

# Aboard Sengo



## From Queensland to New South Wales

**FILLING IN TIME ON  
THE HARD**

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**SOUTH TO, AND  
ENJOYING, YAMBA**

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**PORT MACQUARIE  
AND SURROUNDS**

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At the start of November 2024 we were still in the slip yard - waiting for our annual maintenance, *and* insurance work to be completed. At the end of November we were, thankfully, back on the water, and somewhat further south than the Gold Coast. In fact we were in New South Wales' waters, heading, ironically, back to the same place we had been when we got the damage that related to our insurance claim. Having professionals do most of the work whilst the boat was on the slip meant we could go exploring... and walking... both to old 'haunts' and places anew. Back on the water we only had one priority before heading back out the Seaway - and that was catching up with a particular boat - the crew of which we haven't seen (in its entirety) for a couple of years!

Once out of Queensland waters we enjoyed revisiting Yamba; the entrance and exit to the Clarence River well within tolerance levels, and trying somewhere new; Port Macquarie was on our exploration list for our southward bound journey in 2023 - except that when we were passing it last year we were in the middle of a thunder and lightening storm, had lost one engine, the wind was blowing over 30 knots and we couldn't see a thing.... not the time to enter over an unfamiliar bar! This year the conditions were close enough to perfect and a week spent exploring Port Macquarie township and the surrounding countryside, the latter with the help of a hire car, was much enjoyed.



# On the hard at The Boat Works

## Karawatha Forest Park

1st November 2024. Leaving the contractors to the boat, we headed back to Karawatha Forest Park today - just west of Logan. Of course I didn't take my good camera. And of course I missed out on a great photo; the pied currawong with his large, leggy, dinner wouldn't have cared less if he was the subject of my attention. Instead I just had to admire him. This time leaving the camera behind wasn't a conscious decision, I just realised when I got to the car park at the Karawatha Forest Park Discovery Centre that not only had I taken the camera out of the pack when I got back to boat last time, I had taken the binoculars out as well. As a result the only birds identified where the obvious ones: a few noisy miners, a few cravens, a couple of magpies and pied currawongs. Oh, and one friar bird.

We had forgotten to make yoghurt overnight which left me a little out of sorts for breakfast. I mucked up a quinoa porridge with apple but it wasn't enough to keep us full, so, on the way to our walk, we pulled into a 7/11 service station to grab a protein bar. Before we got out of the car we could see an argument going on. The woman outside was yelling vehemently at the woman inside - through the open doors. It was a very aggressive exchange (at least it looked like it from the woman on the outside), and the woman on the outside yelled 'you racist...'. I don't remember the last word, it could have been 'bitch', I was just so shocked at the aggressiveness. The irony. The outside woman had white skin. The inside woman (staff member) had darker skin. I felt like giving the inside woman a hug (girl really, my estimate - early to mid 20s), but she was in the middle of reporting the incident on the phone (the aggressive woman had gone back inside and knocked over a display of drink cans). It was terribly confronting. The staff member, although young, handled it extremely well....she was back serving customers when we left.

Once in the Park, we followed somebody's Alltrails stroll - for want of not having to navigate unfamiliar trails and make up our own route. It would however have been easy to just wander - there are plenty of intersecting, well-labelled, tracks here... and a clear map is available outside the Discovery Centre. We didn't actually go inside the 'self-guided' Discovery Centre....our aim was a walk; it was a hot day and, as it was, we were starting a little later than originally planned. We also wanted to get to Manly to pick up mail and be back before this afternoon's predicted 'grump'.

Not many people were about; just a few walkers, and one cyclist sleeping on a picnic table under a shaded shelter. Near the Discovery Centre there is a large picnic ground with BBQs and toilets (the other end of the park, where we were a few days ago, has picnic tables only).

We had just got back to boat a little before 1500 when we heard our first bout of thunder. By 1505 the thunder and lightening were close. I managed a load of dishes in the yard facilities and secured loose items in the tinnie. At this stage there was no rain to speak of, just frequent flashes of lightening across the sky. In the end we didn't get wet.



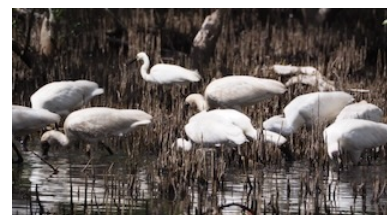
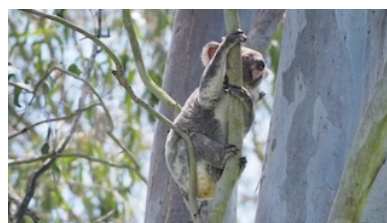
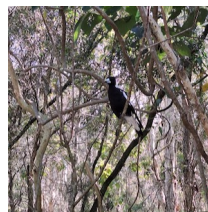
## Coombabah: Kangaroos and Koalas

2nd November 2024. The first bird heard this morning was from the yard..it was a koel. Cattle egrets were in a paddock on our way out toward Coomera, and sulphur-crested cockatoos, and 'paratoids', were flying overhead as we travelled along Oxley Drive.

We had left the boat at 0830. The aim was a wander at Coombabah Lake Conservation Park, the desired track the Koala Track via the Kangaroo Trail. We went one better and tackled the Jabiru Circuit on the end as well.

We haven't walked Coombabah' for several years. And today we think we walked around 9 km. Wildlife seen; kangaroos, koalas, and one very large monitor. A large flock of royal spoonbills was also admired, along with egrets, wood ducks, white ibis, magpies, cravens, and noisy miners. We were also shown one brown goshawk nest (or sparrow-hawk, the guide wasn't quite sure). Smaller wildlife included mosquitoes and butterflies (the latter of two main types; black and white, and, orange and brown).

We had a brief rest at boat before heading to Bunnings around 1600 to get a new toilet seat. Technically the old one was fine, it is just that the screws were rusted and couldn't be separated from the base. Someone with patience and skill and some 'MacGyver' skills may have been able to fashion a fix (all we really wanted to do was give it a new paint) but we didn't have the patience and opted for a cheap replacement instead.(and I note that a yard contractor ended up knocking the seat off the steps and breaking it anyway!)



## Back to Binna Burra: Upper Ballunju Falls Track...

3rd November 2024. Birds heard (only) today: catbird, eastern whipbirds (with and without mates), noisy pittas, and lots of small twittering avians, too small or too far away in the vegetation to be noted. Birds seen and/or heard: golden whistler, brush turkey, yellow robin, lyrebird (assume Alberts?)...and the fly-by by a king parrot across the road as we were driving back down the mountain to civilisation.

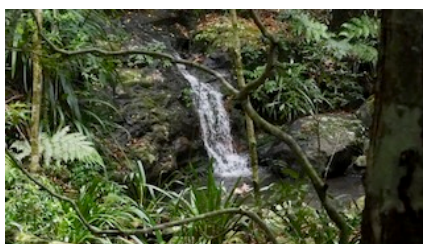
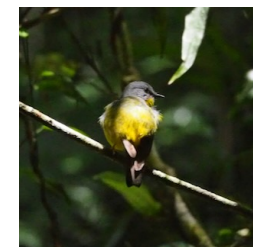
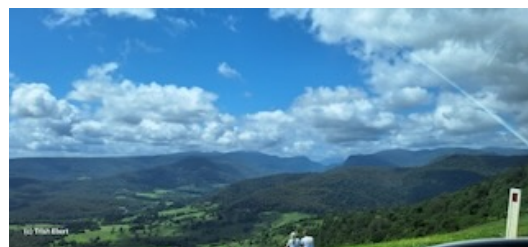
Animals: a couple of leeches and several ticks; two of the latter which Andrew brought home with him!

The option for today's walk was all dependant on Andrews knee. How did it feel after yesterday's 9 km (ish) walk...noting that yesterday's track was flat and Andrew wasn't carrying anything? Today, given the heat, I had a slightly more sheltered option in mind. I was also resting my back, opting for the day-pack with just today's necessities in it.

I had worked out that the Upper Ballunju Falls Track would require a descent, but satellite photos indicated the track consisted of switchbacks rather than steps. Overall the 11.8km was a fairly easy walk. We missed two short side-trips which would have added a few hundred meters to the total...maybe next time.

We started the track (at the normal Binna Burra Trailhead) at 1000. We were back at the car at 1445, having stopped for a few minutes and a nibble at Booboora Falls (hard boiled eggs - the main protein component of our lunch), and then rested at the end of the track, sitting on the rock platform between a waterfall and a valley view.

The evening job was three loads of washing.





4th November 2024. It was hot and our movement was minimal. The polisher started today, working around his comfort of the heat. We escaped the heat for a short while, heading to Bunnings (some coolness in the large shed), and then to Westfield Coomera (where there was better air-conditioning). I tried to pay a contractor's bill in the afternoon and the bank baulked! Most of the afternoon was spent reading.



## Tallawallal Circuit (again without the curly bit to Tallawallal)

5th November 2024. Tape was being applied to the hull at 0545. Andrew was still in bed, but not for long. I had been up for around 15 minutes. The polisher clearly wanted an early start...he was taking some of the afternoon off for Melbourne Cup Day so made up the hours by starting early. In QLD it is taken as an excuse...it is not a public holiday here. The travel lift started up at 0645, followed shortly after by the rest of the yard.

Just after 1200 two lads from the window manufacturer turned up. Clearly they weren't taking the afternoon off! It took them around an hour to remove our crazed windows.



