

Draft Notes: King George Area: May 4-17, 2008

After running two special King George charters in two of the past three years, we decided it was time to add the trip to our regular program.

Section 1: Faraway Bay airstrip to Twin Falls: May 4-10

We fly to the Faraway Bay airstrip. If water is plentiful, we'll head toward an area with a number of interesting Aboriginal art sites and some good sea views, spending the afternoon walking without packs. We first found these art sites in pre GPS days and may or may not find the best of them this time. There is so much that we will certainly find some.

The following day, we move a short distance to a small waterfall which plunges into the sea below. (If water is a problem, we'll head here on the first day.) Again there are a number of interesting art sites and a good walk without packs in the afternoon.

We spend the next few days working our way to a major north-south creek which plunges over a tall waterfall into the bay below. A couple of hundred metres away, a second creek plunges over a second waterfall, hence the name Twin Falls. If we get here early, we'll have time to do an interesting walk down to a beach below. This walk takes most of the day.

On the final day of this section, we make our way down the east side and out to another small beach where we meet the boat that brings in our food for the second section and takes us to King George Falls. The last part of the descent was very scrubby in 2004 – gardening gloves are useful. (Secateurs would also have been useful to get through some of the very thick vines.)

Section 2: King George to Faraway Bay airstrip: May 10-17

King George Falls is a double fall at the head of an 8 km long gorge. The boat trip gives us some amazing views of the falls, unobtainable any other way. A short, but very steep climb from the drop off point, brings us to the top of the falls where we set up a two day camp. The following day, we will either do a coastal walk or a walk upstream. The coastal walk is more spectacular; the inland walk has more Aboriginal art.

From here we head west, first stop a lovely creek and another tidal gorge. After a long break to enjoy the views (and have yet one more swim, we move on.) The next few days are a real mix as we get into an area where there would be unlikely to be enough water for a walk later in the year. As always, we will find Aboriginal art sites and good pools for swimming, some better than others. Our final camp is above a fairly tall waterfall which plunges into a gorge below. In 2004, the water was coming through the rocks so we had to cart water 100-200 m to get the best campsite views. We got an unseasonal rain that night so the waterfall was flowing well the following morning. From here, it is only about 5 km to the Faraway Bay airstrip and the aircraft which will bring us back to Kununurra.

Notes

Although we will be averaging less than ten kilometres per day, some of the areas through which we will be travelling are quite rugged. This, combined with the need to carry up to a weeks worth of food, makes reasonable physical fitness absolutely essential.

The trip includes a lot of rock hopping with a full pack on and even a bit of clambering over large boulders. Anyone who has done some off-trail rock hopping is unlikely to have any problem with the terrain. However, we strongly recommend that anyone who has never done any off-trail rock hopping find some place where they can try it and see how well they cope. Most people cope reasonably well right from the start. A few have serious difficulties which are impossible to overcome quickly.

As the trip will include a number of day-walks, you should bring a day pack or bum bag.

The food drop will be organised the day before the trip starts. Come prepared with a separate package containing your breakfasts and lunches for section two.

Although we carry a sat phone and an EPIRB, you need to be aware that no satellite phone is 100% reliable. If an accident occurs at a time when we cannot get through, the EPIRB might not get help for a day or more.

We expect warm to hot conditions, possibly quite humid at times, with relatively little rain for most of the trip. **However, the weather can do odd things.** In 2004, a huge storm system stranded us at Faraway Bay for two days after the trip was supposed to end in late May.

If you like fishing, bring a light weight fishing line. It can be excellent in several of the places we visit.

Terrain and difficulty

Overall Level 3.

Climate Level 4. Rain is unlikely but possible. Could be somewhat humid. Average daytime max about 34° C; average night minimum 18-20° C, but can get below 10° C on occasion.

Terrain Level 3. Some flat, some steep, some rock hopping. A complete mix. Some of the harder terrain may be done with day packs. **How hard it is depends partly on how much you want to do.**

Vegetation Level 3. Can vary from year to year depending on when last burnt.

Most of the walking will be fairly open but there may be some thick grasses including spinifex. There will be one or more short sections of thick vine forest. Gaiters or long trousers and seed socks strongly recommended.

Hours Generally 4-6 hours walking per day.

Packs **Waterproofing.** Although rain is unlikely, we recommend bringing a pack cover liner (which could be as little as a heavy duty garbage bag) in case we get a late season storm.

Pack weight - level 3. You carry a week's food on each section

Art There is a wealth of art sites in the area. Many are quite faded, but some are in excellent condition. More Bradshaws than Wandjinnas but both are there.

Campsites Mix of sand, rock ledges and grassy areas. Some sites are excellent, some less so.

Swims Good to excellent along most of the route. There are likely to be one or two camp sites where swimming is limited.

Lowlights Pushing through the vine forest; one or two scrubby camp sites.

Highlights Waterfalls plunging in the tidal gorges, Aboriginal art, good swimming.

Wildlife You are unlikely to see many large animals. Birds should be abundant as will lizards. Many of the small animals are nocturnal and seldom seen.

Fishing Some good possibilities.

Maps. 1:100 000 King George and Rulhieres or
1: 50 000 King George, Rulhieres, Sanz and Raaf.

Itinerary **King George**

Note 1 Day 0 is the day before departure.

Note 2 This itinerary is subject to change due to weather or other circumstances beyond our control.

Section 1 Faraway Bay to Twin Falls

Day 0 Section one begins in Kununurra. There are daily air and bus services between Kununurra and Perth and Darwin. Connections to the eastern states are normally made through Darwin.

Pre-trip meeting 6.30 p.m., outdoor area, Kimberley Croc Backpackers. **This meeting is important.** If you cannot make the meeting, please advise us well in advance.

Day 1 Pick up between 7.00 and 7.30 a.m. Pick up is from your accommodation in Kununurra provided you have given us the address at least a week before departure or have made other arrangements at the pre-trip meeting. If you are unable to notify us where you are staying, the pick up is from in front of the Kununurra Visitors Centre.

Fly to Faraway Bay airstrip. Begin walk to Twin Falls. First day about 3 km.

Day 2-6 Walk to Twin Falls in the west. This is a particularly beautiful spot between two creeks overlooking a tidal gorge. Good pools but unlikely to be much flow in May.

Day 7 Boat pick up and food drop. Those ending here fly back to Kununurra.

Section 2 King George to Faraway Bay

Day 6 Those beginning with this section arrive in Kununurra.

Day 7 Those beginning here fly to Faraway Bay to meet those continuing. All boat to King George.

Day 8 Day walk near King George.

Day 9-13 Walking toward Faraway Bay. Last night's camp about 4-5 km from airstrip.

Day 14 Finish walk, fly from Faraway Bay airstrip back to Kununurra.

Important Note **Regional Link** (formerly Air North), the only airline currently operating into Kununurra uses relatively small and has a baggage allowance of only 13 kg. Unless special arrangements have been made, if you are flying to Kununurra and your baggage weighs more than 13 kg, it may not get on the plane with you. (This would be very unusual but it is possible.) Contact Regional Link for more details. Phone: 1800 627474 or (08) 8920 4000; Fax: (08) 8920 4095; email: airnorth@regionallink.com.au
Qantas Link cancelled their peak season direct flights to and from Perth in late 2006. Call 131313 to see if they are running again.