

# Great Sandy Straits by Sea kayak

Early in April 2012 I decided to gather a bunch of sea rabble (pictured below) to sea kayak the Great Sandy Straits. Putting a crew together like this is not easy and after much deliberation, checking with wives, girlfriends, boyfriends a date was finally set of the 8-11 June. None of us had paddled this section of the coast before so there was plenty of planning to be had. To assist with this, and get the most out of the limited individual talents each member possessed I set about assigning duties to the group. I assigned duties based on aptitude, interest and attitude.



Damo – Trip Champion and Ideas Man



Furry – Trip (Zen) Master



Simmo - Navigation



Brock – Local Logistics and Shuttle Master (fluent in local dialect)



Somenuts (Scotto) – Group Comms, Food and Trip Bastard



Seano – Shark Decoy and general hand.



Ado – Muscle (if needed), food and general hand



Annie – Shuttle Bunny

With tasks assigned and numbers confirmed I was able to sit back and watch the trip planning efficiently and effortlessly take place. The basic plan was to drive two cars with two double sea kayaks and two single sea kayaks up to Tinnanba where Brock and his family will come and join us. Then we would do the car shuttle and have both cars left at the pull-out spot up at Urangan. The shuttle went beautifully due to the excellent planning and driving of the Shuttle Master and the driving efforts of Simmo despite having quite a late night. Thanks also to Annie for the Shuttle Bunny services!

After a shortish sleep under a hastily set up tarp in the drizzling rain not far from Tinnanba we started to pack our gear into the boats in preparation of our departure. The double kayak teams were Ado and

Scotto in one boat and Simmo and Seano in the other. In the singles were Damo, Davo and Brocko – ok ok ok that's enough O's for now...

Anyway, we left Tinnanba and got onto a nice little South Easter that pushed us up to Gary anchorage with ease. So easy was it with the sails up that we were able to raft-up for about an hour and enjoy the surrounds whilst still making good ground. The main goal for this first leg was to get used to travelling in a group with boats with considerable different hull speeds. My boat and Dave's are both Natureline Mermaids with good sail systems set up. This made our boats quite quick and able to keep up with the Natureline doubles which only had one sail per boat. The Natureline doubles are an inherently fast hull shape and when evenly matched against a single will come out in front every time but having only one sail seemed to balance out things nicely. The other single was Brock's which doesn't have a sail but is really a skinny estuary boat built for speed and not carrying capacity. This meant that Brock was able to keep up and set about the same pace as everyone else – all in all it worked out well.

Gary's is quite a good campsite which fortunately has a covered table and chairs set up because it was still raining and quite cold. Once we had all warmed up a bit we unloaded the fishing gear and did our best to catch some dinner. Dave did all right by getting a couple of Flathead and a Bream that went into a very nice sweet potato and capsicum coconut curry. That night it rained all night and Simmo was testing out a Henacy Hammock – I don't think he liked it too much because the rain was able to make its way in.