At around 1315 I was driving away from Coomera. Andrew had elected to stay on boat. I wanted a walk. The initial idea was to walk to the Gwongoorool Pool - 3km down and 3 km back and good for step practice. Given the heat of the day, and the time, and forecast afternoon thunderstorms, I opted for an easier option instead. Actually, it was a much easier option, as I was only carrying water and a raincoat (in the daypack). I had contemplated walking the Tallawallal clockwise this time, opposite to what I usually do, except an encounter with the ranger in the carpark changed my mind. If I walked the track counter-clockwise, he told me, around a hundred or so meters along the track on the left hand side, was a 'little' python. The ranger may have thought him 'little' but I thought the curled mass, bigger than the size of a large dinner plate, quite impressive.

The python wasn't the first wildlife that I had seen on this track, I had disturbed a Wonga Pigeon near the toilets, and a wallaby had quickly crossed the track in front of me before I reached to the 'serpent.'



I told a couple of young British tourists (low 20s) about the python but they had just seen their first snake (another python) and turned their nose up at seeing another one. The group of four older walkers met after this seemed more interested to have a look. By this time, despite being mid afternoon, it was getting quite dark. The fluttering I had heard when first starting the walk went from me thinking it was the noise from bird wings, to an aeroplane flying overhead, to a helicopter hovering in the not too distant area, to, no, hang on, that is thunder. Checking the rain radar showed that a mass of opal was coming my way, and I figured I had just enough time to complete the circuit before the tempest hit. Because I had started counter clockwise, the surface of the second half of the track was much smoother; being one end of The Border Track. Given the lack of tripping hazards, minus a few stones, I 'sped-walked' and jogged the 1.9km back to the car. Rain had not started when I got back to the car and indeed, despite the longer than normal journey back (roadwork has some sections down to 40 km/h so the trip up was slower than normal as well), rain had not been felt when I got back to boat. A few light drops for a few minutes punched through the mesh in the front cockpit from approximately 1730 to 1745, but precipitation soon stopped (the canvas man had taken the perpetrator-damaged covers away earlier in the day).

Other wildlife: a second wallaby and rabbits in paddocks on the way home. Birdlife was mainly heard, I was not stopping to try to find them in the foliage given the impending storm; eastern whip-birds (with and without mates), catbirds, and lots of delightful singing belonging to lungs unknown. There were also brush turkeys and pied currawongs. I also nearly tripped over a lyrebird on one of my jogging stints; I was looking where I was putting my feet, and not at all thinking about possible avian activity on track.

6th November 2024. I spent a bit over an hour this morning running around dropping off recyclables, posting mail, and picking up bread. The car was due to be picked up today so I wanted to clear last minute tasks before that happened. Andrew rang to check when they were due to pick it up... and it turned out a pick-up was not on the schedule. The lass on the other end of the phone assured Andrew that they would find someone to pick it up later.

However before that happened we had worked out that neither of the big remaining contractors would be finished by Friday, so splash-in was now changed to next Tuesday. That was almost another week away. We rang and cancelled the car pick-up and organised a weekend away...not exactly budget friendly but I didn't care...I was well and truly over the yard, or more specifically, over having to wait around for works to be finished that were associated with the insurance claim.

The polisher had allowed us a sleep-in this morning. He had a quick job to do before us today but we all expected to see each other mid morning. In the end due to complications on the first job, it was mid afternoon when he turned up. He left just before 1800 (after sundown and as it got dark).

7th November 2024. Well, the polisher said he would start at 0500. And he did! Andrew had, amazingly, got up before this, and he went off for a cool shower; it had been hot overnight, as it had been for the past couple of nights, and the fan had been running and the hatch open above our bed. I was trying to catch up on some sleep, I had been awake for an hour last night, not helped by the mozzie bite I had on my side. I gave up and got up at 0515.

Andrew and I didn't do much. We hustled off to Bunnings at one stage to pick up a new fuel funnel and some gal paint for the end of the anchor (and to try to get an inner for our tinnie wheel tyre but that didn't eventuate). Our morning job had been to clean out the 'garage', (black storage box), chucking out old and superfluous stuff and giving it a good wash. I had discovered last week that there was a black substance in the base of the 'garage', having pulled out two foul-looking wet rags. I thought 'the stuff' was probably oil of some kind related to the tinnie fuel. It turned out to be leakage from a broken bottle of plant fertiliser! That went into the bin and the hose got put to work, cleaning the container and rinsing down all the items the black muck had contaminated.

Whilst out at Bunnings we popped into k-mart next door. I had chucked out the rug on the head floor and wanted a replacement. The offerings at k-mart didn't really suit (they were made of the same synthetic material as the old one and likely to disintegrate over time). After lunch back at boat, I headed out shopping again, looking for this replacement mat. Unfortunately the only achievement was the burning of fossil fuel; driving around the back of Coomera and Upper Coomera (may the planet forgive me). But the air conditioning was on and the car was cool. It was low 30s C outside.

The polisher left around lunchtime and the windows lads turned-up whilst I was out. The new covers were finished.

After a nice refreshing shower I spent the rest of the day recreational reading.

I took no notice of birds today.



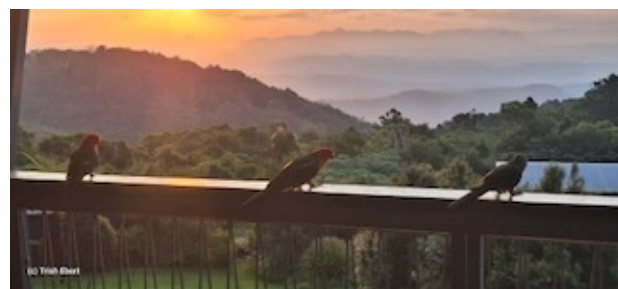
## Lamington National Park

### A short break - Up to O'Reillys:

8th November 2024. We got to sleep-in this morning... the polisher wasn't going to turn up until mid morning, which meant we got a reprieve from a 0500 start. It was hot. Heatwave conditions were forecast for quite a chunk of Australia's east coast and the local humidity was high... at least it felt that way.. we didn't end up seeing any rain all day.

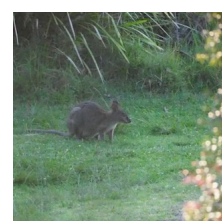
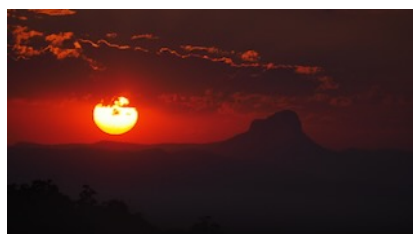
I spent the morning gathering items (clothes/food etc) for the coming weekend: we were taking a short break up the hill as the whole situation being stuck in the yard, or more specifically, why we were there was getting to me. Dishes were washed and curtains drawn. We left the yard at around 1030 and detoured via a bearings store in Nerang before we headed up into the mountains. Unfortunately the store didn't have what we wanted. Nothing is never easy on a boat, but I think the main issue here was 'metric' vs 'imperial'. Maintenance task not solved, we resolved to ignore it until we got back to boat (although we couldn't ignore it after that or we wouldn't have a non-leaking toilet).

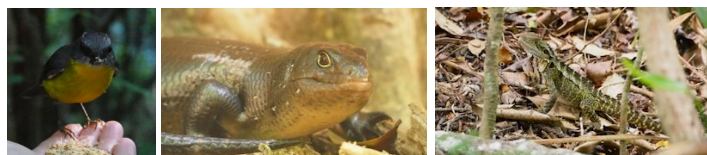
We got to O'Reilly's Canungra Winery around 1230 and the picnic basket provided was generous (we didn't eat it all and saved the snacky bits for later). We got to O'Reilly's Guesthouse around 1430. Check-in is officially 1500 but O'Reilly's usually send a text to let you know when your room is ready. We had been sent a text around 1230 so you can understand my surprise when the lad behind the reception desk said our room wasn't ready. Ah, yes it is, I told him. He was obviously having a bad day because the booking he took for us for dinner didn't get through either!



We had time to settle in before the afternoon tea (cakes and champagne) and the 'managers welcome'. After this I headed off to the afternoon film (eventually, I was in the wrong room to start with and missed the first 10 minutes), whilst Andrew headed back to our room to relax. It was still too hot to be outside when I got back to the room and we only ended up enjoying around half an hour outside on the balcony table and chairs (when the temp finally dropped a bit) before the sun went down. Some king parrots and a couple of crimson rosella's visited our balcony during this time. Dinner was, as expected, delicious, and we were back in room around 2030.

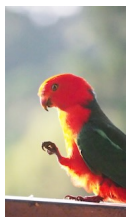
Birds spotted. Egrets (with cattle but too far away to confirm if cattle egrets), swallows, King parrots, crimson rosella's, blue wren, brush turkey, pied butcherbird, crested pigeon, wonga pigeon, white necked pigeon, lapwing, craven





## Yerralahla - Blue Pools

9th November 2024. The alarm was on for 0600. I had got up around 0530. It had been light since 0449. Andrew, semi-reluctantly, joined me for the morning bird walk. The guide was English. And still learning his local Aussie birds, as witnessed by his notes he kept referring to. All was good except a couple of pronunciations...and the use of the word 'unique'.

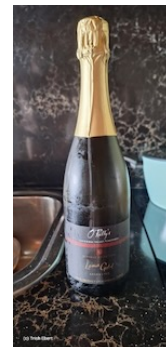


Breakfast was a bit strained for me. The gf bread had corn in it and I had to wait for the scrambled eggs. There was not much else that I was interested in eating this morning.

