

# Aboard Sengo

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November 2021

## Capricorn and Bunker Groups

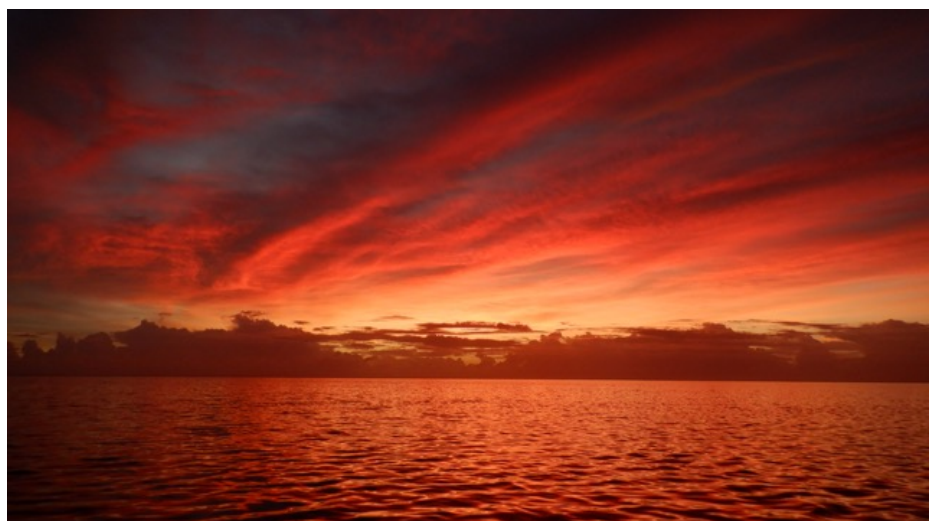
From 12

Enjoying the reef islands from North West Island in the north to Lady Musgrave Lagoon in the south



## Better late than never...

We get a short, albeit late, reef cruising season in.





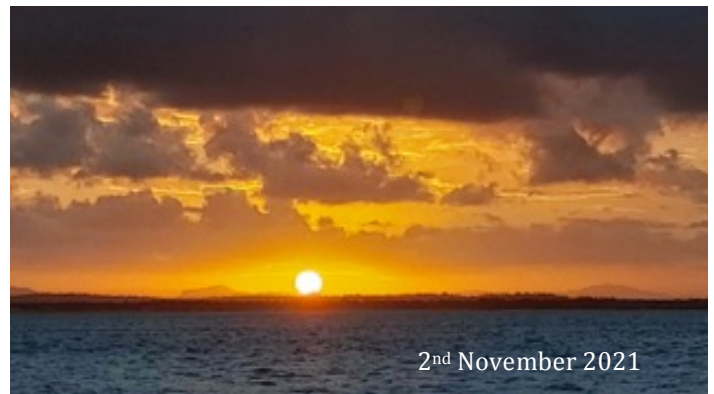
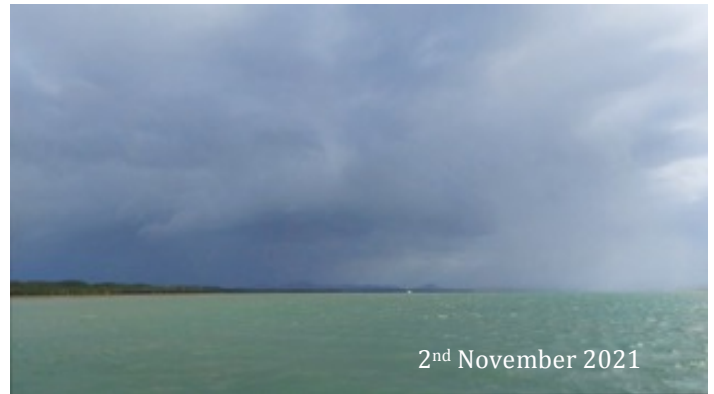
Hot, humid and wet. Not a particularly comfortable, or useful, combination but we are in the 'wet season' after all. I could say that it is the 'Tropics' but by the end of November we were way below the Tropic of Capricorn – although we did cross that mythical line three times this month. Our travel direction was essentially south (with one hiccup) for several reasons. I wanted to hook up some medical appointments on the Gold Coast and clearly couldn't do that until we got there. For peace of mind we also needed to get to at least on par with our cyclone insurance line – at the start of the month we were above it – by the end of the month we were below it – just. Going south didn't necessarily mean we were escaping the humidity as Australia experienced three atmospheric rivers within a short period of time. We were however reasonably lucky, considering we had leaky hatches, to miss most of the rain, and the fact we were late in the season was a blessing from this perspective – The Gold Coast got absolutely walloped! We started the month in Port Clinton. We finished the month anchored at Kingfisher Bay, Fraser Island.

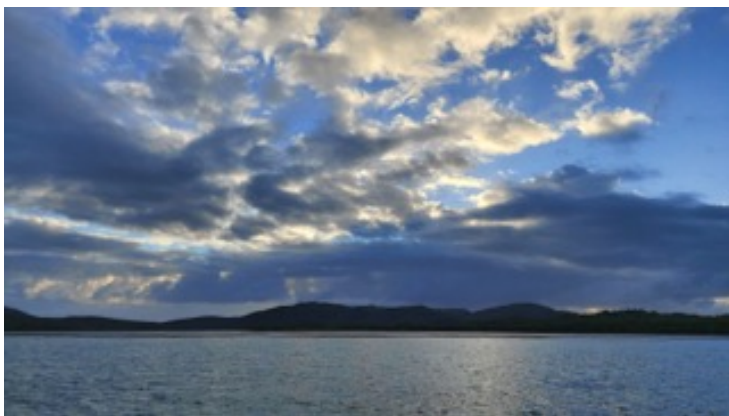


## Port Clinton

1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

The first few days of November were spent in Port Clinton sheltering from a strong southerly. From the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> November I managed to get some well overdue boat polishing done – but only on the gunwales and some of the back steps, armouralled some black plastic (again well overdue and didn't really seem to make much of a difference), sorted out the mess of camp stuff that was still cluttering up our living space, and sorted the linen cupboard.





## Port Clinton to Great Keppel Island

5th November 2021. The anchor up around 0600 but it was 0700 before we put the main up. The sum log had clogged up after a week of non-use despite the ferocity of the current (we have previously struggled to get back to boat in the tinnie in the current at this location) and Andrew went downstairs to clear it, taking him longer than expected. The MetEye forecast had changed since yesterday morning and instead of being slightly south of east, the wind was forecast to be east to slightly north of east. There was a smidge of south to creep in early afternoon but with a bit of luck we would be far enough south not to worry about the time taken in zigzagging a bit.

But this morning when we got up the wind still seemed slightly south of east and knowing the first section of our journey would essentially be motoring in to it, we wondered whether we should lift the anchor at all. However we figured we would try, and if we had to come back then we would just have to come back.

Getting out of Port Clinton was a tad uncomfortable, into the swell (thankfully not excessive), into the wind, and, into the tide. The possibility of getting to Great Keppel for an early afternoon burger at the cafe slipped away as the SOG read below 5 knots for the first part of the trip and was down to around 2 knots at one stage. But the motors off and we were sailing; albeit riding fairly close to the wind. Our angle improved slightly once we got to Cape Clinton, and improved again once we could aim for the Keppels. A slightly

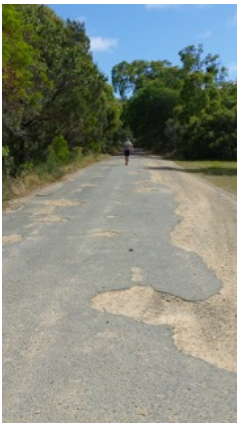
fickle wind direction did have us changing our 'goto' from the east side of North Keppel to briefly, the west side, before the angle improved again and we could again get back to heading for the more direct line to Great Keppel Island down the east side of North Keppel Island. We sailed through the small gap between GKI and Middle Island about an hour before low tide, and anchored in one of our usual spots, between the glass bottom boat moorings. The anchor was down just before 1500, too late to go to shore for the cafe so it was toasted frozen oat bread for a late lunch.

After a rest, and a good dose of sailing on Youtube, Andrew decided to have a look at the leaking hatches. The two we knew that were serious problems - after finding water in the sump pumps on return to boat in Mackay - had let the overspray of waves through on today's journey south. The new seals had shrunk a bit and were peeling off in the corners. Including the seal on the hatch over our bed - and it was undercover! The next two days the predicted rainfall is minimum, but next week the weather bureau forecasts up to 90mm. So at a reasonably late hour we pulled the nonworking seal off one of the hatches, replacing it with a new one and putting some sealant under it. 'Not the standard practice but at least in the short term we wanted them to stay in place until we could get a professional to replace them (although getting sealant off the Perspex for a fresh start might be a challenge).

I went to bed early at 2030. It had been a long day and I was quite lethargic on a low from the comedown of the oats.

We hadn't seen a lot of wildlife during the trip; a few sea birds and a couple of dolphins at around 1230. They swam across us however - we weren't going fast enough for them - and they clearly didn't want to play!





We found the dozer



View from cafe

beach. The last proper walk, albeit basically flat and not excessively long, had been the lookout at Mackay two weeks ago!

Blue skies, minimum cumulous (minimum chance of rain) and a warm sun. Just perfect conditions for a tropical walk. I wasn't looking at anything strenuous, just one of the usual circuits around the back of the resort would do for today, and so we set off inland from boat at around 0845, off the beach and up the familiar disintegrating and neglected holey bitumen road. The geese weren't in their usual spot that we had previously seen them, near a particular building behind a cyclone fence, and the dozer had been moved. Andrew spotted the first bird on our walk and it was probably the spot of the day; a pheasant coucal - it flew across in front of us from one patch of bush to another. The bush foot track that is my favourite part of this walk lived up to its reputation; I mentioned to Andrew that the usual birds we see along here are noisy friarbirds, and low and behold the only birds we saw along there were noisy friarbirds. We did hear other birds, and saw a few lizards scurrying through the undergrowth to the side of the track. But we didn't see any feral goats! There was some talk of a cull at one stage. I wonder if it has been started. Our normal path back behind the resort was blocked by temporary fence partitions so we took the beach route. The tide was up but there were groups set up at the top of the beach ready to enjoy their day. There was also a coffee/toastie booth set up here as well, and was clearly popular...why would you walk a few hundred meters to the resort when you could grab a cold or hot drink from just off your play area. Breakfast was clearly still being eaten at the resort as we passed but we were heading to the cafe further along the path. We like the cafe. They do great burgers, although it was a bit early in the day for a burger, and as we had had breakfast not excessively long ago, the burgers would have been too much. We had a toastie instead as a second breakfast (they had a gluten free bun for me - I didn't ask what was in it) but after that I



## Great Keppel Island to The Narrows

6<sup>th</sup> November 2021. I got up at 0445. There were some clouds in sky but it was moderately light. I had slept mostly solidly overnight but for some scratching; which will be a reaction to either the oat bread or the vegemite.

Before breakfast I wrote up yesterdays diary notes, and cleaned out a greasy box that had sealants in it.

My first real priority today was to get to shore for a walk. The last walk had been on Curlew Island and that was only a couple of minutes down a small

knew that even if we stuck around for lunch that I wouldn't fit the burger in. So we headed back to boat, getting on board at 1025.