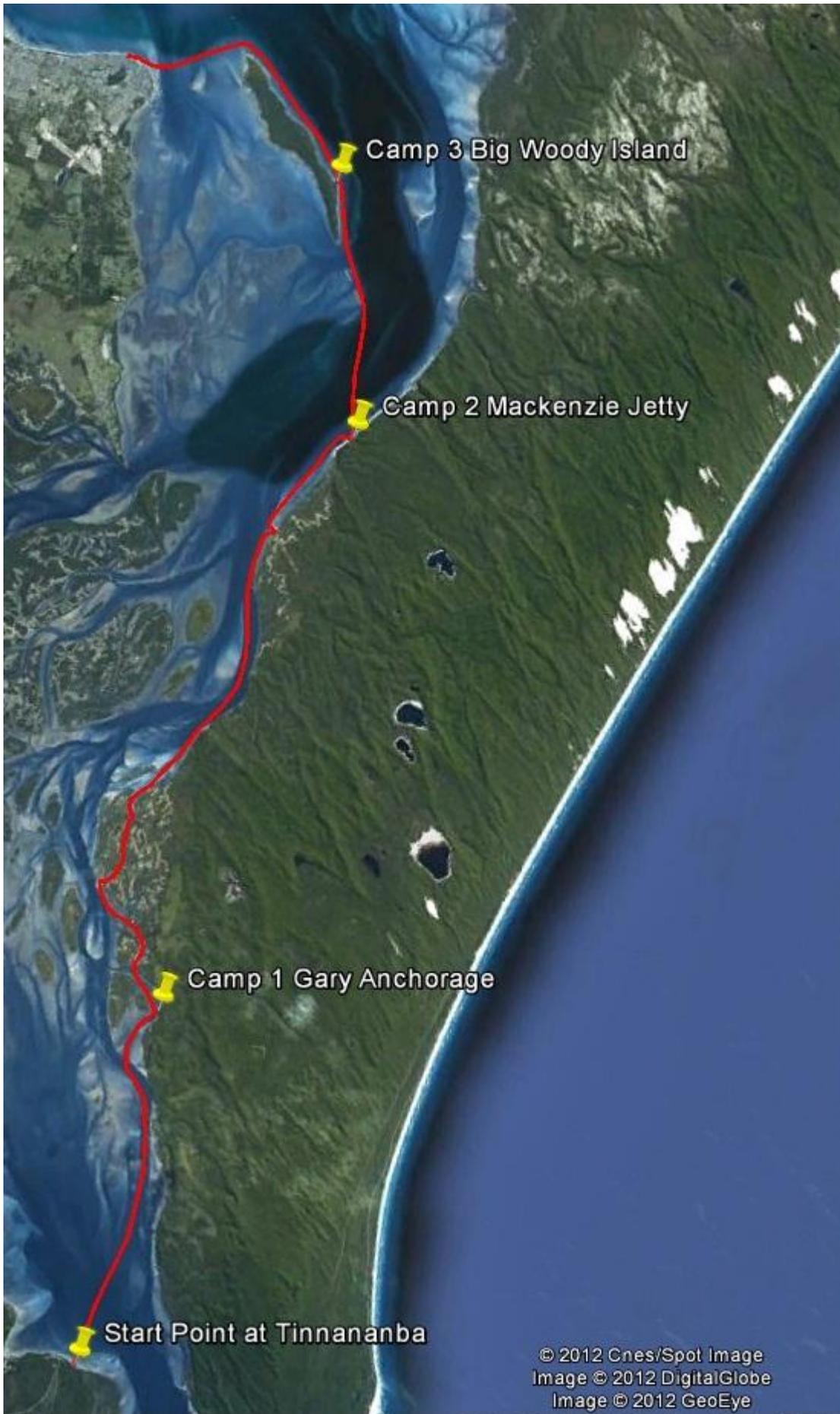
The next day we hit the water with yet again a nice tail wind. Heading North from Gary's is great because you can tuck into this small little waterway that winds its way up through the mangroves. Very nice little addition to the trip that also cuts off about 1km of paddling. After we came out of this creek system we stopped for some cake and a water refill Wanggoolba Creek. Here we got some geezer to take a snapshot of us all.

After a short break we kept moving because it was still quite cold and not good for just hanging around in wet clothing – always heaps warmer inside a sea kayak than out. We paddled for a further 5km or so to Mackenzie Jetty where we pulled up to make camp. Still raining so the first thing to go up was a tarp. After that we settled into our routine of fishing, cooking etc...

The next leg of the journey took us away from Fraser Island itself to head towards Big Woody Island which is a large island at the northern end of the Great Sandy Straits. It was about a 10km paddle from Mackenzies to Big Woody and as per usual we had a good strong wind blow us there. The camping on Big Woody is on the South Eastern end of the island in a good campsite amongst casuarinas on a bed of grass. Still raining so up goes the tarp again. Seano brought his big 6x3m lightweight tarp which was a real cracker and super needed! There was quite a bit of debate at Big Woody about which way around the island we should go in the morning as the wind was forecast to kick up a bit from the SW. In the end we elected to go north from the campsite then turn west to head to our finish point at Urangan. After tackling some quite strong winds hitting our beam we ended up in the sheltered waters of Urangan and the end of the trip.

This was a great trip and the boys are already beginning to think about where the next adventure will be. Cheers, Damo





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Damo at Big Woody Island



Simmo with the thumbs up on route to Gary's



Rafted up but making good headway on route to Gary's



Campsite at Gary's Anchorage



The crew at Wangoolba Creek



Damo and Simmo at preparing to leave Big Woody Island



Damo coming in to Urangan aboard the beautiful  
Rambling Girl