cormorant, silver gulls, osprey (sitting on the channel marker at Paradise Point), great egrets, white ibis, and tree martins.



Back to Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area

23rd April 2020. *I am not a fan of chemicals and the idea of spraying DEET on myself was making me cringe. Andrew had no such foibles – we'd done sections of today's proposed walk before and we'd suffered. He covered himself, and his hat, with the horrible stuff at a park along part of the Coomera waterways before we got to our main destination. I had put on long trousers and hoped they would save my legs. The sleeves of my top only came a third of the way down my arms however and after fighting a swarm of black on my arms near the intertidal area of the Conservation Park I took the opportunity of our first nibble break to spray the dreaded chemical over me.*

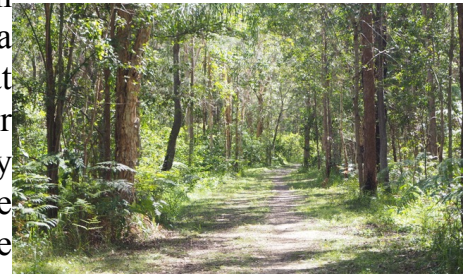
The sun was out, it was warm and at 0945, after Andrew had a blood test taken at the pathology clinic at Paradise Point, we were on our way back to the Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area for the second time. This time I wanted to try and access the park via my original plan in March, skirting the easement between the houses and the canal to the west of the Myola Court car park. If we couldn't get through then I was prepared to turn around and access the park via the route we'd taken last time, in the opposite direction.

Fortunately we happened upon a cyclist heading in the same direction, and he assured us that the route was viable, in fact he was taking part of it himself and he made suggestions for an explore. So we dropped to the easement west of the Myola Court bridge and walked along the back open fences of the locals, chatting to a few enjoying the day, noting a dying antichinus near one property (closer inspection of my photos suggested he has something very wrong with one of his eyes) before crossing the end of the canal and entering the park through (over) a locked vehicle gate.

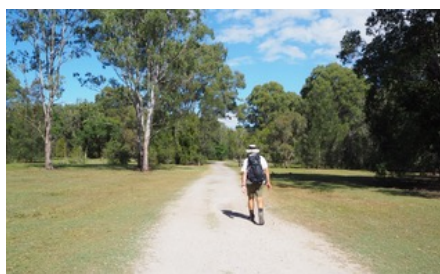
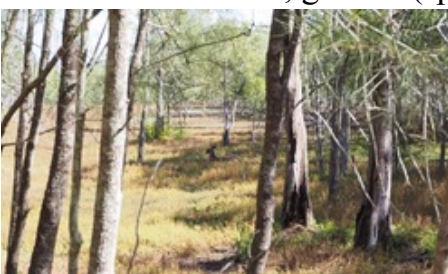




On our first foray off this track, on a side track to the right, we got lost – well we lost the track, but headed off adjacent the waterway anyway. It was infested with mozzies, which of course weren't upsetting Andrew, but they were starting to get to me. Deciding I didn't have the mental head space for a complete off-track explore today we headed back to the original path along the canal and I reneged and put the heavy duty insect repellent on my arms when we finally got our first nibble stop. This path merged into a management track and we joined the official public Koala Track at right angles, leaving the canal behind us and following the wider path south. Birdsong was prolific but the singers were mostly hidden in the bush and tree canopy. At the next T-junction we turned right, completed the Jabiru Circuit, including taking the 'dead end' management tracks for short stints to where the water should be (it was low tide). We saw no 'jabirus' and headed back. Mind you we saw no koalas on Koala Track either but we were assured if we looked up that there was a strong possibility of seeing one. Our decision to head south to exit the park brought us across the kangaroo paddock and eventually out the same gate as we'd exited last month, back up Pine Ridge Road and a quick stop at the Runaway Bay Centre for lunch. We walked back to Paradise Point arriving back at the tinnie 19 kilometers after we'd started. The day ended enjoying a juicy plum whilst soaking our tired feet off the Sengo's back step and watching a dugong frolicking nearby.