The anchor was up at 1100 but raising the main wasn't as easy as it should have been. The wind was coming from the island so I got out as far as I could in a position where we should not have to be in contact with any boats whilst lifting the sail. Unfortunately the wind direction changed a few times during the sail raising and I ended up adjacent one of the ferries, on the other side from where we'd started, fortunately far enough away not to be too stressed, but it was not where I was aiming. Very shortly after this the engines were off and we were heading southwest. We really wanted more of a southeast trajectory but the wind temporarily didn't allow it.

But shortly after our start the wind changed again giving us around 60 degrees to the wind until the start of the channel into Port Alma. This gave us a SOG of around 7 to 8 knots, and occasionally 9! Once we turned off the wind we lost much of our speed, the SOG dropping to around 2 to 3 knots predominantly due to the wind angle - but being against the tide didn't help. Boat speed was back up when we turned past the lighthouse on Curtis Island. The sails were dropped off Maria Inlet at 1530 and the anchor down in Deception Creek at 1545. A very late lunch of chocolate, fig, and walnut muffins was had around 1615. The wind strength was up around the 10 to 20 knots in the afternoon, and therefore, thankfully, there were no midges.

Our Great Keppel bird list:

Pheasant coucal

Pied oyster catcher

Rainbow bee eater

Noisy friarbird

Silver gulls.(at boat fishing)

Stone curlew

Tern (sp?)

Lapwing

Welcome swallows

We also heard a crow and a superb fruit dove

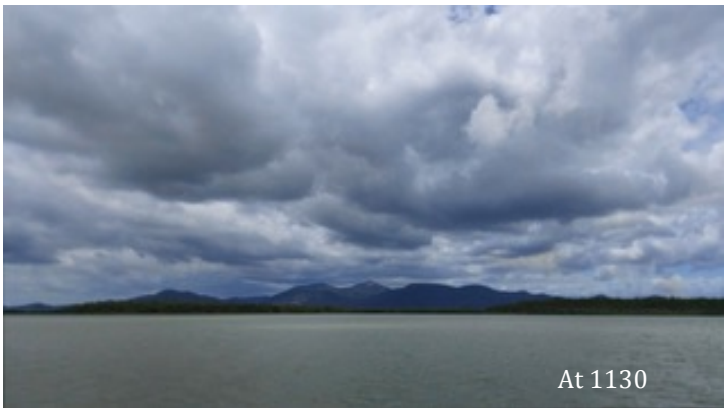
A noddy flew past as we were lifting anchor

Mammals: We heard fruit bats on shore





At 0645



At 1130

## The Narrows to Gladstone

7th November 2021. We were up early. The song of bush birds from the mangroves was lovely, and a sound I haven't heard for quite some time. The anchor was up soon after breakfast and we took the tide south. Essentially we drifted through The Narrows. Yes, the motors were on but only at 800 revs so we had a bit of steerage. A powerboat that had made its way south past us before we left Deception Creek was found facing the current further down and clearly either waiting for a bit more tide, or a bunny to go past and through the shallow section first. We drifted past them to head the charge but we were overtaken by another cat, who we had seen sailing past Sea Hill when we had picked up our anchor. By the time this boat passed us however, it had taken its sails down.

We brought our time into the Marina forward by a day. It was a bit windy but I convinced the office to give us an end berth. There was actually a much cheaper mooring free but with this potential rain and our leaky hatches I figured we would be more likely to get off if we were on

dock, and had access to better facilities if we needed them. Of course that still didn't stop me crying with stress relief when we got tied up, even though we had four helpers to get on dock.

After a welcomed shower we discovered the local cafe closing (at 1315!) And had an uninspiring lunch back on board as we have practically no food left. Then there was a well look forward to catch up with **Anapa**, the first of many I suspect over the next little while, and the way things are going possibly longer. Back at boat we filled our water tanks, attached to power and covered two suspect hatches with plastic and tape although we weren't that confident of the seal as the tape wasn't sticking. Yes, we had dirty decks but we did wipe them down a bit before trying to attach the tape.

Dinner was a late decision to go out and we persuaded **Skellum** to join us. We haven't seen them since late last year so it was a good catch up. Back on boat I tried to read in bed but was soon snoozing. I had got up at 0530 and it had been a somewhat stressful day. Rain started to come down around 2300.

Today's wildlife spot also included dolphins – the local variety in the murky water near the coal terminal. They also didn't want to join us. Was it something we said?



## Gladstone

8<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November

8<sup>th</sup> November 2021. We were up early. I had convinced Andrew to join me on an early morning walk given the expected temperature and humidity for the rest of the day. The morning walk however didn't quite go to plan and the expected destination of the East Shore recreational precinct was not obtainable. The bridge across Auckland River was closed from 0600 to 1800 so we walked under it instead and followed the path behind the University. We hadn't walked this way before, following the mangrove lined Auckland River bank along Bryan Jordan Drive to opposite the chandlery, which we had a snoop at before returning to boat.



Last night whilst walking to dinner we had changed our path to avoid, what was in June, a devastated and overstocked bat roost near the bridge, but found this morning we needn't have bothered. The trees were still devastated but there were hardly any bats. Had they been culled, we wondered, or had they died off naturally?

There are some fenced off tanks along this path at the University – they are apparently a sea grass nursery.

Birds seen on this unexpected sojourn.

Mangrove honeyeater

Lapwing

Mudlark

Crow

Collared kingfisher

Silver gull

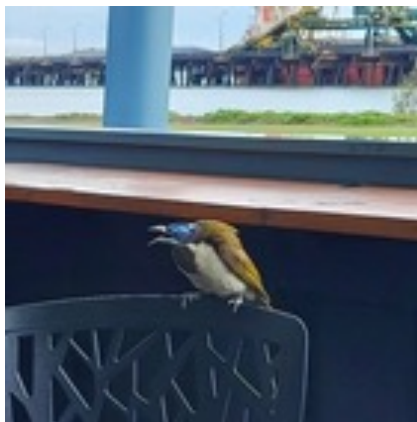
Willy wagtail

Crested pigeon

Fig bird

And we heard channel billed cuckoos





colony of black flying foxes is still along the mangroves, and quite innocuous; giving off no smell, and very little noise. We can get back to admiring them for what they are, cute mammals, and not destructive pests.

9th November 2021. According to observations on the bom.gov.au website the 0300 total for rain since 0900 yesterday was 40mm. But there were no readings either side of this. The rain had eased to practically nothing when I got up at 0530, but the rain radar was showing opal to the north of us covering Curtis Island to Port Clinton.

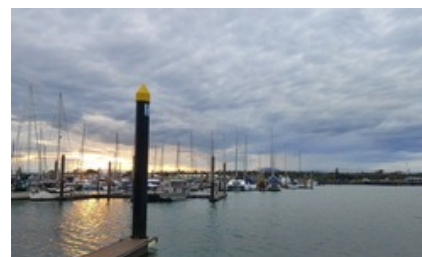
A channel billed cuckoo was calling somewhere outside. Rain was dripping from the boom bag onto our top deck.

The rain had come down with some intensity at 0100. There was a distinct drip in our head (bathroom). The other heads didn't seem too bad. The towels were out in drip zones and I put towels down in C3 under the big hatch just in case. Distinctive drips seen previously on the mattress could have been from a hatch, or from my dripping hair having brought in the bucket from outside to catch the drip in the bathroom

We got to go for a walk at 0745, a bit of a push as it was lightly drizzling and Andrew doesn't usually start any walking in the rain. Look, I said to encourage him, there is blue sky, It is only grey, he told me. The patches of blue sky did get bigger and the cloud burnt off, making it that humid that even the locals were complaining. We took the outside path around the bushland at the end of Spinnaker Park at a controlled but not rushed clip. We stopped briefly to identify a few birds and chat to a local port worker (gardening section I presume) who was reprogramming the lighting along the path. The lighting rectangles along the path were showing a mixture of either plain blue lights or a combination of blue, green and red. As they were aimed at the trees we thought they may have been set up as a flying fox deterrent, these trees along with the mangroves near the bridge full to breaking destruction point with flying foxes last time we were here in June. So much so the council blocked some of the path off from the public. No we were told. The lights are just art. The mob of bats moved off a couple of weeks ago on their own volition....looking at the state of the trees my guess is that it was probably because of lack of food. The small, normally, local



We got back to boat around 0945 and then at 1030 headed off on the bus with 4 others to do some shopping. The courtesy bus drops off at Bunnings but doesn't pick up there so we had to make our way back to Stockland. Fortunately it wasn't raining. After lunch, Andrew got a haircut and we did a quick food shop and the bus got us back to the marina around 1400. We had a cuppa with **Anapa** around 1600. We had salmon for dinner.



Jobs for the day included clear varnishing the first side of another picture frame, playing with some maths, some recreational reading and clearing out the front locker stuff to under the cockpit table so Andrew can access the water maker tomorrow, pending a break-in the weather.

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10th November 2021. There were no excursions today except for the morning walk, which I was lucky to get as it was dripping light rain when we headed off. The stroll was the reverse of Mondays trek starting opposite the chandlery, back behind the University and back via the Millbee Trail past the flying foxes. Andrews job today was to try and fix the water maker with the parts that had been sent from the Gold Coast. The o-ring hadn't de-seated as was first suspected, so wasn't replaced. A sheave was put on the system and the membrane removed and replaced. There was a fair bit of swearing and frustration on Andrew's behalf, and correspondence via text and phone with the Gold Coast. To no avail. In fact we think it might be worse than originally suspected. Another phone call is due tomorrow so hopefully we can get this issue sorted remotely. Other jobs today were the replacement of the fin for the tinnie (replacing the broken bits with a new one), another coat of varnish on a bit of balsa wood, some recreational reading and a cuppa with **Anapa**. It was a hot and muggy day but, despite forecast, provided very little rain.

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11<sup>th</sup> November 2021. For some reason I got up at 0130, and to keep myself occupied at that crazy hour I did yesterday's dishes, and finished Tim Winton's, 'The Riders'. As a result of my early morning start, I had a short mid morning snooze

The only excursion today was for lunch – which was not overly inspiring but it gave Andrew a break.

There was a bit of tooing and froing this morning after Andrew started with the parts for the water maker that had been sent to us. After all of yesterdays work not working, discussions between a couple of contractors in the Gold Coast came up with another possibility so Andrew then pulled all the nobs off the pump and cleaned them. There was still no improvement. The next suggestion was to remove the pump and send that off to be serviced. Andrew wasn't willing to do this for several reasons, one of which was the possible leakage of oil in the locker, but then were we going to sit around waiting for it to get back? Well, the contact in Gold Coast told us, your closest expert is Mackay! Do we turn around? Had we only known before we left! We didn't test the

water maker whilst in the marina before we left because we didn't expect there to be a problem, and we were aiming for cleaner water in which to run it (although I note the clarity of the water at Mackay Marina over the past couple of months has been lovely, so much so that fish are commonly seen and I saw one magnificent bat fish on our second day we were there – the last time I had seen fish like that was years ago at South Molle Island in the Whitsundays!...)

Nope. We will put up with having no water maker and fill our tanks going down the coast until we get to the Gold Coast. We have nearly 800 litre capacity so we should cope.

After a cuppa, having put that issue temporarily to bed, we went outside to again tackle the hatches. With superglue this time! We got a few improved before the clouds threatened to drop their load. We didn't put the blue plastic back on top....we hoped we were confident enough that we had made a difference.....only time would tell.

