

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A HOLIDAY OF FUN AND ADVENTURE THAT IS... **TAGALONGTOURS** OF AUSTRALIA

www.tagalongtours.com.au

Newsletter January 2015

Hello Everyone,

A Happy New Year to you all. It seems that at the end of every tour season there are plenty of stories to be told, and this past year was no exception. As we all well know, the weather always plays a major part in any outdoor activity, and our 4WD camping safaris definitely fall into that category.

Last April, the far north was impacted by Tropical Cyclone Ita and as a result



Crossing the Normanby River

a late wet season followed. This affected many parts of Cape York. Ita crossed the Far North Queensland coast near Cooktown damaging several buildings including the 140 year old West Coast Hotel which lost its



Happy Tagalongs at The Tip

roof. This weather event also caused severe damage to roads and other infrastructure in the Lakefield Na-



Swimming at Fruit Bat Falls

tional Park. As a result of the maintenance and repairs required, National Parks did not open the roads and campsites until early July. The Bloomfield River causeway was closed as well due to severe damage from the cyclone. This meant that some minor itinerary changes had to be made to those tours affected by the closures. Also in June just as a couple of our tours were heading towards the east coast another patch of bad weather including high winds and heavy rain hit the Cooktown area. This made camping a bit unpleasant and the causeway over the fast flowing Normanby River became an exciting and challenging crossing. I'm sure that a



Crossing Sam Creek

good deal of red Cape York mud made it's way home on our customers' vehicles last year. The new bridge over the Bloomfield River was finished in early October so the crossing from Wujal Wujal should be a lot easier from now on. Also the new bridge over Woorbadda Creek is nearing completion and should be ready for the busy pe-

riod after the current wet season. This sadly will take some of the fun and adventure out of the Bloomfield Track, but it will allow all weather access for the locals who are fortunate enough to call this beautiful part of the world their home.



Log Bridge at Vrilya Point

The fishing in the Cape last year was a bit disappointing. There were very few decent sized fish caught by our customers in spite of their best efforts on the wharves at Weipa and Seisia and on private charters. For those keen on bird watching, many species were spotted and photographed. One particular woman on one of our July tours spotted and recorded over 150 different species of birds on her travels through the Cape.

Earlier last year, the vehicles on our Simpson Desert tour also encountered some wet and boggy conditions on the tracks around Mt Dare and Dalhousie Springs.



West Coast Camp Site

Extra care was needed to navigate through the many detours in the flat country on the western edge of the Desert. Also the fuel situation had to be carefully planned in Finke as the Mt



Molly Clark's Old Andado Home

Dare fuel truck got stranded en route due to the boggy conditions. As the group approached Mt Dare they had to radio Dave Cox, the owner of the hotel, to come out in his Toyota and show which one of flooded tracks needed to

Overall, the Desert was quite challenging in 2014, and as a result of several recoveries and boggy conditions at the start of the tour, an extra night had to be spent on the western side of Big Red. This was a bit frustrating being so close to Birdsville and having to wait an extra day for a hot shower and a cold beer at the famous Birdsville Hotel. Nevertheless another night under the stars in the Simpson Desert was not too hard to take.



Sunrise in the Simpson Desert

Our regular tours to the Simpson Desert and Cape York are booking well for this year with the dates shown here. If you are considering a 4WD adventure with us, don't leave it too long before you make a booking as spaces are filling up quickly.

NEW TOUR NEWS

We are adding a new exciting tour this year to our schedule. It will be our Transcontinental Tour from Cape Byron in NSW to Steep point in WA. These are the most easterly and westerly points of mainland Australia.

It will be a self catered tour with some meals provided along the way and will be conducted around mid September to mid October taking about 4-5 weeks. We are still working on planning, per-



Crossing Lake Poeppel

mits, costings etc, but it should be about the same daily rate as our regular tours. If you are interested, send me an email expressing your interest to paul@tagalongtours.com.au and keep an eye on our website for more info at www.tagalongtours.com.au

Have a great year and we look forward to catching up with you somewhere in the Australian bush.

All the best and safe travels.

Paul Stafford.

2015 TOUR DATES

SIMPSON DESERT

12 Day Semi Catered Tours

10.04.15 - 21.04.15

01.05.15 - 12.05.15

CAPE YORK

18 Day Semi Catered Tours

31.05.15 - 17.06.15

05.07.15 - 22.07.15

09.08.15 - 26.08.15

13.09.15 - 30.09.15

12 Day Fully Catered Tour

05.06.15 - 16.06.15

16 Day Fully Catered Tour

07.07.15 - 22.07.15

20 Day Fully Catered Tour

10.08.15 - 29.08.15

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Peak hour on Big Red

be used to get into his place. This was critical as Mt Dare is the last fuel stop before heading out into the Simpson Desert. The next available fuel is 550



Cadelga Creek ruins

kms away at Birdsville. The group also had an interesting encounter in the dunes meeting a large group of motorcycles heading west. The UHF radio was a very valuable tool that day.



Colson Track French Line Junction