Lady Musgrave Island 2010

Important Dates

APRIL
Fri 9. April, Food preference sheet due to Peter & Gail

MAY
Sat 1. May Send completed menu with ingredients and recipies to Peter & Gail
Wed 26. May – trip payment due in full

JUNE
Sat 5. June – Boat working bee

Sun 20. June – gear issue and boat-loading (EVERYBODY must attend since we need to distribute parcels into EVERY car that drives up to Gladstone)

Sat 26. June, Convoy leaves Canberra very early in the morning
Sun 27. June, 12:00 midday: target time for arrival in Gladstone
Sun 27. June, barge leaves Gladstone for Lady Musgrave Island – we’re sleeping on the boat

13 dinners (incl. final day when ferry arrives at 6pm)

JULY
Sat 10. July, Ferry arrives 6pm for loading from the beach at high tide (new moon)
Sun 11. July, arrival in Gladstone early morning
Mon 12. July, convoy arrives in Canberra in the evening
Weekend 17. or 18. July Working bee: cleaning of LMI gear – venue TBA

Details

The barge (Curtis Endeavour) transporting us to the island will be available for loading on the afternoon of Sunday June 27th. Much more than your own gear needs to be loaded so plan to be in Gladstone by noon on the 27th of June. We need to pick up the food, load the containers and get car parking sorted. The barge departs at midnight.

We arrive at LMI around 7:30am on Monday June 28th. We unload over the side of the barge, using our two club boats to shuttle gear to the beach. We will spend the rest of the day setting up our group stores/equipment (first) and then your own tents. The marquee tent, kitchen, food supplies, refrigeration, moorings, compressors etc. need to be set up so don’t expect to dive that day.

At the end of our trip we pack all our gear up and bring it back to Canberra.

On the return we load on Lady Musgrave on Sunday July 10th, starting around 6pm with the high tide for a beach load. We will then depart and travel to return to Gladstone by early Monday morning. We all then unload and pack the trailers and your gear and start the drive back to Canberra that morning. The returning convoy will stay overnight in Moree (~10 hr south of Gladstone).

There will be one night spent on the boat on the way out, 12 nights (13 dinners!) spent on the island, and then one night on the boat for the trip back.
**Trip fee**
The exact amount is still being finalised and is due by Wednesday May 26th 2010, unless you have made some other arrangement. Deduct your $250 deposit.

Your telephone contact for trip planning is Tom on 0403 510 358. It is not possible to contact people once on the island, although we can send postcards back by carrier tourist!

**Getting There**
Plan to take a day-and-a-half of driving to get to Gladstone. A pre-dawn departure on the first day makes for a just after sunset arrival at Condamine, and thus avoids the most kangaroo infested areas at night. Condamine is used as a good place to overnight as it leaves a trip of about six hours to get into Gladstone the next day in time for all of the loading.

The trip from Canberra to Gladstone is about 1,575 km and involves approximately 16 - 18 hours of driving time if you travel out through western NSW via Cowra, Dubbo, Narrabri, Goondiwindi, into QLD and through Miles, Wandoan, Taroom, Banana, and Biloela.

You can save some time by bypassing Gilgandra via Mendooran: 8km north of Dubbo (Brocklehurst), turn right to Mendooran in the 80km/hr area zone. On the way back, take the same bypass 15km south of Coonabarabran. Take the left to Mendooran, look for the red McYuks sign.

We often have left over unleaded petrol from our island trip so try to arrive in Gladstone with only enough fuel to do the running around that you will need to do. This way we may be able to sell you some cheap petrol for the return trip.

When in Gladstone, follow the signs to the Gladstone Marina.

Lock-up car parking is available at the Gladstone Marina for $70 per car ($5 per night) and $42 per trailer ($3 per night). The Marina also has hot showers, phones and a shop to buy postcards.

**A check list of personal equipment**
Although there are theoretically no size restrictions on equipment taken please keep your gear to a sensible minimum. Just remember that every item needs to be moved 5 times: from your car to the loading area, from the loading area to the barge luggage crates, from the barge to a small boat, from a small boat to the beach, from the beach to the camping area. Pack everything into a few sturdy bags or sturdy Nellie bins (avoid the cheap brittle plastic ones) which are of an easily manageable size (no loose bits and pieces) and weight (NO WEIGHT BELTS!). Every person in the group must be able to lift each of these general items. Keep in mind that, if the weather is a bit rough during unloading onto the Island, bags and equipment can get wet. There are no bunks on the barge and only hard metal bench seats with arms so you can't stretch out. If you plan on sleeping overnight, keep your sleeping bag and a mat accessible and able to be repacked and waterproofed after the night for transport onto the island. **Everything** you require for the boat trip to the Island (including your breakfast) together with your wetsuit boots, a spare T-shirt and a pair of shorts or bathers should be placed in a small bag to be kept accessible on the barge. It is likely you will get splashed or completely wet when unloading so dress accordingly. Everyone will need to be changed and ready before the barge begins to unload and the unloading can proceed smoothly.
Bring:
- packs/bags with waterproofing for your gear
- tent and normal pegs (some sand pegs)
- your own folding chair and table (no big banana lounges/wide chairs)
- rope/clothes line (can't tie directly to trees)
- sleeping gear (mat/lilo/sleeping bag)
- waterproof jacket
- warm clothes (fleece/thermals)
- sunburn cream
- insect repellent
- cheap shampoo
- hat & sunglasses
- camera/binoculars
- torch & batteries (headlamps are great)
- towels (leave a spare in Gladstone)
- diving gear (including UW torch with batteries, safety sausage)
- Sturdy tub or bag to transport dive gear
- spares kit for SCUBA
- alcohol
- plates/cutlery/cup
- private food
- Tarpaulins
- personal medications/prescriptions
- boules/bocce/cards/games

SCUBA gear
There will be a SCUBA Club working bee on Saturday June 5th, at the Club shed starting at 9am. This will be our last chance before Musgrave to ensure the gear is in good order. Be there!!