There was no walk today – our exercise was a few yoga stretches



12<sup>th</sup> November 2021. At 0620 this morning it was about 24 degrees. In the storm overnight we had (extrapolated) got over 30mm (34.6 Gladstone, 37.6 Gladstone Airport). The deluge started at 0030. A deluge for us; Biloela got over 100mm. Thunder and lightning were, thankfully, not too close

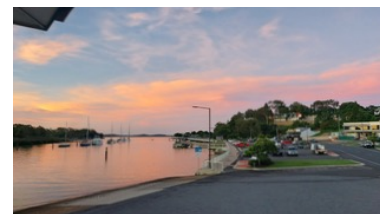
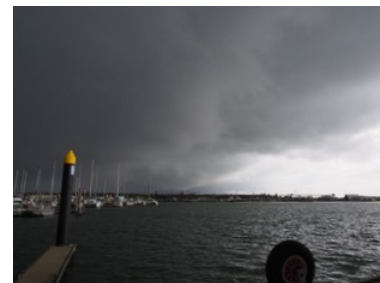
There was no obvious leak in C2 head. And the leak in C3 head was not too bad. Clearly the leaks in C3 and our head aren't fully fixed yet. The cockpit hatch is leaking but we haven't looked at that yet. And I still don't know if the moisture settled under the front starboard hatch over our cupboard is from a leak or just the result of condensation.

The sound of the koels and channel-billed cuckoos were noticeably absent this morning but there was a mixture of swallow chattering and the insistent bell from the shipping dock.

We managed a walk this morning. Half the bridge was open so we walked around to East Shores and back again, stopping at the newly relocated Maritime Museum and then for a cuppa before heading back to boat. Unfortunately the Gladstone II (Naval vessel) was not open until tomorrow, and then only until Sunday before she closed for the summer. But at least she is open, last time we were here she was closed because of Covid.

As we were approaching the marina a light rain started and we slipped into Complete Angler to wait it out. The light drizzle didn't stop however and after a few minutes we continued in the rain, getting back to boat just as it got heavier. The predicted major storm however didn't hit until around 1230. The leaden skies were part of a line, the end of the low that extended from north of Mackay down past Brisbane. There was a lot of thunder and lightening and we constantly checked the towels near our known hatch leaks. Fortunately they were behaving themselves. A bit more superglue may be needed. We saw **Anapa** for an afternoon cuppa just before it started raining again around 1500, and the rain was on and off all evening, but not with the intensity of the earlier big storm.

Gladstone to midnight had received got 58.6 mm.



13<sup>th</sup> November 2021. We had decided to leave dock tomorrow – without either the watermaker or the leaky hatches fixed. Today was a day of running around in preparation., scrubbing the boat and filling up water tanks.





**Time for our (very late) tropical reef cruising season!**

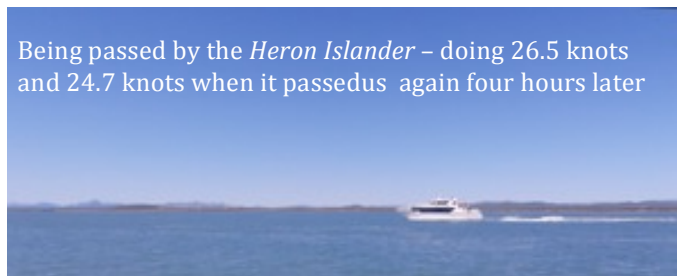
### To Mast Head Island

14<sup>th</sup> November 2021. We were off dock around 0800 but it was closer to 0830 when we left the marina compound. Andrew had been reluctant to do the sum log last night; he probably just couldn't be bothered, and was boyishly confident it would work this morning. It didn't. So instead of heading out the marina area after being helped off dock by *Anapa* we were heading for a mooring – and once safely secured Andrew cleaned the sum log whilst I put the fenders and ropes away.



Eventually we were motoring down the main channel into the wind, a perfect time to put the main up. By 0845 the mainsail was up, one engine

Being passed by the *Heron Islander* – doing 26.5 knots and 24.7 knots when it passed us again four hours later



was off and the boat was doing 4.4 knots but with the tide the SOG was a respectable 6.0 knots.

We were pure sailing from around 1200. But the motors came back on at 1430 when we concluded the wind alone wasn't going to let us get anywhere near our destination in time to potentially anchor in amongst coral – which is

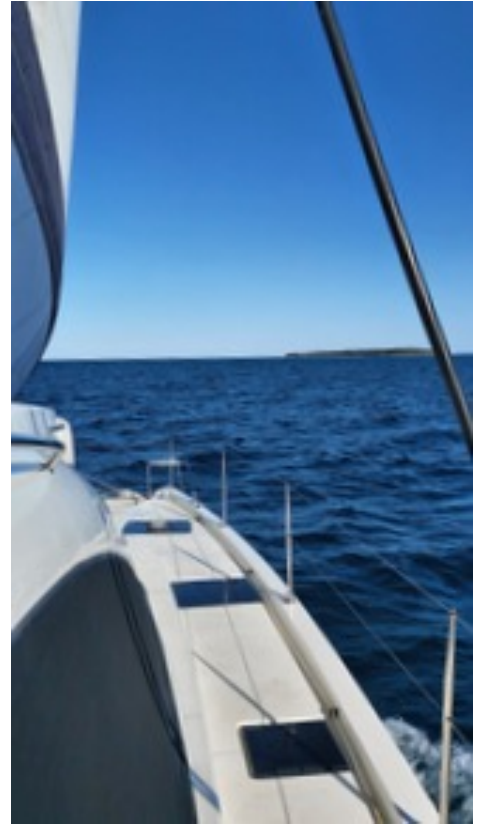
best to do before 1530 for the light. It did take us until a bit after this to get settled however.

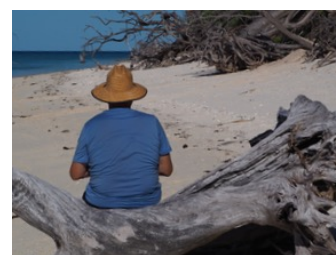
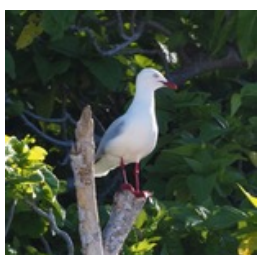
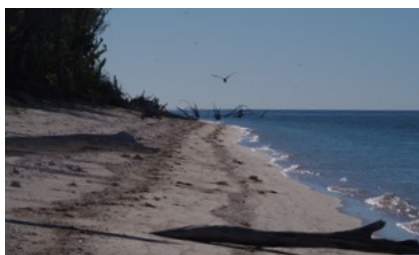
The engines were off at 1700. After our little planned memorial we turned the boat toward our anchorage at Mast Head Island with the perfect wind angle for a great sail. Admittedly it was only an hour away so we didn't get to enjoy the sail long. Anchored off the north side of the island and reef was a fishing trawler, one of about five anchored around this set of reefs. We suspect they are prawners and we expect to see lots of lights throughout the night...a little curious though, these vessels are currently anchored within National Park boundaries.

We had not expected competition for the mooring on the north side of the island, and although the wind had changed and would provide a lee shore, I was certain, as we are late in the season, that there would be no pleasure boats around. I was wrong. A smallish pleasure boat occupied the Mast Head mooring so we had to find an alternative. We have anchored at Mast Head twice before over the years just on the southwest edge of the reef in 10 to 13 meters of water. As it was this anchorage was protected from the wind, if that's what you would call it. We put the anchor down in around 12m of water and let plenty of chain out. Firstly I wanted a fair amount out to set the anchor, and we did end up over 22m of depth by the time I had stopped letting the chain out, but I could have perhaps reeled some in before I put the bridle on. We were fighting the last bit of the incoming tide, although it should have been slack, but it looked like the bridle wasn't coming up to mark it on the plotter. Are we dragging backwards? It turned out the bridle clip had slipped from the chain and so I had to hunt up a length of rope in order to facilitate its retrieval. It was whilst we were occupied in this activity that Andrew noticed the pleasure boat was moving. Really. You think he could have dropped the mooring as we were approaching! Retrieving the bridle and picking up a bit of chain was going to take a lot of time. There was not much point, given the light and lateness of

the day, lifting the chain and going for the mooring, as if we got to the mooring and then discovered because of the wind and swell movement it was too uncomfortable to stay it would have been a rushed job to get back to the anchorage. My only issue was the westerly that was due overnight potentially putting us into the reef. I hoped the tide was going to be too strong for it and keep us nicely in position.

Andrew tried a bit of fishing on the way across with no success. We spotted noddies, boobies (perhaps – at a fair distance) and terns (perhaps – at a fair distance). There were the slaps of several large jumping creatures on the water's surface, but by the time we heard them, the creature that created them was gone.





15<sup>th</sup> November 2021. I was up at around 0500. Andrew was up a little after 0600. I had said I wanted to go for a walk this morning but it had to be early, around high tide, so we could access the shore and had time to get back to boat before the terrain became impassable.

This is the fourth time we have stopped at this island but we had yet to step ashore; previous visits usually just overnight stops on the way to somewhere else.

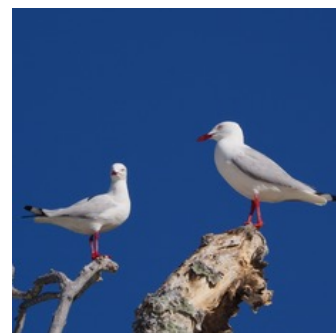
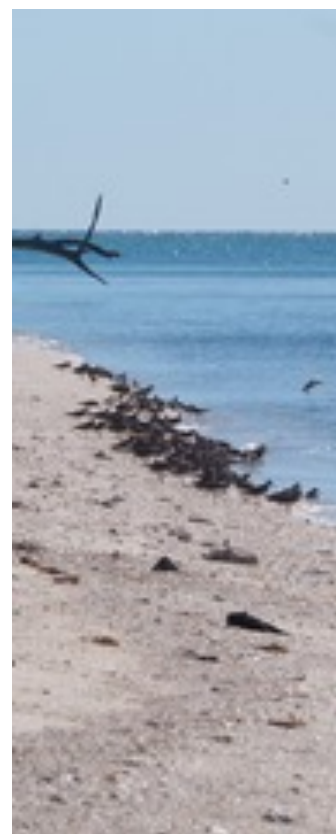
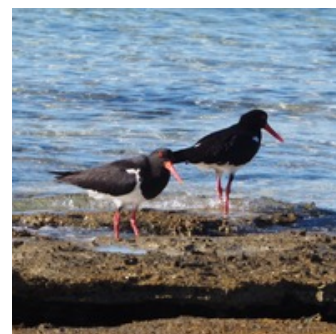
The surrounds had been awash with hunting birds since we got up but on shore there were so many more. We almost had to kick noddies out of the way. The white morph reef herons stayed further away, too jittery to let us get too close, as did the flock of sandpipers, the members of which seemed to move as one entity. Terns (mixed flocks) and pied oystercatchers allowed us to get closer as we strolled but we only saw the pair of white bellied sea eagles from a distance.

I started by counting the turtle tracks on the beach but soon got distracted, and I couldn't tell which had been last night's layers or previous night's. One turtle swam along the shore but it was small. Several small (baby) manta (or eagle) rays were noted as well as the dorsal fins of shovel nosed rays near the exposed coral on the southern side.