We left for our walk at 0850, after signing the intentions book. We passed one woman coming the other way at 0915...she must have started really early! We had a 35 minute break when we got to Yerralahla, and then reversed our steps back up the hill. The walk consisted of a 450m elevation change down, and then 450m up again.. Normally the track down is part of the West Canungra Loop but the loop track is closed from Yerralahla.



On their way down to the pools, just after we left to return to the resort, we passed three walkers: one young couple, and a single older male.



The afternoon was spent relaxing. We had a spa in our room so we enjoyed that, along with the champagne (and chocolate-coated strawberries) that had been supplied as part of the meal package.

Bird visitors to our balcony: crimson rosellas, king parrots, and a lewin honeyeater.

Animals of note: land mullets ((very) large fat-ish skinks not unlike blue tongues), small skinks, back swimmers, a lady bird, dragonflies, butterflies, ticks.

Birds: a flock of topknot pigeons, magpies, swallows, regent bowerbirds, satin bowerbirds, rifle-bird (female), scrub wrens (yellow-throated, white-browed, large-bille(?)), yellow robin, grey fantail, log-runners, and we heard and saw eastern whip-birds. We also heard pittas, wompoo pigeons, white-headed pigeons and catbirds.

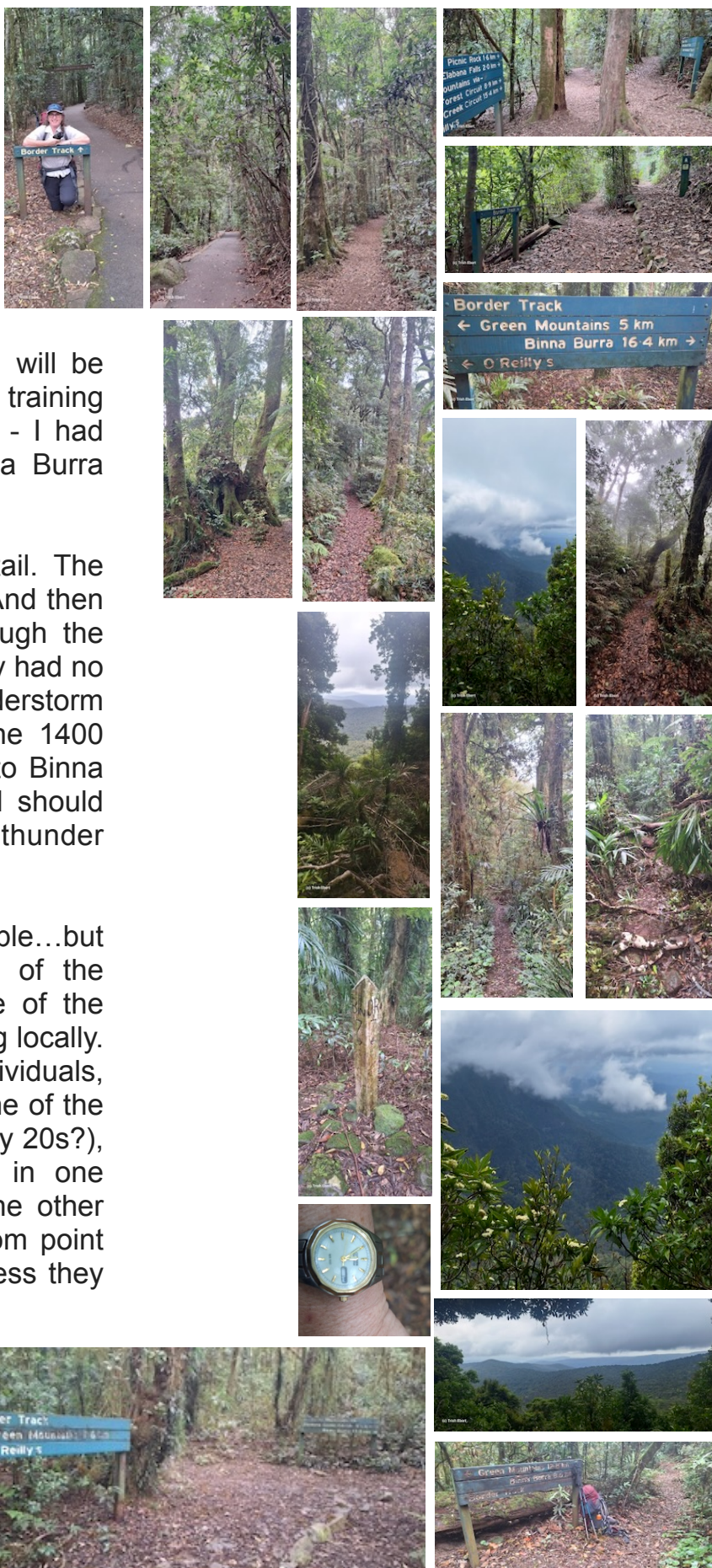
## The Border Track

10th November 2024. I have always wanted to walk this track, although, admittedly, the aim in the last few years had been to do it with Andrew, and possibly as part of the Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walk. However, the opportunity arose today to do it on my own with most of the stuff on my back that I will be walking with in NZ. So it became a training run... a rather focussed training run - I had over 21 km to walk to get to Binna Burra before a forecast thunderstorm.

The first bird seen was rufous fantail. The second bird spotted was a lyrebird. And then there were lots of birds flitting through the bush and across the track. But I really had no time to admire. The forecast thunderstorm and a little rain was due around the 1400 tranche of MetEye. I wanted to get to Binna Burra before the worst of it came. I should have relaxed a bit...no rain or thunder transpired.

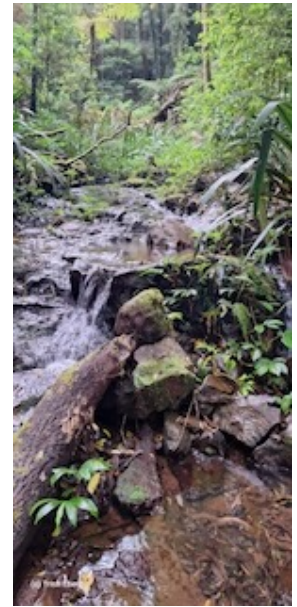
I passed (or was passed by) 10 people...but the last two within two kilometres of the Binna Burra trailhead, and because of the time, I suspect they were only walking locally. The other 8 consisted of only 6 individuals, one young couple who camped at one of the lookouts, one young pair of girls (early 20s?), and two runners who passed me in one direction, and then passed me in the other direction several hours later..time from point to point for them - three hours. I guess they may have had lunch at O'Reillys in between.

I had had two near falls; one because of a slippery rock, and one the result of getting tired and missing a step. I picked up 13 leeches. Two of



them had a full lunch. A third individual had half a meal before it was discovered.

I had started the track not long after our 0700 breakfast. Andrew had spent some time relaxing in our room before heading down the hill to Canungra and then back up the hill to Binna Burra to pick me up. This morning we had discovered a tick on my head behind my ear. I found another one whilst having a shower when we got back to boat.



## In the yard and itching to go...

11th November 2024. The windows were 're-bogged-in' today. And polishing was continued. Andrew played with the water pump in the toilet - it turns out our issue may not be the seal after all, and he has ordered a cap instead. Dragging myself slowly around in the heat I put some of the weekend stuff away. In the evening the rain came down. In buckets! The yard was awash!

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12th November 2024. Big grumbles were heard from outside at 2128. I had managed a load of washing...(the bed linen), in between showers and dinner, and was now contemplating my next move. The evening rain was about to come down so there was no point washing and drying the towels blocking the gaps in the helm station.

The polisher and his assistant (whom had apparently worked on this boat years ago) spent a good chunk of the day on the boat, working through a rather heavy and lengthy downpour. They left 'way' after sunset, just as it was getting really dark.

My morning job had been a final run to the transfer station, buying a new frypan, and conducting a food shop. The courtesy car gave me noisy issues for a while (I got back to base safely, the scraping-type noise turned out to be related to the ABS breaks).

The rest of the day was spent watching the weather, reading, and trying to keep cool, a little difficult when the boat is fixed and the wind is not coming from the right direction for efficient ventilation. I also managed a couple of recreational phone calls and washed all the dirty dishes (over several trips - there are only so many dishes that you can fit in a bucket)!

The lift tomorrow has been adjusted to a 0700 pick-up (from 0630). Andrew painted the anchor again and got rid of some old oil.



## Back into the drink!

13th November 2024. 0642. Quiet. Not normal. We had been shifted from a 0630 to a 0700 lift but clearly something is happening in the yard that we are not privy to. Something in the north yard would be my guess, given the lack of yard noise.

The alarm had been on for 0430. This morning I got three loads of clothes washing done, one load of dishes, fitted in a shower, and pulled the hose in. We had also finally raised the anchor up; in theory we were ship shape. At 0644 we were still waiting for the travel lift!

Finally after some delay we were picked up. A chap from the anti foul mob came to paint the bottom bits. And couldn't - the paint had dried up. He went off to source some more. More waiting. Eventually we were off dock at 0955 (after a minor issue with forward thrust on one engine). Winds were calm. We turned out of the Coomera River at 1000 and motored north.