Group packing and gear issue
There will be a number of large items to lift and pack into boats/trailers and all of the club spares to pack and distribute for transport up. Thus the Sunday the 20th of June is reserved for such packing. It needs a few strong folk and other careful, meticulous ones and should only take an hour or so. Gear issue for Musgrave can be done on that Sunday also. Let me know what Club gear you need (Tom Magill <magill@apex.net.au>). Gear hire will be charged on hiring for three weeks (i.e. a $30 deposit plus your usual weekly hire fee x3)

Grog
In the past a number of sub-groups have successfully transported a small cellar to the Island to assist with the general ambience of the gourmet meals. You may wish to form your own group to enjoy this aspect of the trip. For those wishing to buy beer or whatever in Gladstone, a number of hotels have bottle shops. If you can get it in a can or a cask, please do so as these take less space (crushed) on the way home and avoid the possibility of broken glass.

Notes on Diving
Please be extremely cautious in your diving activities. An accident or mishap may not only spoil your holiday but a lot of other people's as well. You are diving in a remote area and there are definitely no second chances.

The maximum depth around the island is approximately 25 meters. The waters around Lady Musgrave are subject to currents that can be very strong on occasions. Please take into consideration these currents in planning and carrying out your diving activities. Check anchors carefully during diving and always use the buffer bouys. If in poor conditions or strong currents dive in shifts and leave an observer on the boat while diving.
The Island is on the lee of its reef and conditions can be quite rough on the weather side. Be careful when diving on the south and east of the reef when the south - easterly is blowing. There can be high swells rolling in from the south which are not apparent from camp.

**Boating**

The two club inflatables, The Goat and Tigger, are planned to be used on the trip. Each boat will carry 6 divers. Please do not overload. Inflatables are ideal boats for the diving around Lady Musgrave Island but are very prone to damage. Do not make yourself unpopular by putting a boat out of action. As with other group activities, do not leave the work for the "experts", as they are not being paid to run the trip. Try and learn how to operate, refuel and maintain these boats; it will increase our safety and your enjoyment.

Some points to note in the use of the boats:

- Always wash the sand off any gear and also wash sand off the pontoons before loading gear into the boats.
- Keep the boats well away from the coral at all times. Even on the reef flats you can find sharp pieces to shred the boat. Tilt motor(s) to keep the prop(s) safe.
- This is coral grit, not normal sand, and is very abrasive.
- Be careful in lifting cylinders into the boat. Don't drag the cylinder over the pontoon. Lift it!!
- When transporting equipment in the boats be paranoid about any sharp objects that could slip or move.
- Do not let the boats wash around on the beach.
- Always anchor with a large amount of rope payed out. This ensures that the anchor is unlikely to be pulled out of its setting. If you do not know how to tie off the anchor or are uncertain of your knots, ASK somebody and learn how.
- Check overnight moorings daily. If the weather looks suspect we may need to move the boats into the lagoon and pull them up onto the sand above the high tide mark.
- The boats and the compressors run on unleaded petrol and Tigger has separate tanks for oil injection systems.
- When venturing out onto the eastern side of the reef or traveling to Fairfax Island it is better to travel with the company of another boat.
- Do not use boats unless the pontoons are firmly inflated.
- Do not load or drop weight belts onto the non-carpeted portions of the boats.
- If you ONLY have a shot type weight belt, **MAKE SURE** that the compartments are extremely well sealed: if loose lead shot gets into the hulls, it will cause corrosion.

There are marine CB radios available for each boat and a base station at camp. These have an effective range from any of the normal dive locations around Musgrave and Fairfax Islands. ALWAYS report into Musgrave base before and after each and every dive. However, radios can only help if they work and are used. Learn how to use them and check them frequently. [N.B. Turn them off after use]. We will operate on channel 91 (or 27.91 MHz). Emergency is channel 88 (or 27.88 MHz).

Be careful and good diving.
Safety Issues to Consider

a) Diving Safety
- We’re FAR from the coast / help
- You MUST come back to the anchor – good navigation ESSENTIAL
- Dive into the current (even if there is only a little on the bottom)
- Use a computer or tables – don’t just trust it will be OK
- Many dives will be to/beyond limit of NDL of tables (=multi day fizzing)
- Take some spares so your gear is always in good nick

b) Boating Safety
- Advise where diving, and radio in before and after the dive
- Safe anchoring, dive flags, safety saussies etc are a must
- Play safe – if conditions are not ideal always use two boats, dive shifts, and abort a dive if anything is not right
- Injuries around boats can ruin a holiday at best or cost a life at worst. Take care and drive and dive gently.

c) First aid/ medical emergency on the island
- Compile a list of who has (what) training
- Advise someone in group (nominate) of any medical conditions/ allergies
- Some things each should take (basic first aid supplies)
- Some things just some to take (bulk betadine, cotton wool, etc major 1st aid kits)
- Know how to treat marine bites/ stings, coral cuts, etc
- Check you have insurance cover (in case air evacuation is needed)
- anything else?