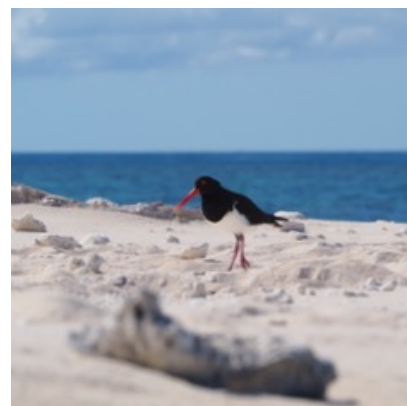
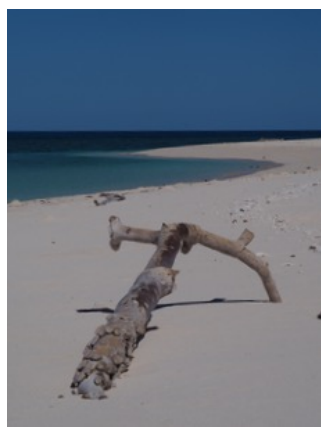
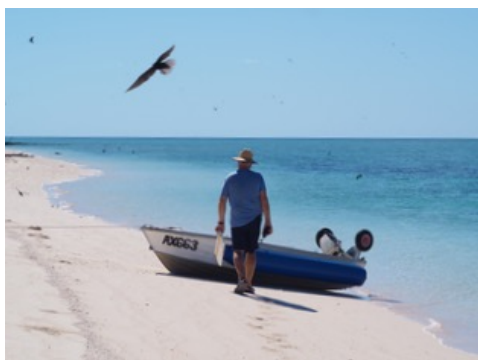
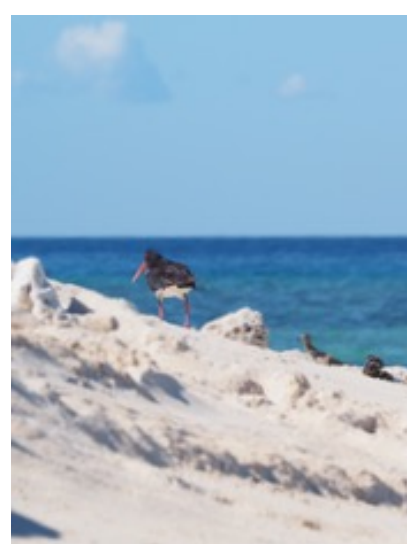
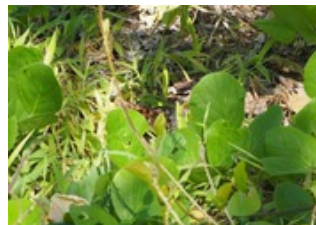
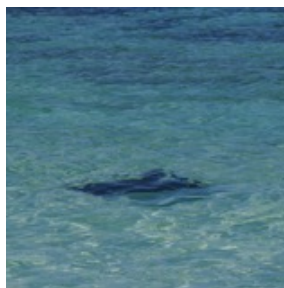
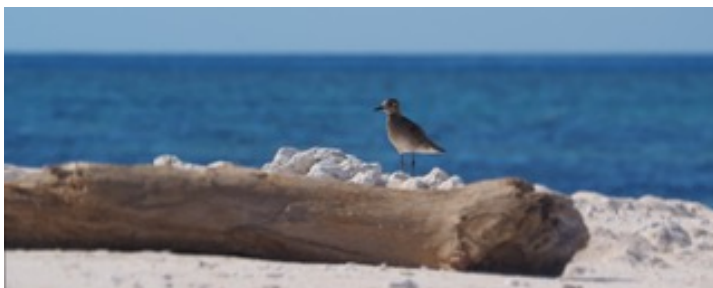
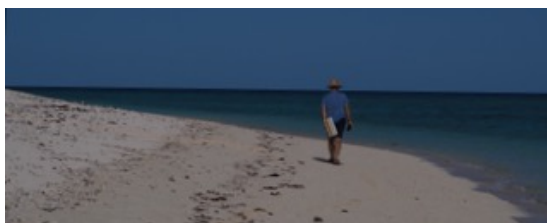
We picked up two bits of rubbish: a section of Asian polystyrene foam and an empty plastic drink bottle. My only foray above the high tide mark just happened to be where the National Park sign was, along with some interps regarding the transport of foreign seeds, and the remnants of a social distancing sign, the bulk of which had been ripped off and thrown by the base of a tree slightly inland. There seemed to be the possibility of overgrown tracks to follow here. Maybe some other time we could explore these. There was also a rail in amongst the ground cover here, very efficient at hiding itself although I got the feeling it may have been injured. The silly bird would not have had to move if it didn't start at my presence; I wouldn't have noticed it.

There was the unfortunate odd dead individual noddy along the shore, no doubt the victims of the pisitonia they nest in. The crab holes along the sand were large and one individual got trapped between the water and its hole when we passed. It was not happy and stuck both large claws out to the side to make itself look bigger.

We left the tinnie for our walk at 0705. We were back at 0815. We got back to







Sengo around 0900 because we took the opportunity whilst the current wasn't too bad, to paddle back...most of the way anyway.

After a few hours back on boat we headed out again. This time







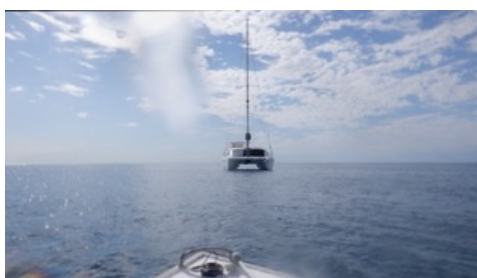
the aim was a low tide for a snorkel. Significant amounts of coral were exposed at low tide and we centred on some that was in around 10 feet depth. It was the first time we had used our new stinger suits (you feel like you are cocooning yourself in hosiery). We knew they wouldn't be as warm as the old suits but I loved the hood. My issue with confidence in the water is partially due to my hair breaching the goggles and letting water in. I had no such issues today. I have grown my hair out so I have no fringe but the hood kept it all nicely off my face.



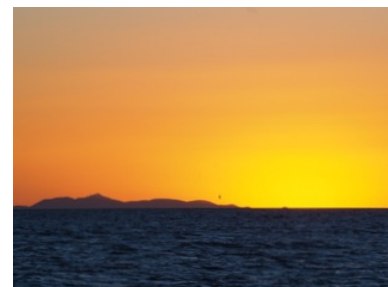
I am not sure how long we were in the water, it wasn't excessive, but I was well and truly a prune by the time we got out. The water temperature was interesting, we swam through patches of uncomfortable heat into patches of freezing cold.



Around 1530 another boat anchored next to us.

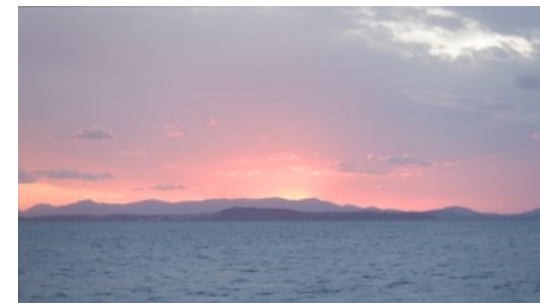
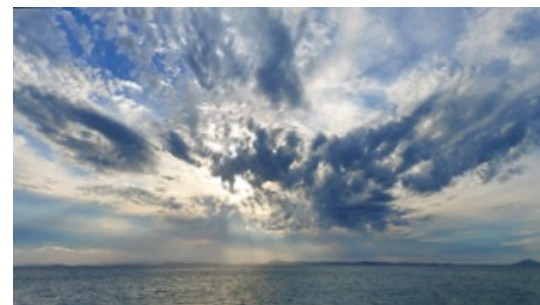


16<sup>th</sup> November 2021. We didn't do much today but did go for a latish snorkel, well after low tide. The water was a bit colder today, although more even in temperature. The coral and fish were also not quite as pretty, although we can't have missed a good spot by much as we had headed towards an area a dive boat had specifically gone to yesterday.

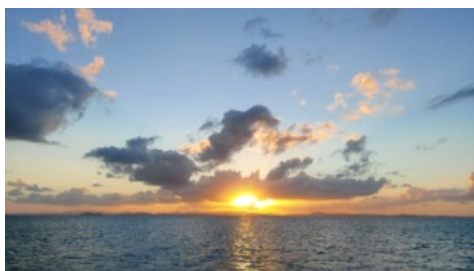


## The Keppels

17<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The weather was changing. The original change was for a strongish south-easterly. We thought we might try Hummocky Island north of Curtls Island as our shelter. The guides suggest good holding even with a bit of side swell. However by the time we got to Hummocky, the forecast had changed to ESE and looking at the anchorage we decided we wouldn't be comfortable here. So we instead headed back to Great Keppel Island, essentially doubling our travelling distance today. We put the anchor down between Shelving Beach and Monkey Beach. We hadn't anchored here before. We were a fair way out but found we were reasonably comfortable with the wind over tide rock.







18<sup>th</sup> November 2021. I got up at 0430. Andrew got up after 0700. The wind forecasts hadn't changed much and there was only about a 20pc chance of rain...but there could be a thunderstorm in that. The forecast was of course for the entire coast and the sky was relatively clear. But then I checked the radar. There was a lovely large patch of opal out to sea and to the south of us, and it had offshoots and tendrils heading this way. I figured we had about an hour, maybe. We still have leaky hatches!

By this time we had wind over tide and the wind seemed to have swung a bit more to the south, no doubt due to the coming system. The rock was to put it subtly mildly, uncomfortable. In the middle of our getting stuff out to help seal the hatches Andrew asks me if we want to move. Yes, we are a fair way out. Yes, we are mildly uncomfortable but doesn't he realise we are about to get hit with a potential thunderstorm and our leaky hatches are priority. If he wanted to move he could have got up earlier!

We stumbled getting stuff out from below one of the beds, but once we had equipment in

hand headed out first to the hatch over c3 bed, then to the two smaller hatches on the port side, all of which I knew had issues to varying degrees. Juggling sealant, which was put between the end of the rubber seal and the hinge, and supa glue which was used to restick the top seal to the hatch, and where each time I followed instructions to push the two substrates together for five minutes (even more vital on a vertical surface and uncomfortable on the knees as their position kept changing so I could contort my back into ever changing more comfortable positions) we finally shut the hatches as the first drops fell down. We don't know if the sealant had cured so it is highly possible we have sealed the hatches shut...if so we will deal with them when we get to the Gold Coast. Just hopefully they no longer leak.

The first rain cloud was an ominous black and had brought a stronger colder wind, but no precipitation fell from it until it got a few hundred meters past us. The second cloud was a non-descript grey. It brought only the merest of drops. I put the bucket out hoping to catch some rain but there wasn't enough to catch and the wind kept blowing the bucket over anyway.

The conditions were still uncomfortable and we watched another cat, who was anchored closer in, head toward the north, we assume he was changing anchorages and not sailing north. Andrew said maybe we should move too. The obvious move under normal circumstances would be to move further in, possibly at Fishermans Beach. But we were next to Fishermans beach and there were a lot of boats there. There would be no room and they would be getting similar conditions to us anyway. The other option was around to Leekes Beach or Svendsens. BUT as we were finishing off the hatch seals a boat we knew came past us. They had been anchored on the Leekes Beach/ Svendsens side of the island. The predicted swell was supposed to be northeast, no protection for most of Leekes. There has to be a reason they moved around I said. So I rang them. Firstly to apologise for our not waving back when they hailed us on the way past...we had our heads down with sealant and holding supa glue and I knew if I looked up I would muck it up (I needed both hands), and secondly to enquire why they



had moved. As expected, conditions to the north were apparently horrendous. We would put up with our 'uncomfortable' here.