We settled into Perrys Hole at around 1130- ish. This is an anchorage we normally avoid, usually going for our trusted Tiger Mullet instead. However, we didn't have the top of the tide to get up Whalleys Gutter, and whilst we may have made it in to Tiger Mullet through the deeper Mackenzie's Channel from the north, we wanted to check that the water maker works - and make some water; the anchorage around Perrys Hole has an almost direct line in from the sea.

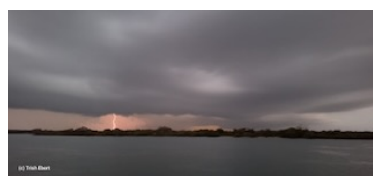
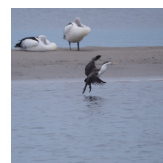
We spent most of the early afternoon relaxing, reading, putting some stuff away from being on the hard. I spent the late afternoon watching the impending thunderstorms, the worst of which fortunately we did not get (the severe thunderstorm warning areas changing regularly through the late afternoon).



I tried for photos with my phone and given we were on a moving boat got only a couple of still slightly fuzzy, but not bad in the circumstances, shots.

Given I had been up since 0430, I went to bed early, although I did jump out of bed at a couple of alarming times: the first turned out to be jiggling relating to wind-over-tide, the second turned out to be jiggling relating to the wind speed; it was blowing over 30 knots!

During the afternoon two boats had anchored in this anchorage with us: a mid sized 'gentleman's cruiser' to our west, and a lagoon catamaran to our east.

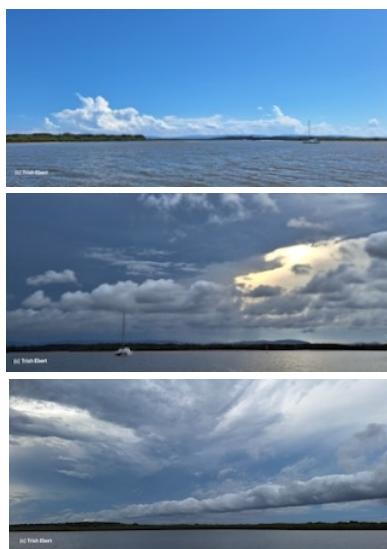


## In to Tiger Mullet Channel

14th November 2024. Bush birds and whistling kites were making their respective noises at 0550. The gentleman's cruiser had gone. The cat was still there. A plane was heard at 0635. Skies were mostly clear and the sun was shining. There was no nearby rain on the radar.

We moved anchorages when the tide was 'close to high', and after settling in, headed across in the tinnie to socialise with the adjacent boat. We had not seen **Anapa** (or rather the four of us together had not seen each other) for around two and a half years (two of us had caught up for dinner in Melbourne earlier in the year).

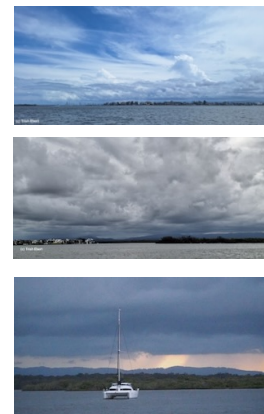
The afternoon was spent waiting for a storm that didn't come.



## Tiger Mullet Channel to Paradise Point

15th November 2024. We took the opportunity for another catch up with **Anapa** this morning; we have no idea when we will see them again. After this, on the top of the tide, we made our way south through Whalleys Gutter (eventually - the chain was stuck in the capstan and it needed a hammer, and Andrew's brain power, to be released).

Sengo's anchor was down in a wind-over-tide situation at our usual gutter anchorage opposite the Coomera River at 1115. The conditions were rigorous enough to 'almost' be doing circles.



## Picking up mail

16th November 2024. The idea was to have the alarm on at 0530, leave the boat at 0615, and pick up the car at 0700. Not all that came to pass but we were driving away from the car hire place at 0735. Fortunately the rain predicted at Paradise Point for our tinnie ride to shore did not eventuate, and the first rain we saw was at 0758 as we were getting off the M1. From then on we had rain on and off until about that location again on the way back.

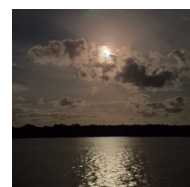
Today's task was picking up our mail at Manly. Whilst it wasn't cheap to hire a car for one day, the alternative was timing tides and wind direction to travel up to anchor off Cleveland (probably) and would have cost us several days. The mail we were picking up was the cap we had ordered for the toilet - something we wanted to obtain as soon as possible.

It was fortuitous that the post office was open on a Saturday morning as the parcel was too big to put in our post box, and we had to go into the actual shop. We stopped for engine oil and some groceries on the way back, walked from the car hire place back to Paradise Point, and caught up briefly with **Anui**, before getting back to boat around 1230.

I spent the afternoon reading, and sleeping, and working on October's diary notes.

The first bird noted this morning was an osprey - flying low overhead as we were getting to Paradise Point. His partner was noted on the balcony railing of a fancy house at Sovereign Islands. Birds around Paradise Point included swans, silver gulls, little black cormorants, little pied cormorants, a darter, crested terns, white ibis', and a pied butcher bird.

Birds spotted and/or heard back at boat...channel billed cuckoo, koel, stone curlews, egrets (I admit I didn't use the binos to determine which species), pelicans.



## Queensland to New South Wales

### Out the Seaway to Yamba

17th - 18th November 2024

17th November 2024. A Stunningly calm morning. No boat traffic. At 0530 I could hear the waves on the east side of South Stradbroke Island. I could also hear channel-billed cuckoos, koels and some sort of pigeon calling from shore. The tide was coming in and there was only the faintest of ripples on the water's surface.

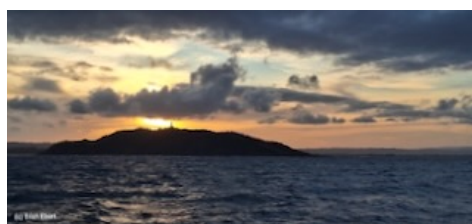
Around 0530 we were checking the weather: wind, waves, direction, strength. All still looked good for a departure in a few hours. So the 'dink' was tied on, the side covers put back and loose gear stowed.

The first move however wasn't out the Seaway...it was to anchor just inside it. The destination for this next sail is a river and we are likely to be surrounded by boats. Given that combination of factors, the water is not likely to be clear enough for us to be comfortable to make water (or, potentially not clear enough)... so we sorted it before we left. We have an anchoring spot near the Seaway entrance that we usually use. However the anchor didn't take...on two goes, and then it got stuck trying to retrieve it. The third attempt to put the anchor down, in a slightly shallower patch of water, worked.

High tide was at 0903. I thought it was a little later than this, and there was some argument as to when we would exit. I preferred to go later given the distance to travel and the calculated time to get there. Andrew didn't want to leave too far after high tide given there was an easterly wind, and if combined straight-on with an outgoing tide... well, that was not going to be comfortable.

In the end we made it out the Seaway, with a bit of uncomfortable swell as we exited, not long before 1100. Engines went off at 1100. SOG was 6.7 knots.

The wind speed, whilst not overly high, was combining with the boat angle for a fabulous run... if we were doing a longer passage! We were however travelling

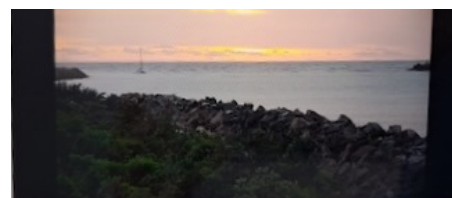
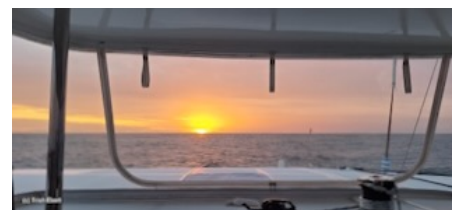


twice as fast as we wanted to be travelling, and to try to slow us down a bit, we dropped the main sail when we were east of Tweed Heads.

This didn't help much as the wind speeds, as predicted, got higher. At one point a strong wind warning was forecast (we had expected 20 to 25 knots but Andrew ended up seeing 30 knots True overnight). At 2100 Andrew furled the genoa in a bit to reduce sail and perhaps could have furled it in more. He did slow the rate of journey down but the damage had been done.

We still had to 'hove to' outside the entrance to the Clarence River from 0200 until 0545.

I noticed the shearwater circling when I got up; having been woken up when Andrew put the engines on at 0537! 'The webcam indicated calm conditions,' he said, 'I'm going in.'



Andrew informed me several shearwaters had been hanging around for the past few hours. Some smaller, mostly white, terns were seen on the way in, as was a pied cormorant. The anchor was down at 0611 in a new anchorage area (for us) suggested by **Anui**.

Two sailing craft and one motor yacht left the Clarence River just after we came in; clearly we weren't the only ones to think the bar clean enough to cross - although they were travelling in the opposite direction.

After our breakfast and habitual UK politics YouTube, Andrew went to bed at 0700.

At 0710 I could smell smoke out the back. And hear gulls and bush birds from shore.

I went to bed at 0745. I got up at around 1045. The Boat upstream of us had left...damn him...he could have left before we arrived so I could have had the spot with the biggest swinging room. Looking out the front I discovered we had a neighbour... a large mono. According to the golf ranger the back of this boat was 88 m away from the front of ours. We weren't exactly lined up with our anchor but providing the other boat has enough chain out there shouldn't be an issue at change of tide. If the tide is stronger than the wind this afternoon then we shall see. Tomorrow I suspect the wind will be higher than the tide and we will both be facing south.