Bird list: pelican white ibis, straw necked ibis, willy wagtail, mud lark, magpie, crow, pied stilts, pied oystercatcher, silver gull, crested pigeon, osprey, lapwing, intermediate egret, rainbow lorikeet, noisy minor, black faced cuckoo shrike; godwit (sp?)

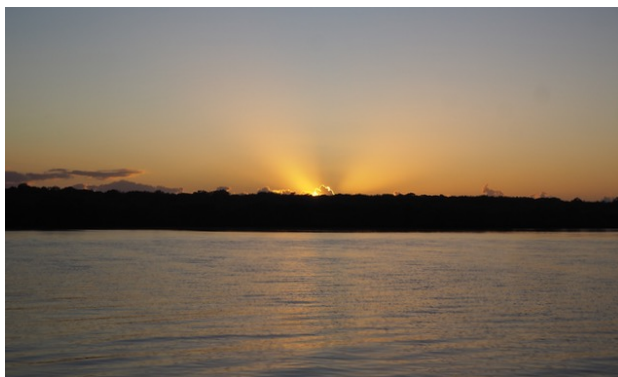


24th April 2020. Just when I've finally got enthusiastic about cleaning the boat... the pressure pump in the water maker packs up! This was the issue that we had thought had sorted itself out last month – clearly it had not. So after a couple of small loads of hand washing, I was placed on strict water rations until we got it fixed.

Non excessive or absent water consumptive tasks today included: Wiping down the hiking boots, wiping down the back verandah area (very dirty), chatting to a couple of yachties on the phone, watching youtube for photography and cleaning hints, and I started cleaning the desk. Andrew cleaned and clove-oiled the ceiling of the helm station, glued a broken bit of the seat of his nav station, and fixed some bookshelf trim downstairs in the desk area.

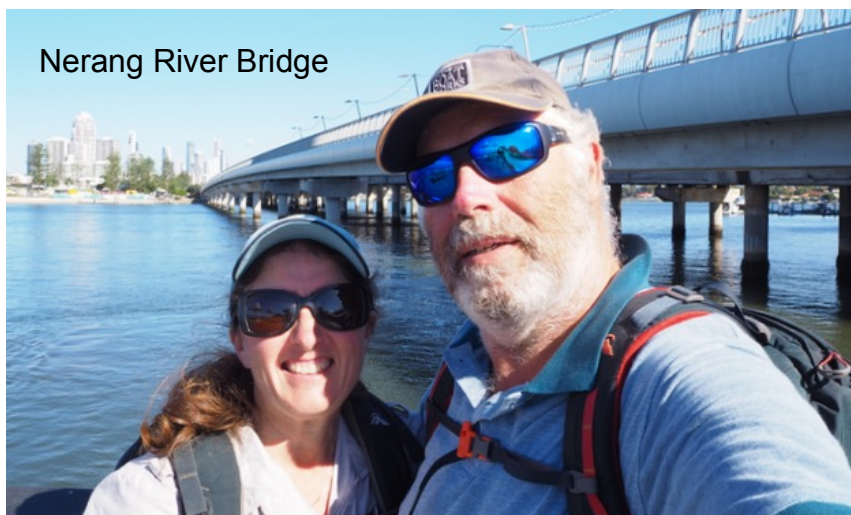
I also had a chat to a couple picking up their crab pots (I was sitting on our tramp) who thought that one of their crab pots was under our boat – it wasn't, the offending float was attached to string only – and had somehow tied itself around our anchor chain – fortunately it wasn't too difficult to remove and they removed it for us – thanks team! The worst thing about being anchored here is the wake emanating from the big power boats going north (and south) and we suffered through several horrendous bouts. This of course is a problem only at high tide; at low tide the sandbank absorbs most of the energy; we were anchored here over the weekend so the traffic was significantly greater than normal. This is a convenient little anchorage if we can't get into Paradise Point or Crab Island but we just might make future stops in the 'quieter' times of the week

25th April 2020. I got up for the dawn service. 'Sort of. The national service had been going for ten minutes when I started watching it; sitting on the back step surrounded by several midges, birds, fish skipping across the water's surface before sinking below the viscous barrier, and early morning fisherman heading north and south along the Main Channel. The sky was already relatively light when I started, infused with the smell of smoke that I'd noticed around an hour earlier. The national service was a simple service, with only one obviously religious section (see Aboard Sengo April 2018 for my disappointed thoughts on the cult religious centric dawn service in Ceduna, SA) and my listening time was finished off with a piper in Melbourne as the sun came up adjacent our anchorage.