Other jobs of the day included replacing the shot cord of the side shade, spinnaker blocks and the section under the helm seat, recreational reading, chasing stuff for last year's tax, other internet product issues to chase up, mainly my Keen Boots, and dealing with investment properties in Victoria and Tassie. It was way too windy, and too rocky at certain times to get off boat. We did a short yoga session at 1630. We had salmon with rice for dinner.



19<sup>th</sup> November 2021. It was a calm day. In the morning we had a look at patching up a couple more hatches. I fear it will be a case of sealed by a 100 patches before we can get them properly looked at. A supaglu fix for a suction cap on the shades over our helm station didn't work so we will need to try again (or look for alternatives).

Late morning we went to shore for another walk – just the same old circuit around the back. The spot of the day today this time however was a sunbird. Wildlife around the boat seemed more prolific today with the odd fish frenzy below and around the hulls. The rest of the day was spent recreational reading.

Sundowners was on ***Roma***.



20<sup>th</sup> November 2021. We moved to Pumpkin Passage at North Keppel Island this morning. The original idea was to stay at our GKI anchorage and tinnie over to Middle Island to snorkel at low tide. We haven't snorkeled along the shore of this island before and I was looking forward to it. However checking the weather and knowing we wanted to head to North West Island tomorrow, starting from Pumpkin Passage would give us a better chance of actually sailing, given the expected wind angle. So we moved across to the bottom of North Keppel Island. . I should still be able to get a snorkel in here; there is the odd patch of coral around here that was lovely last time we were here.

In the end we didn't go snorkeling – the water didn't seem all that clear.

So we did a few jobs instead; putting sealant around the hatch cover in the back cockpit, checking the genset (as it sounded a bit funny) and found that an expected fan belt problem was actually a matter of low coolant – we were grateful the genset hadn't blown up). A couple of gluing jobs were done – with mixed success, filled containers with moisture absorbant (I need to transition off these) and put my picture frame project stuff away. The rest of the time was filled in with the usual activities; dishes, reading etc. We watched the sun go down sitting on the back step eating dinner.





## The Keppels to North West Island

21<sup>st</sup> November 2021. I was up at 0430. I got Andrew up at 0500. We started lifting anchor at 0600 and motoring out of Pumpkin Passage, North Keppel Island at 0610. We raised the main sail outside the passage and motors were off at 0635.

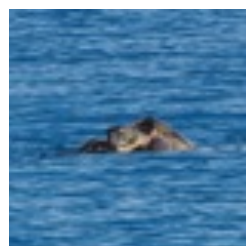
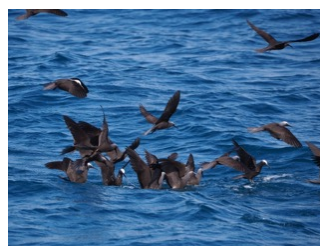
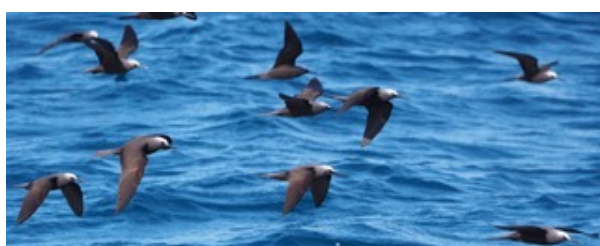
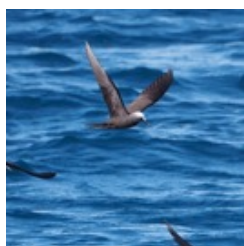
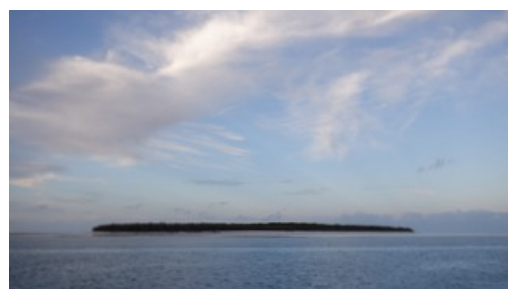
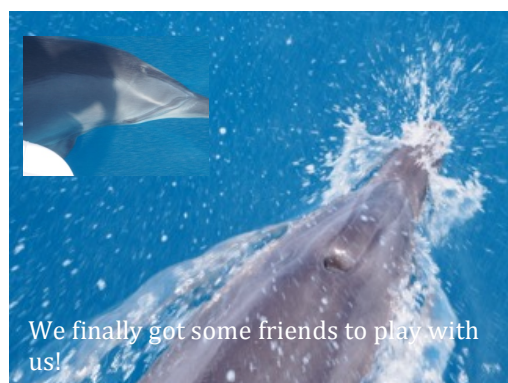
The wind speed (True) was generally around 10 knots or below

We put the engine on again around 0945 because the boat SOG was down to around 3 knots or slightly under. We had the opportunity to turn the engine off again about half an hour later but they didn't stay off long. Whilst the wind had picked up enough to give us around 4 knots SOG, we were in the middle of a shipping lane with a ship barrelling down on us (relatively speaking), so we turned the engine on again for another 30 minutes until we got out of the lane and therefore out of the way. There was another bout of pleasant sailing, although not as consistently fast as when we had first started, and then we lost the wind, 2knots True! We motored in to toward North West Island dropping the sails before we headed to the top anchorage

and picked up the only mooring we spotted. Engines were off at 1455. I had read there were two public moorings at this island but we didn't see the second one. The location of the mooring wasn't ideal, on the wind and swell side of the island and the constant bub boom, bub boom of the mooring hitting the hull had us in a pretty short time dropping the mooring and heading around to a more sheltered spot. By the time the anchor ball was up we had 65 meters of chain out in 7m of depth. The reef was not that far away- almost within swimmable distance of the back of the boat. The reef was fortunately however quite deep, even at low tide, which occurred soon after we put the anchor down, and having lost an young Ranger to a shark attack last year, I wasn't going snorkeling here anyway on this trip. A decision confirmed shortly after when Andrew spotted a shark below us!

I would have liked to have gone for a walk but the tide wasn't going to be high enough to get the tinnie over the reef until after dark so we contented ourselves with watching turtle porn (they were popping up an mating all around us) and viewing the odd fish swim past. At dusk hundreds, perhaps thousands, of shearwaters flew past and once it had turned pitch black the elongated click of bird calls over the water (possibly noddy calls) were interrupted sporadically by mournful ghosts (shearwaters).

From boat we had noticed lots of herons hunting on the reef. The camping ground on the island was also occupied. We had noticed lots of people and five beached boats on shore as we were approaching.



## North West Island to Heron!

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021. We got up at around 0530. It was light. It was cloudy. There was an east wind. Fortunately the 90 pc chance of rain, possible thunderstorms, possibly severe had not come in yet. The tide was still out and we could see three turtles on the beach close to the shore, making their way back toward the sea; they just had to wait for the tide or it was going to be a painful and bumpy trip.

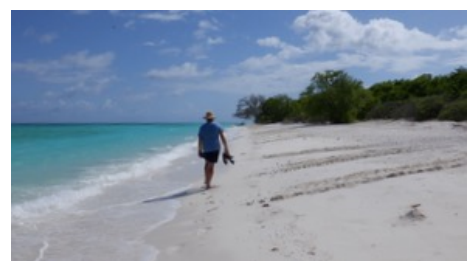
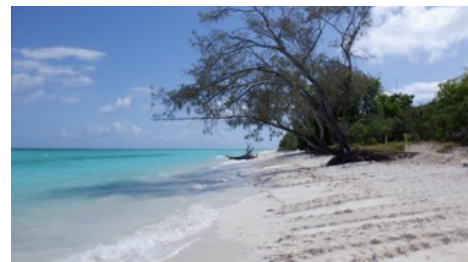
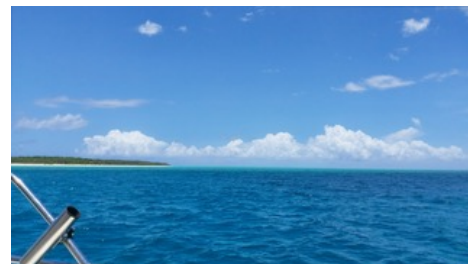
We were on shore at 0815 and even then it was too late not to get our feet wet if we wanted to walk around the island. Just to the north of us was a conglomeration of fallen dead trees down to the waterline. I knew we wouldn't pass them at high tide at 1000 so we started walking clockwise to get past them first. As it was we got wet to our knees before turning briefly inland because I decided I drew the line at swimming. On this small inland detour we avoided shearwater holes, many dead noddies and a turtle hemmed in on three sides by very large logs. We couldn't help her. She is too heavy to move anywhere with just two of us and any interference would have given her more stress than she was already under. The tide line was just the other side of the lowest log, lets just hope that there was enough tide still to come for her to manoeuvre herself out.

We visited the 1892 gravesite of 3 year old Ella, and saw the compressor and fuel locations, and toilet for campers. Blue barrels sat on the beach and all boats we had seen beached yesterday were gone, indeed we had seen a couple leave as we started our walk. The island wasn't abandoned however, with solar power cells and clothes drying on a clothes line at the top of the dunes - we knew someone at least would be back.

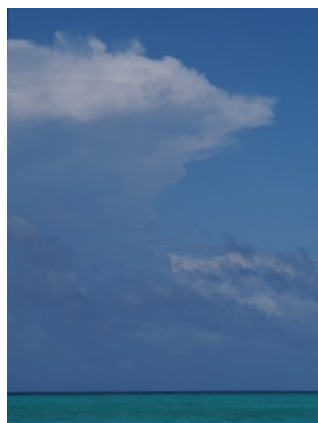
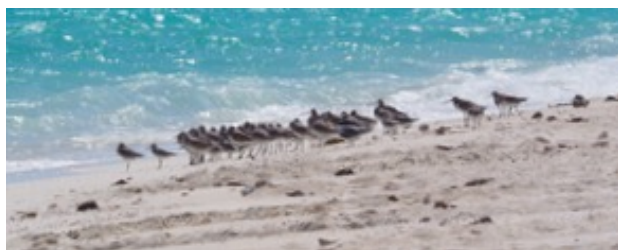
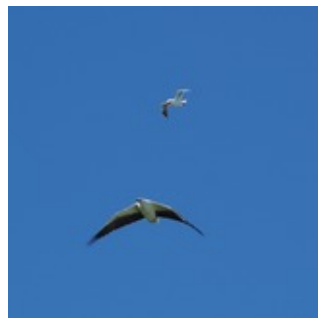
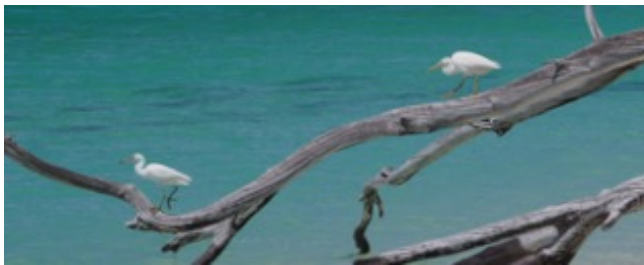
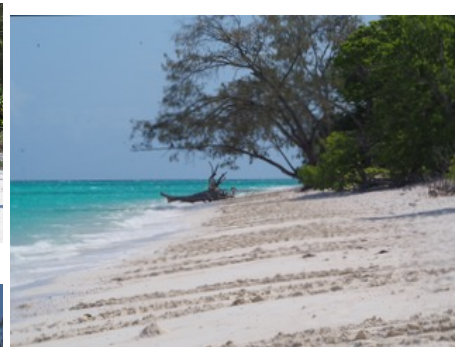
The last time we walked around North West Island it was with another boat late afternoon in an anti clockwise direction. This time because of the fallen trees near the point we did the reverse. The beach was occupied by noddies, (alive, dead and dying), silver gulls, pied oystercatchers, terns, and a bunch of shorebirds we couldn't easily identify (who were reluctant to move prob because they were tired from flying several thousand kilometres) but who instead of flying off and landing behind us where they wouldn't be disturbed, landed in front of us for an almost perpetual dance. They worked it out eventually.