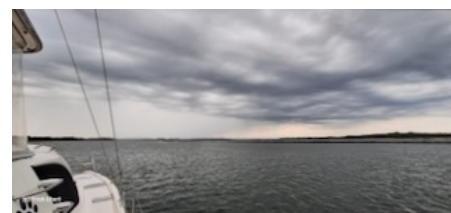
Andrew got up at around 1230 AEDT (we had to remember to change our clocks!) and commented that the fisherman chatting on the radio weren't swearing (which is unusual). One had commented that prawns were more likely to be picked up on a 'running-out' rather than a 'running-in'. One also commented he had 50 dolphins around. I don't know where he was (I thought I had heard one dolphin earlier) but 50 would have been an amazing sight!

We were going to try for a quick walk on shore this afternoon, as according to MetEye wind predictions we may not get off boat for the next few days. However that plan didn't come to pass. We were ready to go around 1400. Until we tried to close the back door. And it wouldn't. The culprit...a plastic clothes peg. It had become stuck below the main sliding door and there was no easy way to get it out. We tried removing the top plastic to lift the door but that wasn't enough. And adjusting the screws onto the rollers - that also wasn't enough. In the end it was a combination of lifting the door as far as we could and pushing down on the peg on a mm gap with the sharp pointy bit of a long sharp knife!



By this time it was 1600. Low tide was at 1730. Sunset was admittedly at 1922 but the cloud cover had made the day grey, and getting darker. And we had rain on the way from the west. Plan B: a cup of crappy coffee, and perhaps a yoga session late in the evening! Rain started to fall at 1645!

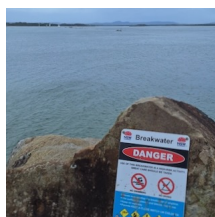
The evening was spent on diary notes, making pumpkin soup for dinner and catching up on some tidying after the overnight sail.



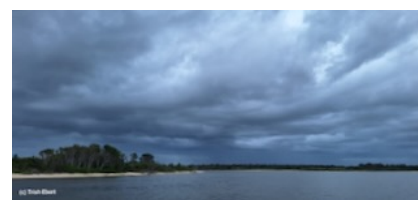
19th November 2024. I seem to have lost notes for the 19th. I can only assume it rained all day and we didn't get off boat.

## A walk around Yamba

20th November 2024. We finally got off boat, taking the rising tide over the shallow channel nearby to tie up at the boat ramp to the west of the marina area. The derelict fixed jetty that belongs to the Moby Dick Resort seemed to have a bird on each post - mostly pelicans, and mostly standing - although the birds sitting on the 'smaller than their bellies tops' can't have been too comfortable. We didn't realise there was a 'closer to town' floating public jetty until we came across it. It was quite long and a smallish monohull was tied up against it. The boat's owner, and her lovely dog, were a delight to engage with. A brief hello to two arriving in a dingy (our neighbours) was also had. From the jetty we had a quick look at town then climbed the hill looking for a food establishment that wasn't there. Fortunately however, a couple of other eateries were, and a healthy lunch was had before we walked passed the lighthouse and down the hill to the end of the breakwater. We discovered that had we come to shore earlier we could have visited the Wednesday market (in the morning), missing it by around two hours.



21st November 2024. Back to shore - but we walked in the other direction. Whilst there is an independent grocer in the main shopping area of Yamba (where all the tourists are) there is a Coles supermarket in a newer shopping centre where the township has grown. We did a big shop - not knowing when we would next be able to get to 'the shops.' The walk, according to Google Maps is under two kilometres, and flat. There were three 'guard Dachels' in one front yard which was quite cute (although they weren't there on the way back). We bought our fish at the coop near the boat ramp (although the lasses wouldn't skin it for us).



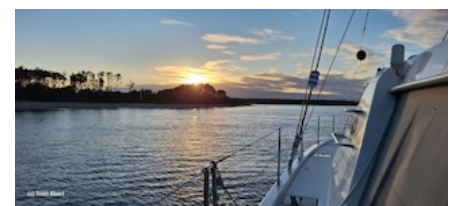
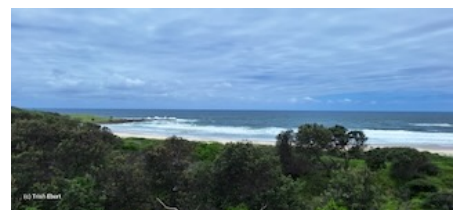
## Back into Town.

22nd November 2024. The opportunity arose for another walk today and we walked back in to town. I took Andrew's old backpack (a Macpac in excellent condition) and gave it to the op shop for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter. S & F were now anchored so we couldn't say hello to them. We took a wander south east toward Pacific Parade and came back to town via the coast, half walking the Lover's Point Headland. After lunch we headed back to boat. Birds were prolific and close up - and of course I didn't have the camera with the zoom lens with me.

Birds: Rainbow bee-eaters, Brahmany kite, osprey, magpie, butcherbird, great cormorants, flock of 100 or so (seen also yesterday) of little black cormorants, terns, pelicans, pied oystercatcher, white ibis, fig-bird, martin, silver gulls.

Other birds over past few days...mudlark, swallow, crested pigeon, Indian turtle dove, noisy miner, common myna, shorebirds (too far away to recognise with binos (tattlers/sandpipers??))

By evening there were six boats in our anchorage - I assume all waiting to go across the bar tomorrow...



## Yamba to Port Macquarie

### Out one bar and into another!

23rd November 2024. The alarm was on for 0515 but I had been awake earlier - boats had been passing since around 0400! We checked the condition of the bar. High tide had been 0330 (something) and it was a dropping tide but the webcam seemed to indicate that the bar was doable - not that it was entirely smooth - there was a 'little' more undulation going out than there was coming in. (This was obvious earlier watching the fishing trawlers on their way in).

It took a little while for the anchor to come up - an extra loop of chain having hooked onto the anchor clip, and we had to work out how to take the pressure off the chain to release it. Fortunately this issue was solved without too much stress and, after some frustration, the anchor was up around 0600.

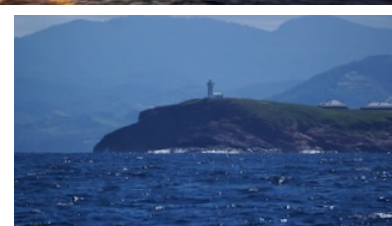
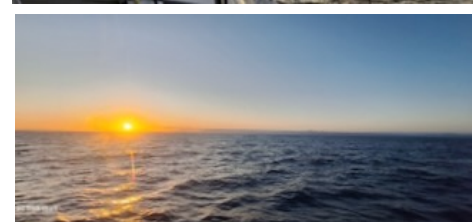
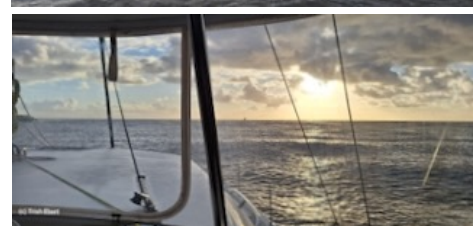
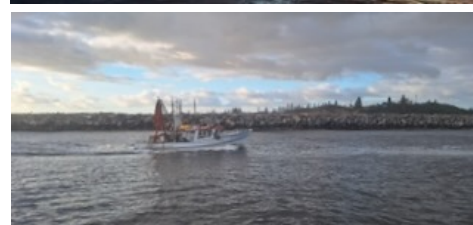
We were out the bar with the main sail up at 0636. The genoa was out and the engines were off at 0640. The wind was blowing 8 to 10 knots True. Our speed over ground was 6.7 knots.

Around 0730 the wind decided to change from south-west to south-east, and, after a series of tacks in light winds we settled in at 0800 with a SOG of 4 to 5 knots. Wind speed was 6 to 7 knots True.

Before we got to Coffs Harbour, around 15 nautical miles to the north east,' I did some calculations. Our boat speed had picked up as the wind had picked up, and whilst I wouldn't normally complain about this - particularly if we were doing a long passage - in this instance it was a problem. We would be arriving at our planned destination just after midnight. I didn't really relish the prospect of hovering for five hours in predicted increasingly stronger winds and rougher seas. So, we dropped the main and continued solely with the genoa. This wasn't the panacea that we had hoped for.

Entertainment was via fishing competition participants calling each other over the radio. Birdlife at sea included one very hopeful gull at the back of a fishing vessel as we passed close by, and shearwaters in flocks of various numbers during the journey.

It was necessary to work out where we wanted to anchor once we got inside the bar/breakwater at Port Macquarie. The forecast for the next couple of days was for slightly grumpy northerly winds. The public moorings, if they were available, were a little exposed to winds from that direction. Anchoring along the river, where there was room, would not have been an issue, but with grumpy weather, we would not have got off boat to explore. Perhaps the marina had a mooring we could hook up to? I took a chance and rang. Yes, we were in luck. A boat, who had been on one the marina's moorings for a long time, had recently left. There was a mooring available. Terrific.



Later in the afternoon I happened to be looking at [marinetraffic.com](http://marinetraffic.com). Hang on. The mooring we had been allocated seemed to be occupied. Yes, the manager texted me. The boat had just come in. Apparently it was going to get off it first thing in the morning. In the mean time there was a red, boatyard, mooring just next to it that we could hook up to until our allocated mooring was free. (The manager did offer us the fuel dock whilst we waited, but as it was not a t-head, I politely declined)

I didn't quite know what 'first thing in the morning' meant....that was yet to be seen.