I hadn't lit a candle because a) any candles were in the bilge somewhere and I didn't have an appropriate receptacle to put one in, b) any use of a torch was just a waste of power resources and c) no one was around to see me anyway (I couldn't tell if the semi-abandoned wreck at the end of the gutter was occupied).

Nerang River Bridge



Nerang River Bridge! After several walks south we finally got to the ‘mythical’ Nerang River Bridge today, 22.6 (ish) kilometers from the Paradise Point Jetty and back. (‘Mythical’ because we had measured the distance as an end point destination some time ago and we never seemed to get there). (The last time we got close we blew the weekly budget on a gourmet lunch at Catalina’s, walked through Australia Fair on the same day a beauty salon worker who’d returned from Iran was diagnosed with Covid-19 (and I subsequently came down with some ‘cold’ like symptoms four days later, after probably giving it to friends catching up with them in between), and took a bus back to base because the top of my right foot was very sore and I was struggling to walk any further.....)

Andrew finally got out of bed and we considered today’s exercise options. We were a bit tentative about our feet prior to today’s walk –they had after all done a lot of walking just two days prior and we could both still feel tired spots, and in Andrew’s case the soreness near his big toe was still slightly annoying him. But given the distance we eventually walked, our bodies, and our feet, held up reasonably well (Andrew had preempted some of this by rubbing Voltarin on the offending patch prior to the start) and we were more tired than sore at the end of the walk.

The stroll headed through the suburbs from Paradise Point to Runaway Bay down to Bayview, where you start to walk along the Broadwater Parklands. Being Saturday people were out in large numbers, most exercising

(themselves or their pooches) but some not (sunbaking was relatively common) but we didn’t see the authorities move anyone on until we got down to around the public jetty area near Australia Fair. Whist Catalina was open and providing take away, with our income limited due to struggling tenants, it was not in our budget, so lunch was sandwiches from a small booth in the park. We walked the final 1.3 kilometers to the Nerang River Bridge (so we could at least say we’d got there) and then turned around and walked back to Paradise Point.



Resting on the way back!

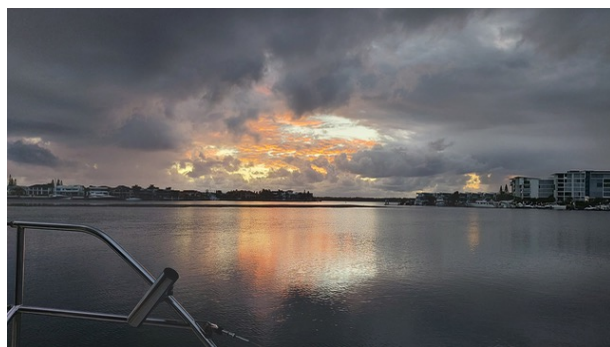
26th April 2020. Sunday. A rest day and domestics!

Paradise Point

27th April 2020. Monday. We took Sengo across to Paradise Point around 0900 on this morning. We had been in contact with the water maker contractor on Friday but he wasn't going to know until Monday when he got into the office when he could fit us in. In anticipation we squeezed between an existing catamaran and the Paradise Point public jetty. Because of the space we only had 20 meters of chain out and were grateful for the calm forecast for the next few days. As it was the contractor was able to see us early afternoon, the fix took 15 minutes and we managed an afternoon walk; our usual parade around the Point.

The 28th April 2020 was a relatively non-active day; we did get a walk around the Point, some on-boat cleaning and I brushed out the floor mat which has finally been put back in its place in the living area.