A sea eagle flew above along the north beach - being chased by smaller birds.

In the water we saw turtles, rays, normal and manta-like (eagle?) as









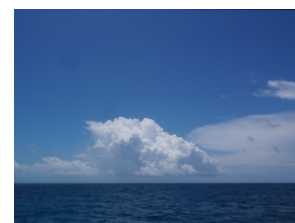
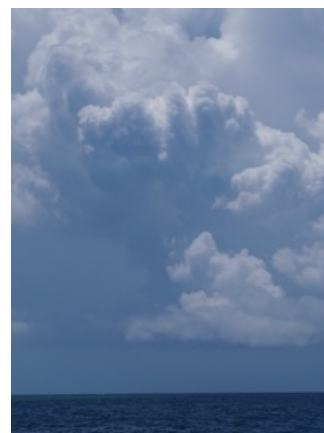
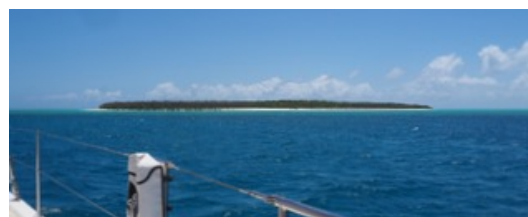
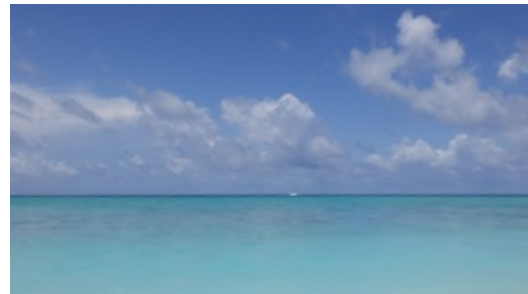
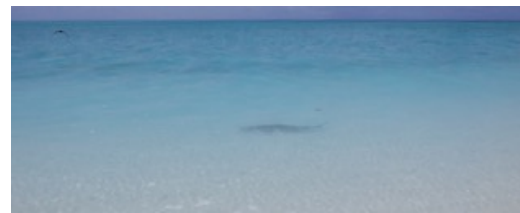
well as several shovelnose rays close to shore. A black tipped reef shark was the last animal I spotted, stalking along the waters -edge at high tide.

We heard two bouts of thunder between 0950 and 1000 and we could see the anvil of a system to our south -west. We could also see a small cloud that seemed to be dropping precipitation out the south east of the island.

By a crazy bit of luck we managed to pick up internet reception when we got back to boat and the rain radar showed a kaleidoscope of colour to our south and south west. There seemed to be a couple of small patches over and near Heron Island but most of the large amount of colour was on the mainland. It looked like Gladstone had just copped a storm. The systems also seemed to be developing and heading south along the mainland coast. Our hope was they would remain that way, and be gone by the time we got to Heron Island

### **One hell of a storm!**

We were almost there! We were only 2.5 nautical miles off Heron Island when the line of grey along the coast seemed to appear a bit more ominous. What really got me thinking was the side view, with subtle layers and a photo taken with the good camera where the optics highlight the differences even more. Hang on I thought. If I can see the length of that cloud coming, it is likely to be the front, and if it is the front then it is probably coming our way. Fortunately we still had a skerrick of internet reception and we discovered to our horror that instead of tracking down the coast as it had been two hours ago, the mass of blue, yellows, greens and reds had changed direction and was now tracking in a north east direction. Straight for us! The genoa was furled in (we had sailed all the way down on genoa only getting a respectable 6 to 8 knots) computers, phones, tablet and cameras went in the oven, and we made the decision not to try and pickup the mooring buoy or anchor at Heron Island in the oncoming storm. Andrew's first idea had been to turn into it, using Wistari Reef as some protection, and whilst in theory this was a good idea the wind was that ferocious when it hit us a few minutes later, (we were getting over 45 knots), that any mitigation of wave height the reef may have given was minor. Steering into 2.5 to 3 meters of wind generated

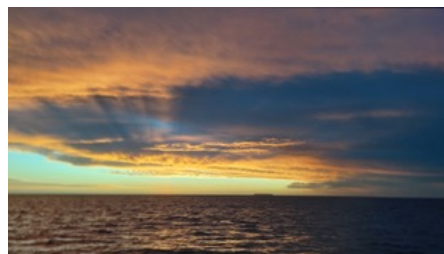
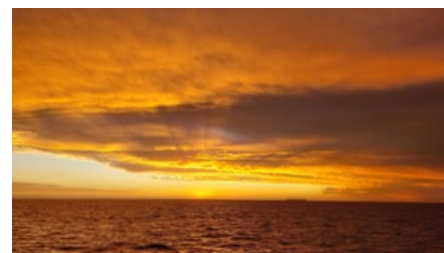
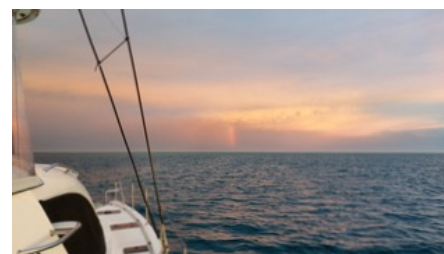
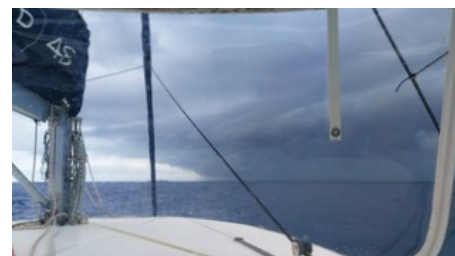


waves had its own issues. So we turned around and let the wind push us away from the mainland, and at times we were travelling at over 8 knots (under neutral engines). We made some small adjustments to make sure we didn't hit Wreck Island, Wilson island and Broomfield Reef. For a short time we hovered in the lee of Wreck Reef but it was getting close to 1600. If we still wanted to visit Heron tomorrow we were too far out to be useful, none of the anchorages listed here in the Curtis Coast Cruising Guide would have given us adequate protection (even the emergency anchorage on Wreck Reef was for 10 to 15 knots only. It was still blowing 25 to 30! )

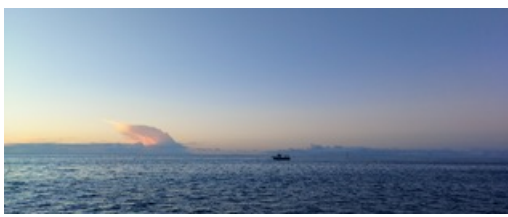
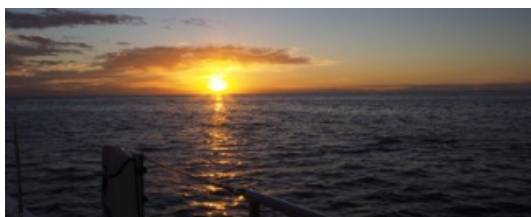
According to Navionics there are two mooring boys at the northern edge of Heron Reef. Of course you have to be wary as they are client plotted and our Navionics hasn't been updated recently. We think one was the correction of the other because when we finally got to the anchorage there was only one mooring boy. And it was occupied. The wind fortunately had died down making the motor trip south change from a bone shuddering jar to an uncomfortable forward rock, and we entered the anchorage with about ten knots blowing. A couple of issues arose. The wind had swung east and the normal forecast was for north east overnight, thankfully light to 10 to 15 but this would still put us on a lee reef (we didn't have time to reach the boy near the island before it got dark) and the windlass had issues with its o-ring and free-fell without control for some time. Just what we needed! I was too busy with the anchor to take photographs but there were three rainbows to the north as the anchor chain went down. I have never seen more than two.

As far as storms go today's encounter was the worst conditions we had been out in. I took no photos of the several hours between recognition of the impending encounter and the end, I was too busy concentrating on our direction, the three meter waves pushing us along from behind, and the thunder and lightening, most of which was mercifully at a distance; one bout of which was however almost on top of us giving us a very big fright and the poor noddy who had taken refuge on the front deck (because funnily enough he had decided flying against 40 plus knot winds was not for him) an even bigger fright – he flew off after that close encounter.

For a while it probably didn't matter to us where the storm was (we weren't going to be able to out run it) but in the end as we turned back toward an anchoring spot we put our radar on to get an idea of the conditions (or at least the thickness of the rain band) that we were heading into.







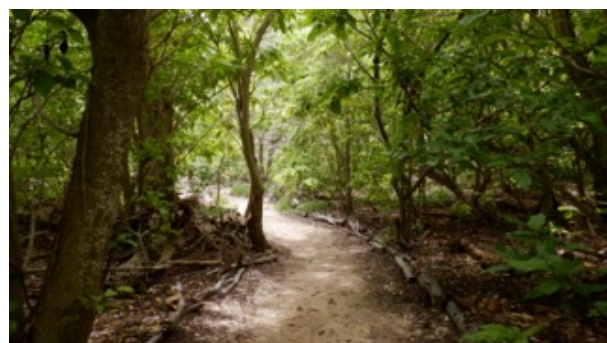
### A visit to shore.

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021. I got up at dawn, to notice a rather large cumulonimbus cloud to the south east on the mainland. The fishing boat was still on the mooring but had left by 0530. They didn't go far and Andrew perhaps surmised they were collecting reef fish or coral for the aquarium market.

We motored the six or so nautical miles west along the top of Heron Reef tucking around into the channel between that and Wistari Reef. We hoped the mooring was available. It was. The engines were off at 0730 and we settled in for a casual morning before heading ashore.

Generally Heron Island is a place to snorkel for the yachty visitor, and not to go to shore as the occupants of the island are a private resort (we didn't interact with anyone last time we were here, keeping to the non resort side beach) and the research station run by Queensland University. Last time we went snorkelling. This time however we were checking out the research station by invitation from one of the workers. Thanks S! After a chat, and a cuppa we made our way through the middle of the island to the beach, almost kicking the birdlife out of the way. There was of course the nesting noddies, the reef herons for which the island is named (and one couple of resort visitors had a mismatched pair at the front of their room), rails (with cute youngsters that were just a smaller versions of the adult), and of which apparently have been fluff balls just a week or so ago. The ground was dotted with shearwater holes. I saw the odd silver gull but I was very surprised approaching the shore through a more grassy dominated landscape (where I noticed one noddy being decidedly selective about which bit of grass he was going to use for nesting material) that I didn't see any terns. Usually this terrain is where the terns nest. I did see a few terns as I got to the beach, in close proximity to people so I wonder if they were waiting for any tit bits.