24 November 2024. We were adjacent the Smoky Cape Lighthouse when I came up on shift at 0000. We were still going too fast. The 15 to 20 knot tranche expected winds had come in and it was blowing 17 to 18 knots T, 15 knots apparent. We were travelling at 6 to 7 knots SOG. Boat Speed was a little less..the current was giving us about a knot.

According to the plotter - there was one boat following us; the mono that had been our neighbour for the past few nights at Yamba.

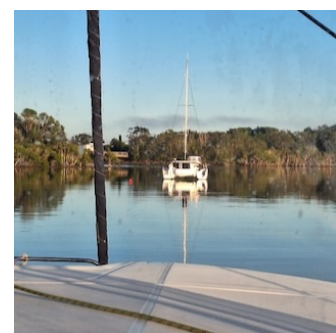
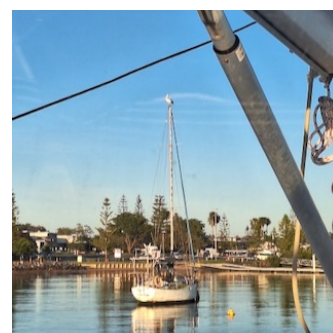
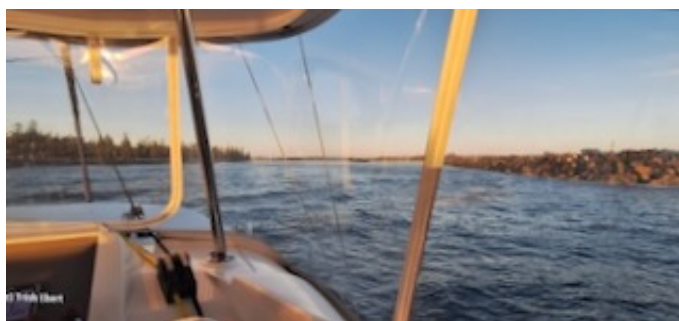
Ships! What are they? It has been a couple of months since I have even thought about ships. We were well to the west of the shipping lane but the odd light on the horizon was a reminder that they were there. When I went to bed at 0300 Andrew furled the genoa in a bit, and slowed us down further. I had the alarm on for 0510. First light was at 0510. Sunrise was at 0537.

When I joined Andrew at the helm I found we were east of the Hastings River entrance. Ideally you would enter at top of the high tide (bar conditions pending). We were around an hour later than top of the tide but Andrew had checked and was satisfied that the water level drop was minimal. The bar web cam was also

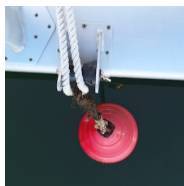
indicating a good entrance (as good as can be expected, I suppose, for a bar crossing we have not done before).

So, we furled-in the genoa completely and motored in as the sun was starting to rise, following the lead sector lights over a smooth entrance. I got the ropes out of the locker and tied them on just before Andrew steered the boat down the narrow channel towards tonight's mooring

We were inside the breakwalls at 0600. We were on the boatyard mooring at 0615...some meters behind tonight's mooring (as it was currently still occupied). First birds seen this morning were cormorants flying across the outlet of the river, and a couple popping their heads up



from below the water's surface. The first bird heard calling was a koel. A pelican standing on the top of the mast of a small monohull was amusing. The first non human mammal seen...a dachshund near Lady Nelson Landing.



Once tied up and settled it was time for a cuppa, our UK politics YouTube and breakfast. Fortunately I didn't have to think too much about this; I had some 'bircher' soaking in the fridge from 36 hours ago.

0800. Andrew had gone to bed whilst I was outside giving the stanchions and lifelines a quick rub down with a wet cloth. By 0800 the dishes had been done. Winds outside were extremely light. Any ripple in the water seemed to come from the opposite direction to the wind as per indicated. Insects on mass were calling from the nearby Island. The boat on our mooring that was going to 'move first thing' finally decided to move, I think prompted by the marina manager. It was too late for Andrew...he was already asleep and I wasn't going to wake him up!

Kookaburras were heard somewhere in the distance. A small group of lapwings flew over. The cacophony included craven calls and 'unidentifieds'. A few small tinnies/runabouts quietly left the marina area... if 'quiet' is possible for a tinnie, and the 'dragon boat' went past...the leader's voice the only 'loud' human noise. In the background there was also the muffle of vehicle noise. It is Sunday. I suspect other days will be louder.

A pelican flew by at 0822. The dragon boat was back and the helmsman has a loud voice. He has to. He is giving instruction to 18 rowers. At 0834 the dragon boat went past again and a small plane flew over - the place is getting noisier. Andrew is sleeping through all this.

At 0930 and 0942 there was the loud noise of what I suspect is a sea plane on the other side of the island.

Andrew got up around 1200 and we moved the boat, unfortunately in now slightly grumpy winds, and cautious that there was not much room behind us to the rock wall. Our large freeboard had to be managed with contrary strong winds but Andrew was confident he could control the boat. The move was easier than I expected; although I didn't expect the mooring we were heading to to be constructed with its own bridle!

After lunch of leftover cheese muffins and salad we headed to shore - introduced ourselves to the new marina manager, and then went for a walk to Settlement Point and back. The sun was out, it was hot, and we had a McDonald's cup of clear liquid thrown at us by a P-Plater in a white car. It hit Andrew in the leg. He was not amused but apart from getting angry about it there was not much we could do... A younger, angrier, aggressive opponent with a big metal weapon is probably not a good match for two ageing humans. Gestures were exchanged as the car passed us again and I was too slow to get a photo. We took a seat at the park at the point for a rest (and were accosted as being a couple that we weren't) before we walked back again.

Birds. Pelicans, pied oystercatchers, little pied cormorants, little black cormorants, great cormorant?, martins. Fig bird, honeyeaters, eastern rosellas, rainbow lorikeet, mudlark, egret (sp?). A koel was heard.

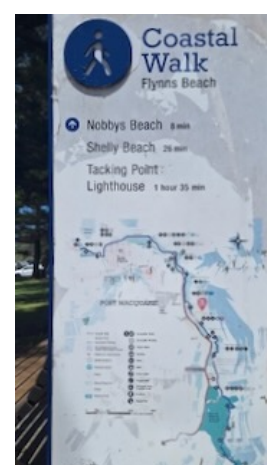
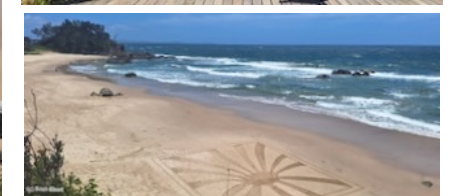
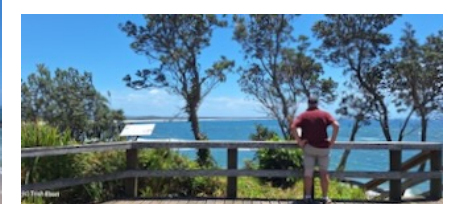
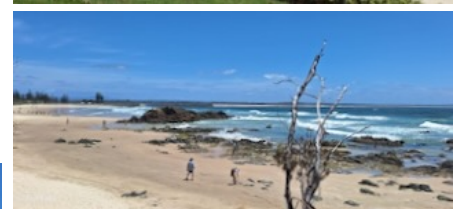


## Exploring locally... on foot.

25th November 2024. I got up at 0555 - but I had gone to bed at 2130 - and I hadn't had any catch-up sleep yesterday. The sun was up. There were no clouds. A paddle boarder swooshed past and, as he was that close to the boat, I am surprised he didn't wake Andrew. Some road traffic was heard, as were unidentified bird calls from nearby vegetation. Andrew got up at 0645.

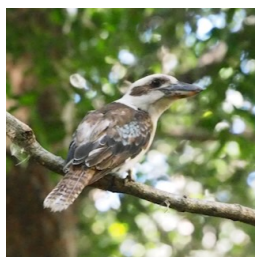
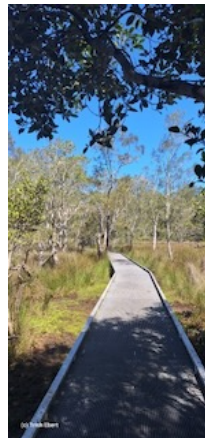
We finally got off boat around 1000. With nothing more substantial organised we decided to walk into the main centre of town, where our first destination was the Information Centre. Thanks to the attentiveness of one of the staff we left there armed with brochures and handouts and we discussed our options over a cuppa. The decision for the rest of today: walk part of the Port Macquarie Coastal Walk, head across to the Koala Hospital, and then back to boat via Kooloonbung Wetland. Along the journey we enjoyed the varied vegetation of the Coastal Walk, had lunch at the cafe of the PMSLSC at Flynns Beach, and spotted a few birds, although none of the species on the 'watch out for these' sign near the littoral rainforest at the mainland edge.