29th April 2020. Whilst I would have loved a paddleboard, overnight rain had left a few clouds this morning and a slight chilly early breeze. A walk was going to be easier and like the previous couple of days we followed the circuit, along with everyone else, toward the Coomera River, around the Point and cut back to the original beachside track when we hit houses. I made comment before we got to the Coomera River that I was surprised there was not more bird calls, the hour was early (just after 0800) and the sky mixed so it wasn't as if it was too hot for them to be out. At that point I'd only heard a couple of rainbow lorikeets and there seemed to be no life in the mangroves. However avian action started not long after and our final bird list is: rainbow lorikeets, rainbow bee eaters, willy wagtail, noisy minor, black cormorant, magpie, pied butcherbird, pied cormorants, pacific black duck, black cormorant, welcome swallows, white ibis, Australian pelican.



The rest of today was due to present calm conditions but tomorrow morning 15-20 knots were due to arrive around 0700 and the wind was predicted to increase to 20-25 knots later tomorrow afternoon. We didn't have enough chain out to be comfortable here, we didn't really have enough room before the jetty to let out more chain, and the boat to the north of us had only ten meters out! Our anchorage at Paradise Point was not going to be a comfortable proposition, so after a big shop we headed back to our old favourite: Tiger Mullet Channel.



Rainbow bee-eaters on the walk around Paradise Point

Tiger Mullet Channel: Restrictions haven't been lifted yet and hasn't anyone informed those two boats of the 1.5m rule!





Jumpinpin Bar.

30th April 2020. My first preference for today's excursion had been a paddle but Andrew, being male, didn't get the hint that low tide was around 0730 and we needed to leave extra early to make this our turn around time. I need to be more articulate in my communication! So the other alternative, given the time, because the next slack tide was due to coincide with stronger winds, was a walk at Jumpinpin.

Of course, as we stepped on shore at the southern end of Horseshoe Bay it started to rain! Should we keep going? Rain was predicted but the rain radar checked around 45 minutes earlier had all the rain offshore. Admittedly it was heading south but it was either breaking up as it hit the top of North Stradbroke Island or was much further out to sea; at the point of checking it didn't look like it was going to be an issue, but the weather, of course, is prone to changing...

We did however want the exercise and we did have our Gore-Tex jackets with us, which really hadn't had a good test of the seam sealant we'd repaired them with, so off toward the back of the sand dunes we went.

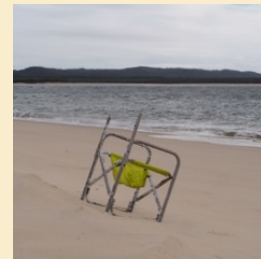
Admittedly it wasn't raining very hard, but enough for me initially not to bring the camera out. Eventually the rain stopped – above us at least – there was rain still out to sea to the east of us. The 'track' the authorities wish you to trace, according to the sign at the southern end of Horseshoe Bay, isn't very



Riding the swells of water coming across Jumpinpin Bar

obvious. There is no line of supposed black poles to follow, and only one pole was evident between the dune systems between the ocean and the western side of the land. Because of the sensitivity of the dunes as a conservation zone on either side I suspect now that 4WD driving is discouraged, although from the one pole that is actually there, we did find and follow some old(ish) 4WD tracks - when we could see them - but we had to muck about trying to trace signs of traverse for most of the walk, staying in the middle and emerging on to the beach with minimum crossing of the sensitive dune areas. Red-capped plovers were the only bird of note amongst the dunes.

There were people here; from one 4WD parked at the oceanside edge of the bar, and from several boats anchored in the shallow inlet I had previously thought was 'The Bedroom.' (See earlier). The Covid 19 sign near the Jumpinpin bar was intact; the one near the interps board at Horseshoe Bay was defaced!



The walk around the point presented some strange artifacts and washed-in debris in the sand.



Birds seen: pelican, Caspian tern, pied oyster catcher, crested tern, lapwing, silver gull, red capped plover, Brahminy kite (1st year – brown), white bellied sea eagle, whistling kite. intermediate egret, pied cormorant, willy wagtail, swallows on boat.



Disappointing: The people who defaced this sign would probably do well in Trump's America!