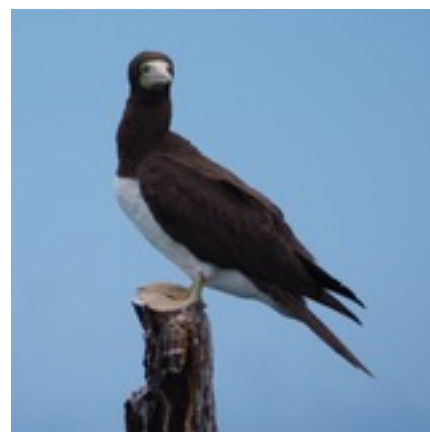
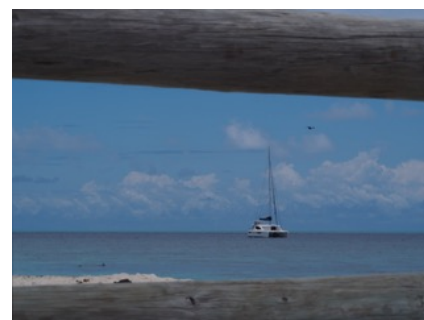
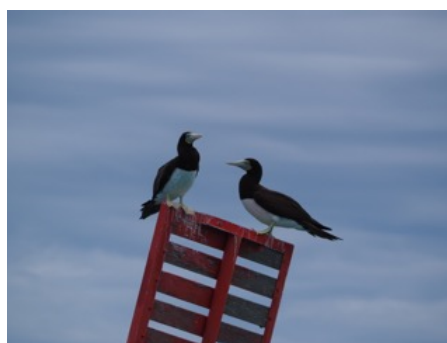
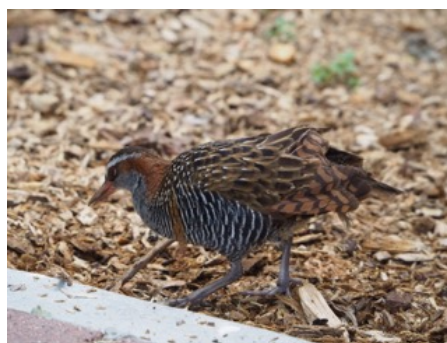
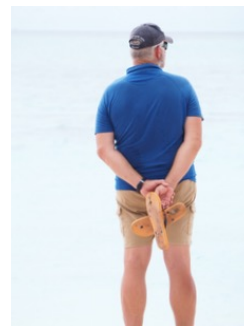
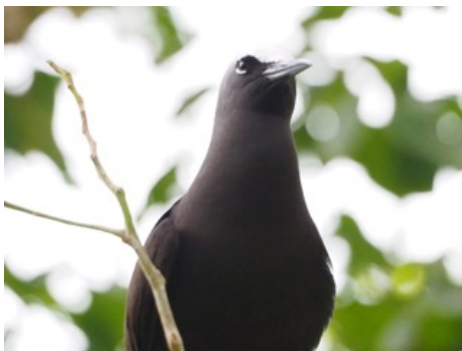
When we hit the beach we turned left toward the resort side of the island but we didn't really mean to interact. Our aim was to follow the beach back to the harbour where we had left the tinnie. But it didn't go that far and





we had to cut through some accommodation past the resort info centre, restaurant and shop, so we apologise for any unintentional trespassing.

Lunch was what we would normally have for dinner because we had been invited back to the island for the evening meal. We didn't really have the food stocks to make a dish to share so we figured if we had a substantial meal for lunch we would just take a heap of nibblies to shore. I also made a chocolate cake to share around. As it was we didn't get to shore for dinner, which was a pity because it would have been great to perhaps get a chance to chat to some of the researchers and university staff—particularly at this time of year. However, checking the rain radar showed several storm systems out to sea and heading in a southwest direction straight for the Island, the exact opposite of yesterday's tempest. It wasn't rain we were worried about, it was the state of the sea. In a storm if Sengo is rocking in the weather, because of the shape of our back steps (we don't have sugar scoops) it can be dangerous to get back on board. We decided we would make a call at 1745 as to whether we would head to shore in the evening but the decision was made earlier. As it was by 2015 no rain had come but the decision had been made by 1715! Despite Andrew's solution, the fix to our dropping tinnie didn't work and the tender dropped again, breaking off the replacement fin we'd



bought for the last time it broke when it fell. A new cam cleat may be in order I think.

Afternoon visitors were marine parks, who wanted to know if we knew all the regulations on the reef (and whom I told their app was quite old fashioned, a problem to move and should have the moorings on it). We were their second visit. The first went to a power boat that had come in and anchored but left to head further south around 1400, and S who brought his boat out to spend some more time with us. Discussion over tomorrow departure time ensued early evening. I just have to get Andrew up early.

Reception is practically non-existent at Heron Island – the phone doesn't work and for the weather and email (very slow) we had our Telstra dongle up the flag halyard.

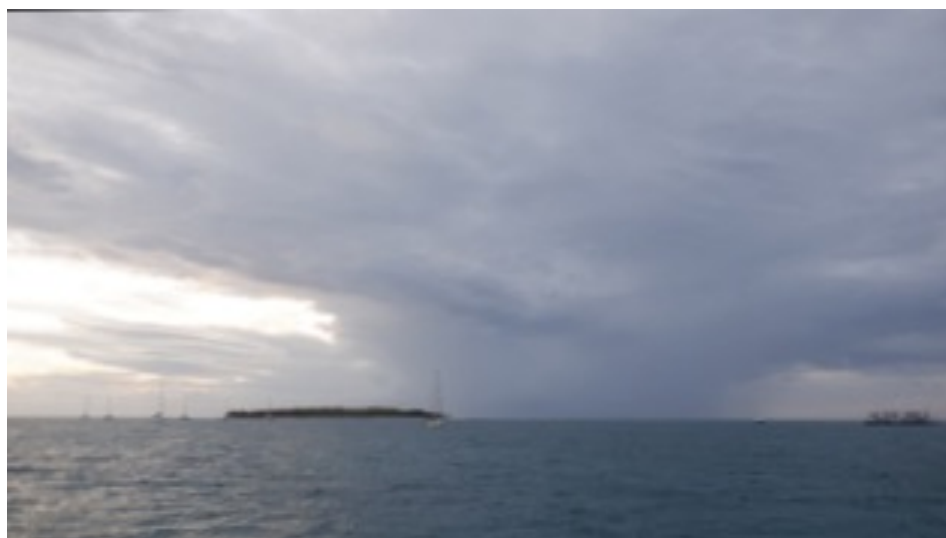






## Lady Musgrave Island

24<sup>th</sup> November 2021. I wanted to leave at 0500. Andrew tried to compromise at 0600. In the end our lunch was still in the oven at 0600 (I was rescuing the bruised pair which would have gained all its blemishes from the bouncing around in the storm) and we ended up dropping the mooring at 0620. The sail was up at 0630, the genoa out and engines off at 0635. The wind angle meant it was a sail into the wind but as we came out of the channel between Heron Reef and Wistari Reef at an angle to avoid Lamont reef we were doing 7.9 knots SOG. I had calculated the trip (as I normally do) on 5 knots to reach Lady Musgrave at high tide 1100. With the good start I thought we may just beat that.



There were minimal clouds in the sky, the sea state was practically flat, and a group of noddies had to get out of the way as we sailed through their meeting spot on the ocean's surface.

The anchor was down inside the Lagoon at around 1230. We had used a course outside the marine park zones to troll. We caught no fish but we nearly caught a brown boobie. Twice. Having turned around to find one of the lumbering birds flying at a



constant distance behind us checking out the lure we had to reel it in very fast to ensure we got it back on boat before the bird went for it. Having shoed the bird away where it joined its mates we tried again. We don't know whether it was the same bird or another one but we turned around shortly afterwards and had



to repeat the exercise. Having shoed the second booby away, Andrew stated if we had to save the lure from a third bird he was giving up for the day. We got no third bird. We got no fish either.

On approach to Lady Musgrave there seemed to be three rain systems of note in our vision. One in front of us near, but probably behind, the island, one obliquely to the southeast, and one to out east where I commented I was likely to get wet putting down the anchor. Andrew didn't think this system was all that big and suggested tacking behind it, which we duly did. We got a short shower but the system was beyond us a few minutes later. We didn't want to waste the height of the high tide so we tacked back again and then drooped the sails in the lee of Fairfax Island motoring the last section of thirty minutes.

This was the least anxious entry to Lady Musgrave lagoon that I've had and Andrew had a track to follow. There were a few boats here already so we didn't have the option of considering a mooring. We put the anchor down in around 7 meters

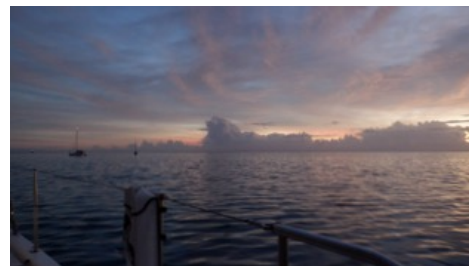
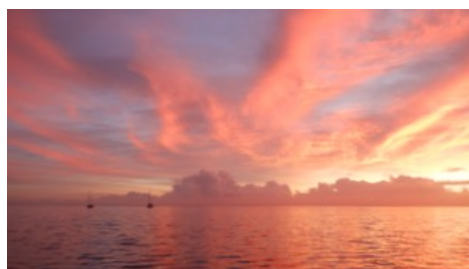
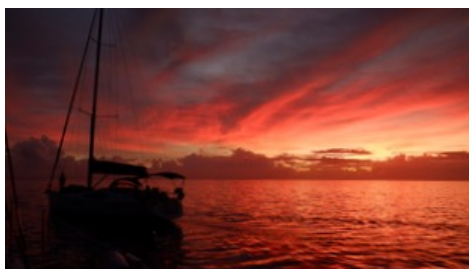
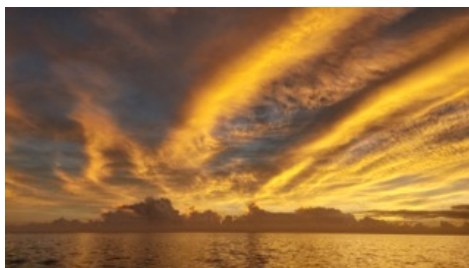
We stayed on boat for the rest of the afternoon. Low tide wasn't until 1748, too late to go snorkelling, and we still had some potential showers coming our way. Fortunately we only got a couple of drops.

25<sup>th</sup> November 2021. I woke up at 0430. The sun wasn't quite up but was on its way. And two boats left in short succession. By 0600 several more had left although I was distracted and missed their departure.

The sky was overcast. The forecast was for 50 to 60 pc chance of rain but I hoisted the dongle to get a signal and managed to get the bom rain radar. There was no obvious rain affecting this area although there was a long line of rain travelling north east to south west to the south of Lady Elliot Island.

Andrew got up around 0615

The day was mostly overcast so not ideal for snorkelling so we decided on a walk instead. High tide was at 1200. Andrew originally suggested we start the walk at 1100 but we ended up with our first



steps at 1040. Even then the water was high enough that we had to, if we didn't want our legs completely drenched, venture above the high tide mark. We did use a track that others had used but it didn't mean the locals were happy, a juvenile tern have a right old grump when we passed within a few feet. I do note he was no longer in the nest but on a stump at the top of the beach.

Black tip reef sharks were spotted near the terrace of conglomerate where we had seen them before, a couple of turtles noted, but not as many as we expected. The north west side of the island was a bit of a surf beach, frothing and active.

The beach of course was littered with dead and dying birds. We expected the deceased noddies but the

sooty oystercatcher was a surprise. He was 'sitting ' on the sand next to a rock ledge, almost, as Andrew suggested, as if he had died peacefully in his sleep.