The bird(s) of the day was probably the olive backed orioles - one spotted by the coast and one along the mozzie track on the west side of the Kooloonbung. Other birds: kookaburra, pelicans, mudlark, rainbow lorikeets, martins, terns. Also spotted were pied cormorants and little black cormorants. We had a striated heron on our bottom back step this morning before we got off boat... that was pretty special but I didn't get a photo. There were other smaller, unidentified, birds during the day and a koel called in the late afternoon. Andrew also spotted a dollarbird

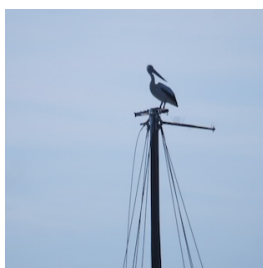
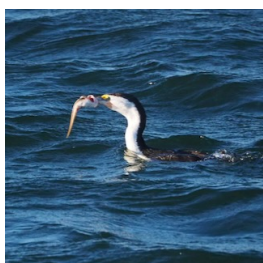




Shelly Beach Road Trish - unfortunately she can't be released due to nerve damage



Kooloonbung Wetland



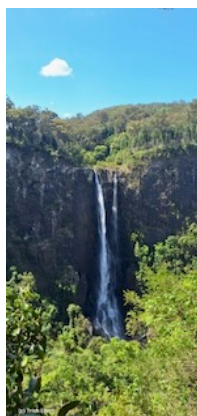
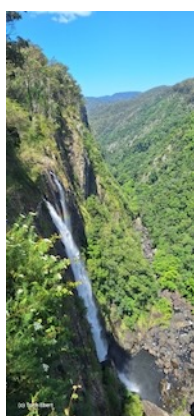
## Ellenborough Falls - eventually

26th November 2024. The idea for today had been to go for a drive. But until this morning we hadn't booked a car. The hope was we could pick up one from the Port Macquarie SIXT depot as that was the closest car-hire place to us. In the end we ended up picking up a car at the airport - a hot 4.6 kilometer walk away. Andrew was not happy - he had missed the reference to the distance and had in mind 2.1 'kays.' Nope - that was the SIXT depot - which could only offer us an electric BYD. And interesting option to try one day - but not today when we were heading into the hills.

We were on dock not long after 0800. By the time we booked the car and picked it up it was 0945. We headed off to Wauchope and enjoyed a cuppa before heading west. Originally I had planned to follow the suggestion of a road trip from the fellow at the info centre in Port Macquarie yesterday, but the suggested road trip on a local website appealed - it would mean a longer distance (we had limited kms on our hire vehicle) but would still cover New South Wales' tallest single drop waterfall.' So, we could still potentially stop at Byabarra for lunch (the info centre fellow suggested booking ahead). This business seems to be the only one of the hamlet and it seemed closed so we continued toward Combyne (with a short stop near Bridal Veil Falls but I think the short walk to the escarpment edge where you may have been able to get a view has been blocked-off for revegetation).



At Combyne we walked into the Community Centre, had a chat to the lass there and grabbed some maps. The walk to Rawson Falls sounded a bit too challenging for today (one hour down and one and a half hours back up) and the direct route to Ellenborough Falls, we were told, was blocked. We ended up driving the long windy road down to Wingham for lunch, before heading back north the other way to Ellenborough Falls.



Ellenborough Falls



The final excursion for the day was back at Wingham - at least for me. Andrew stayed in the car and missed the raucousness of thousands of flying foxes trying to keep themselves cool by flapping their wings.

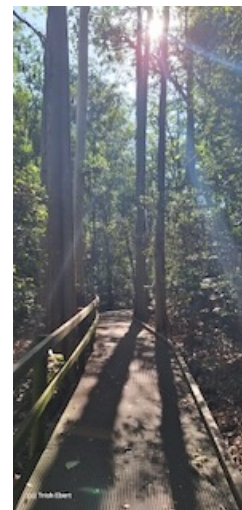
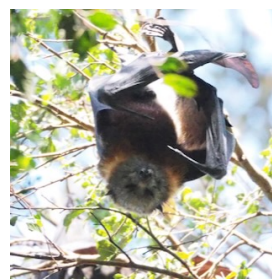
We travelled back to boat via Taree and the A1 before heading toward the coast and coasting through Lauriton and Camden Haven, having a look at another potential anchorage if the need arises in the future.

It was a hot day; at one point the car indicated it was 34 degrees C outside.

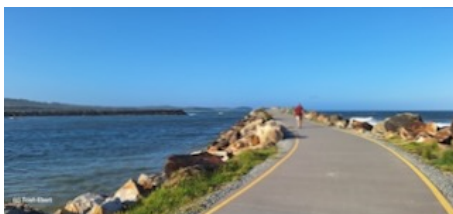
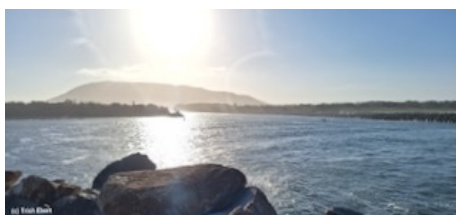
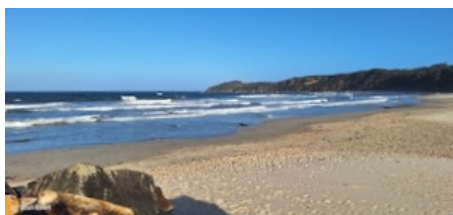
We were back on boat at 2130. We had black bean chilli for dinner.

Bird list: osprey, pelican, mudlark, pied butcherbird, galah, white ibis, around 1000 cattle egrets, white-breasted wood swallow, pied cormorant, pied currawong, craven, fig bird, yellow-throated scrub wren, yellow robin (emaciated - or pale robin perhaps)

Water dragons; butterflies (species not determined), one dachshund coming into Port Macquarie.



Wingham Brush



Camden Haven

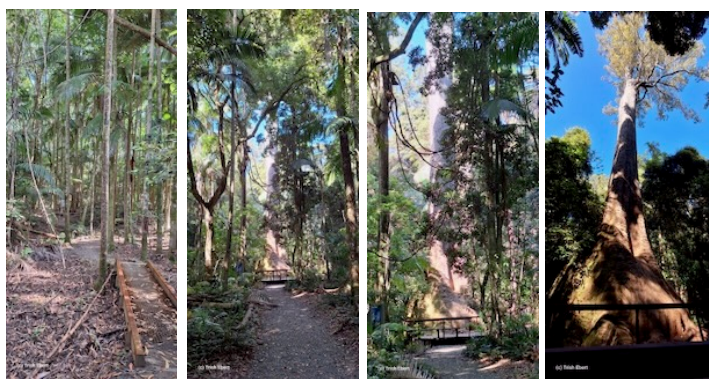


## Old Bottlebutt, Tacking Point Lighthouse, and Sea Acres

27th November 2024. Exploration was a bit stifled today as we had used 3/4 of our mileage allowance yesterday. Whilst we normally hire cars with unlimited mileage, yesterday morning we had to take what we could get (and we had rejected the BYD electric car). This meant that we ended up with a rather comfortable Subaru Forester - which was great for long distances - except we didn't have much distance left. The forecast temperature for Port Macquarie was 30 degrees Celsius.

So after a refreshing morning shower, and saying hello to a dachshund in the carpark, we headed off, passing peak-hour traffic coming into town in the opposite direction, and turning south down the A1. Getting off at the Bargo Road we headed north-west and turned into the Burrawan State Forest. In this section of land there are management zones which allow for 'now' preservation of areas considered of current conservation importance. One such area holds 'Old Bottlebutt' - the largest Red Bloodwood in the Southern Hemisphere - apparently.

From Old Bottlebutt we reversed our drive until Houston Mitchell Drive, turning east toward the coast and approaching the area of Tacking Point Lighthouse from a southerly direction. There is construction work currently at the lighthouse; they are building an accessible walkway. As a result you can't drive to the lighthouse. We parked at the closest cliff-top car park and took the last of the Coastal Walk to join the access road just north of the lighthouse on foot. A selfie proves we got as close as we could. From the photo spot - if looking the other way, there is a nice vista over Lighthouse Beach.



Old Bottlebutt



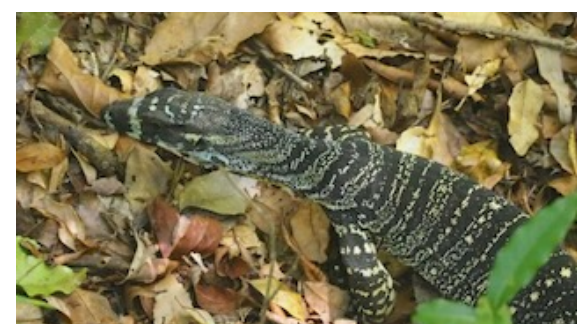
Tacking Point Lighthouse



For the final ‘touro’ thing’ we visited Sea Acres; firstly having lunch in the cafe, before paying for access to the board walk. There wasn’t a lot of birdlife seen (it was the middle of the day) but a spectacled monarch and a couple of fantails were obvious. Apparently there is a pair of powerful owls with chicks in the area as well; one adult having presented itself at visual height during the day a couple of days ago. We saw a photo of it on the phone of one of the volunteer ranger’s. A fabulous sight - A pity we missed them. The only non avian of note was a large monitor on the ground.

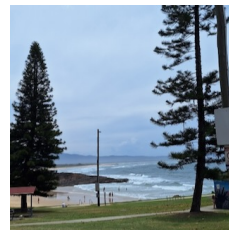
We did a quick food shop at Woolies before returning to boat.