We both took our shoes off on the way around, the foot support needed for the rocky part of the traverse but we were hoping for a wander along the sand. (My Tevas are giving me blisters). However there was very little clear sand at this point, the water too high to avoid much of the coral and we came back to boat with slightly grumpy feet. It wasn't the most enjoyable stroll around Lady Musgrave but at least we got to stretch our legs for 40 minutes.

Back at boat Andrew removed a persistent rod holder from the tinnie (with a hammer) and end to ended the rope that holds the back of the tinnie on the davits. When it failed a couple of days ago and we broke the newly replaced expensive fin for the tinnies engine, we both noted that there was a fray in the line that corresponded to where it should be gripping in the cam cleat. Neither of us had noted it before.

In the afternoon there was quite a big band of rain that just seemed to miss us as it headed south. We got a few drops at around 1715 and then around 1900. Later in the evening it wasn't raining but you couldn't see the stars.

Bird list

Noddies

Terms

Ruddy turnstones

Some sort of sand piper?

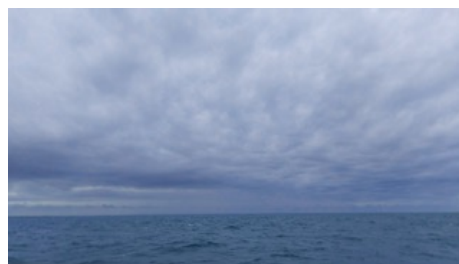
Silver gulls

Boobies over the water

Reef egrets, mainly white morph, one grey

The afternoon was spent educational reading, and doing a bit of tidy up





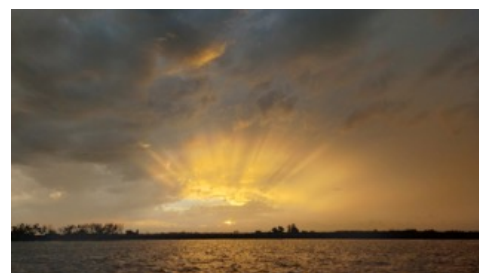
## To Burnett Heads

26<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The first real rain shower I heard at around 0300. I got up around 0500 to a uniform grey, I would see no sunrise this morning. I was about to contemplate raising the dogle back up the flag halyard but then it started raining. Solid and steady. The wind turned a bit to the northwest and I read 24 knots on the gauges. Andrew didn't want to get up until 0600 anyway and he didn't want to leave when he couldn't see clearly (there were boats that left yesterday who left at 0430 to 0500 with a rising sun and no rain). At 0600 Andrew was still in bed. We didn't really want to leave in this. Of course, from a personal physical comfort point of view it wouldn't really worry him, he is not the one who is going to get wet picking up the anchor! And if we run with genoa only, he won't have to get wet prepping the main sail.

The dive boat that had turned up yesterday evening left at 0600 and I watched them bounce around in the swell as they departed the channel – so we knew what conditions to expect outside the lagoon

We lifted the anchor around 0700. In the rain. It was close to low tide so it was prudent, despite a track, for me to stand on the top deck....in the rain. We were out the entrance and had the genoa out at 0725. The wind speed had dropped from 24s earlier now to around 12s. Ideally if we were going to raise the mainsail we would have done it inside the lagoon, although I didn't relish doing that at low tide. The decision with the stronger winds was perhaps not to raise the mainsail at all. But now the wind had dropped would it be enough from behind to get us down to the Burnett River before dark. Now we were out of the lagoon did we need to get to the shelter of the island and raise the main?

We however persisted with what we had. It got us to our destination in the light, just. But because of the combination of the lower wind strength and wave and swell direction, I spent three hours of the sail trying to sleep off sea sickness. I did manage in the middle of this to make a batch of cookies and lunch, but I didn't feel well. Companions along the trip included quite a few sea birds; noddies, shearwaters and the odd brown



booby. We had two dolphins say hello but they didn't stay.

The genoa was furled in and the engines put on around 1735 in the Burnett River just down stream of the marina. The river looked very dirty but despite a minor flood watch from the overflow of Paradise Dam a week ago and the dolloping of rain Bundaberg had had in the previous two days there seemed to be no detritus along its banks. There was perhaps a bit of extra erosion opposite our normal anchorage upstream of the sugar sheds.

Despite the forecast and the rain radar to either side of us, it stopped raining just after the genoa went out. For the last hour or so of trip we had been watching a fresh lot of rain



parallel us down the coast. I am going to get wet putting the anchor down, I thought. It started raining as we turned into the shipping channel. It was still drizzly as I undid the anchor chocks, but it was practically dry when I engaged with the anchor; a challenge because the wind was pushing the boat one way and the fast flowing river was pushing the boat the other way. Putting an accurate way point on the plotter was impossible. We had to keep an eye on it before we went to bed to ensure we weren't moving from the anchorage drop. The Burnett River dance was in full swing.

Shortly after the anchor was down it rained again

Dinner was carrot and lentil soup. The fridge is practicably bare.

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## To Fraser Island

27<sup>th</sup> November 2021. We were off boat at just before 0700 heading to the Burnett Heads Boat ramp. The original idea for today had been to stick around and sit out the southerly here and Andrew could get his lunch in, seeing as though we didn't get a pub meal for dinner last night.

But the winds were still northerly albeit very light and with the southerly predicted to come across at 0100 on Sunday perhaps we could do a spinnaker run south and sit out the southerly near Fraser Island. A much more scenic location, and easier to get off boat if there was opportunity to do so.

It was around 0720 once we had tied the tinnie up to the floating dock at the boat harbour and we headed for town. It was hot and it was extremely muggy and I didn't notice much on the short walk. We did notice the bee eaters and a couple of cockatiels, we cant remember the last time we saw cockatiels, and Andrew noticed the mob of roos, but my attention was mainly on not getting bitten by mosquitos. I haven't been annoyed or bitten by so many mosquitoes for quite some time. They were big, black and all over my purple trolley, as well as my exposed skin.

The first task was to pick up a parcel we had sent to the post office. Fortunately this post office is open at 0700 on a Saturday. The next task was a basic shop at the iga; mainly fruit and

vegies to cover us to get to at least Tin Can Bay, and hopefully the Gold Coast. I love the fact this iga has a service to either pick us up or drop us off. We always walk to the shops. Sometimes we request a lift back if we have two trolleys full or a big load of meat. We did have a couple of fridge items and a couple of bits of meat, but we had also grabbed a packet of frozen peas to help keep the items cool. However we were actually offered a lift back, and with the oppressive humidity we gratefully took it.

We were back on boat at 0830. At 0930 we started picking up the anchor, at 1015 we were outside the Heads but there was practically no wind. Were we going to get enough even for the spinnaker? In the end we motored a bit further to head to the west and fortunately the wind strength picked up a bit. At 1115 the spinnaker was up.

We got four hours sailing with the spinnaker up, covering about half the distance we needed to go. We put the auto on wind so we may have covered a bit more 'ground' than distance in the process but in general we were heading to where we wanted to go, the anchorage we had used on the way north near Koongul Point.

It was possibly fortunate that the forecast was slightly inaccurate with north westerly instead of north easterly winds, although we did end up with the spinnaker at 75degrees. In the end we pulled it down at 1500, the wind was clocking close to east and we were therefore heading south west toward the top of the

sandy fan delta, of which we did not want to go through today. The wind had temporarily dropped off to close to nothing but after we packed all the spinnaker paraphernalia away it picked up again, 40 degrees off the nose and with enough strength to put the genoa out to give us a boost. So for a short while we had one engine and the genoa on heading directly to our anchorage in a south east direction. Neither bom.gov.au nor windy.com had the south east coming in to day but a reading of the weather over the radio mentioned south east in the afternoon. MetEye was still on a 0654 prediction and didn't indicate that wind change at all however eventually the wind did clock south east and we were motoring directly into it, the genoa having been furled back when the wind angle became too sharp.

I had mentioned to Andrew that perhaps I'd like a long walk along the beach tomorrow morning but as we approached the anchorage we particularly noticed the rolling swell from the north. I remember this now, this is why we didn't get off last time we were here. There is a reason yachts anchor just to the south west of us behind the sand bar! But it was too late to head down there now. I wanted to anchor in the light. We just made it, the anchor down and engines off at 1830, 8 minutes after official sunset.

The sky had been overcast most of the day. The radar had rain on the outer edge of Fraser Island and the edge of the mainland, we only got one small rain event late in the afternoon, and it didn't last long. I predicted there might be clear skies after the rain and indeed some of the sky allowed us to gaze at the stars for a while, and watch the satellites go across the sky, but we were eventually sent in by biting bugs, although no mangroves obvious in area. Lightening lit up the sky in the distance

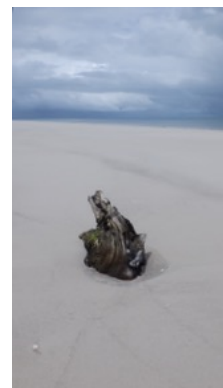
Wildlife spotted during our trip included shearwaters, terns and noddies (did we see boobies). No dolphins joined us for our journey across but we saw a couple in the fading light feeding along the beach at anchorage around 1900, just before it got completely dark.

28<sup>th</sup> November 2021. There were no stars visible tonight. Cloud has been a persistent almost 100 pc coverage all day although we had only got the slightest of drops of rain on the odd occasion.

The original idea for today had been to move down to behind the sand bank where the other two cats were, go for a nice beach walk, and then move around to Kingfisher Bay and go out for lunch.

However by the time we got to the area behind the sandbank (the other two cats had gone) it was low tide and the wind had picked up to a level I was not necessarily completely comfortable to get off boat. The biggest risk factor, the northerly swell, had been eliminated but the current swell was from the south west, wrapping around Moon Point. It was only small but with a light drizzle and threatening clouds the idea of a walk suddenly became less of a priority. The wind forecast for tomorrow was lighter (today's forecast around lunchtime at kingfisher was 15 to 20 so probably too uncomfortable to get off anyway) so we decided to delay the whole idea for 24 hours.

Instead we read a lot, and managed one small yoga session mid afternoon - and that had to be modified because that happened to coincide with wind against tide at high tide and the boat was rocking a bit.



### Walking in the rain.

29<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Walking in the rain wasn't the aim of this morning's walk but the later we left it the more rain seemed to be coming. I had told Andrew I wanted an early walk, that should mean less wind. In today's case it meant less rain. But early to me was 0700. He only got up at 0700 and it was 0850 by the time we were on the beach and heading west.

We had hesitated a bit for a couple of approaching showers but in the end it is only water. Andrew doesn't like starting a walking the rain and fortunately it wasn't raining when we started. However for the final ten minutes or so, it was pouring and we were soaked by the time we got back to the tinnie. We couldn't get the boat immediately back in the water however, it was full of water and had to be bailed out!

We were back on Sengo around 1020.

As we were casually relaxing about an hour later I asked Andrew what time he wanted lunch. The idea was to get lunch out at The Sand Bar at Kingfisher resort, about 16 nm away, and therefore, given the wind angle, a three hour motor. At this rate we wouldn't get to the anchorage until 1430.

In the end it was around 1500 when the anchor was put down. And it was drizzly. According to the rain radar it looked like it was going to be drizzly for some time. Maybe we will put lunch on shore off again, and try again tomorrow.

The rain didn't stop for the rest of the afternoon. We read a lot, I rinsed some clothes in fresh water collected from the roof (these were already soaking clothes we had been wearing this morning) and did a bit of tidy up.