Birds: seen; little black cormorant, kookaburra, little pied cormorant, pelican, white-breasted wood swallow,. Heard; whipbirds, willy wagtail, yellow robin?, female regent bowerbird,



Sea Acres





## Kempsey, South West Rocks, Smoky Cape Lighthouse and Hat Head

28th November 2024. By the time we had swapped the cars over (from a limited mileage vehicle (albeit bigger) to an unlimited (and cheaper but smaller vehicle)) and got ourselves to Kempsey it was closing in to 1100. The Slim Dusty Centre was our only stop in town but it wasn't to visit the museum - it was to pick up a map for our intended destinations. The recommended 'coffee' stop at Gladstone (a lot smaller than its Queensland namesake) was skipped for lunch at the South West Rocks SLSC.

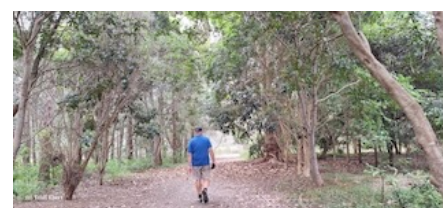
After lunch we visited the Trial Bay Gaol (prior to a couple of days ago I didn't even know Trial Bay had an historical gaol - I only knew it as a potential anchoring spot for a northerly journey), bagged the Smoky Cape Lighthouse, walked around the Jersey Vale Boyters Lane Wetland area to the bird-hide (which Andrew was disappointed with because the vegetation in front of the bird hide was blocking the view) and then finished the day with the Korogoro Circuit Track around Hat Head. By the time we got to Hat Head it was almost 1630 and according to one map there was a track to the top of Hat Head which looked like it was shorter than the circuit. I should have guessed that we would struggle to find the track as it

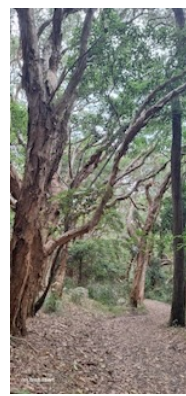
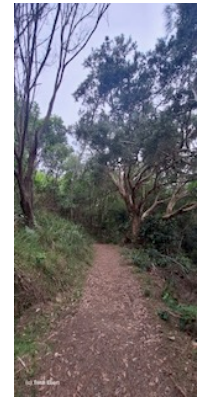
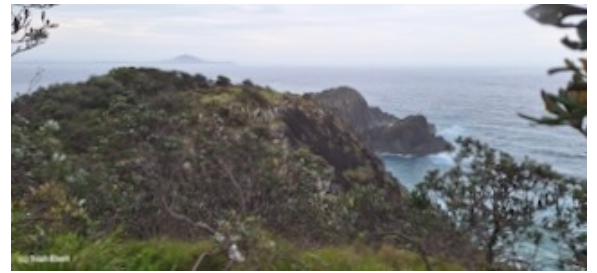
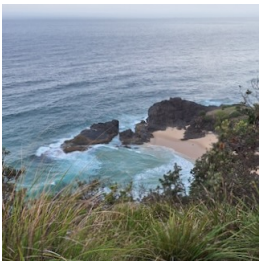


wasn't on the interps boards at The Gap carpark. I suspect the track existed at one point but has since been overgrown for some time. We continued around the headland anyway, chatting to the many macropods who temporarily blocked our path, and managed to beat the rain; a couple of drops hit the car windscreen as we drove back toward Kempsey.

Landscape from Kempsey to South West Rocks consisted mainly of farmland; cattle being the predominant industry. Birdlife in the dams and swamps and river along the road was prolific; spoonbills, cormorants and herons, along with other smaller species - we could have spent all day just birdwatching from the road.

Bird list: white necked heron, magpie goose, little black cormorant, pied cormorant, royal spoonbill, great egret, white faced heron, intermediate egret, black winged stilt, silver gull, red-browed finch, little wattlebird, silvereye, willy wagtail, Martin (sp?), pelican, pied oystercatchers, koel, plumed whistling duck, black swans, wood duck, white ibis, glossy ibis, azure kingfisher, pacific black duck, other ducks (teals and hard heads?), superb blue wren, crested pigeon, Bronzewing (sp?), lapwing, Australasian darter.





## Rainforest at Dorrigo National Park

29th November 2024. 0700. Low cloud. It rained overnight around 0230. Outside was quiet. There was no wind. Our planned excursion for today involved some driving...

Last time I tried to get us to Dorrigo National Park we were land-based. I can't remember if it was pre-boat (4WD trip to Cape York) or whether it was our six month sojourn with the caravan before we sailed from Darwin to the Kimberley. What I do remember is that we were travelling along an inland route and the coast was getting walloped with rain; day after day, so any visit to Dorrigo National Park, or Coffs Harbour for that matter, (because I had hoped to have a look at that city on the same trip) was off the cards.

Today a bit of rain was forecast - maybe. Coffs Harbour is around 150 km from Port Macquarie so today's excursion was always going to be a full day exercise. We left the marina car park around 0800 and we arrived at Bellingen for a 'morning cuppa' around 0930. Bellingen is a quirky place; but I had been warned. The main street consists of old buildings, in various styles (obvious late 1800s, and 1920s art deco for example). The occupants of the buildings consist of a range of businesses; the usual IGA and pharmacy etc, to coffee shops, eateries, fashion stores, op shop, giftware etc. We took a seat outside under the verandah of our chosen mid-morning stop (where a majority of the 'something nice's' are gluten free), and just people watched. The street was full of ages - low twenties to grey-haired and ancient individuals - some of whom were clearly tourists, and some were obviously locals (each attired with 'normal' dress styles or obviously 'alternate' garb). I had been warned that the town had a hippy feel - and it wasn't uncomfortable (there was a fellow crossing the road in the afternoon on the way back down the hill who didn't look at the passing traffic - we were lucky we had room to swerve and didn't hit him -and I suspect he was 'on' something. The locals seem to have a blaze attitude - we were also passed in the morning across double lines!).



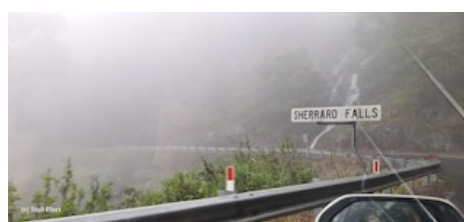
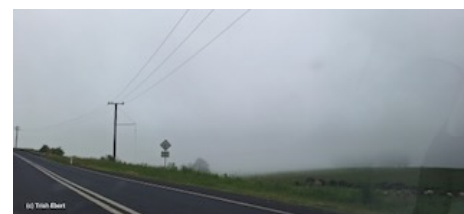
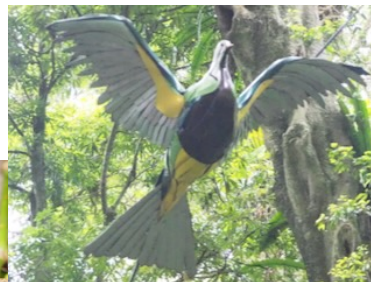
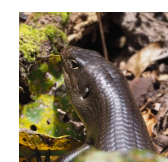
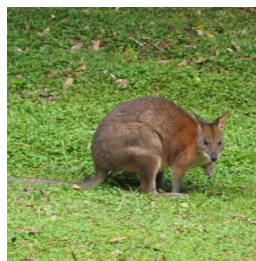


The vegetation goes through several types of rainforest and Andrew made the comment the landscape was a bit like 'O'Reilly's' (Lamington National Park). Bird calls were reasonably prolific but not a lot of individuals were seen.

Given the time when we got back to the Visitors Discovery Centre (in cloud) we knew we wouldn't have time to get to, or complete, the other circuit walk in the Park so proceeded to head home - although we did make a slight detour. We had never been to Coffs Harbour so a short drive north introduced us to this bustling city. The city centre seems large enough to sustain a lot of people (apparently Coffs' population surges in holiday periods) but we didn't stop to examine it closely. I was more interested in the harbour - and if, despite its rolly reputation, it would afford us shelter on a future run. There are public moorings to the north of the fixed jetty, two of which were occupied and there were a couple of boats anchored on the southern side of the jetty. The marina looks doable for a couple of pens for me but it is not a preferable location - and literature seems to state that the marina is undergoing a complete redesign so stopping there next season may be taken off the cards anyway. The upshot - we've seen the harbour so we now know what's there if we need it.

It was too late to visit anywhere else on the way back to boat if we wanted to get back in the light. We were back on board at 1900.

Bird list: wompoo pigeon (heard), grey shrike thrush, catbird (heard), rifle bird (female heard), yellow-throated scrub wren, white browed scrub wren, superb lyrebird, brush turkey, yellow robin, grey fantail, rufous fantail, pied currawong, magpie lark, magpie, martin family near tinnie tie up at Port Macquarie marina, craven, fruit dove (superb?), noisy pitta (heard), eastern whipbirds (male and female), king parrot (female), Lewin honeyeater, golden whistlers (heard).



## Returning the car; settling in for the weather.

30th November 2024. The main exercise of today was to hand the car back. Technically the hire was due back around 1000. The office was only going to be open until 1100 anyway but we got it back in time - after a nice shower in the marina facilities, adding an extra day's booking to our mooring hire, and after a trip to Bunnings to pick up some cleaning products. The next task was a supermarket shop and to post my one, and only, xmas card.

We had thought about trying to catch up with **Anui** but it was lunch time when we got back and Andrew was getting hungry. After lunch the wind picked up and the rain (expected - although the forecast was 'from late afternoon') started. There had been little wind this morning and a large number of kayakers had emptied a shed in the marina and headed out on the waterway.

The first bird heard this morning was a pied oystercatcher. Birds seen throughout the day included the baby martins on dock, craven, mud lark, magpie, pelican.

The afternoon was filled with steady rain.

