

# Inaugural Arnhemland Fly Fishing Week

## An Unmitigated Success *...by Peter Morse*

As a fly fisherman, the northern coast of Arnhemland represents a remote Nirvana. Fly fishermen have different expectations from most other fishermen — we like to go about our fish-catching business in slightly different ways. The nature of the sport means it's all active; this is not a passive form of fishing. One thing fly fishermen enjoy and demand more than most other forms of fishing is sight casting, seeing the fish first and then getting the fly in front of it to see its reaction. We also love casting, especially to structure that might hold fish. Fly fishing is about casting.

For the promise of fulfilling these expectations, Arnhemland as a fly-fishing destination really excites me.

The first gathering of fly fishermen at Arnhemland's Barramundi Nature Lodge was held in December 2009. It was late in the season, some said too late, but I trusted Alex's experience in this part of the world. Graeme Williams drove in from Darwin to guide and some of the lodge's regular resident guides, Ben Boulton and Mick Eddy were also helped out by a cameo appearance from Roger Sinclair and Alex himself.

Although this was my second visit to the Lodge, I arrived a couple of days early to get the feel for what was going on. I fished with Mick for two days and we enjoyed perfect blue sky days and some great fishing around the rocks, along the beaches and in the creeks. The wind in the morning was offshore and the seas were dead flat, then in the afternoon a light sea breeze would blow in — it was perfect.

I spent another day with Graeme Williams and we cruised the beaches using his electric motor. What we saw on a rising tide through the morning was really quite mind boggling. Huge GTs to 30kg patrolled the shallows, monster queenfish came in and out of view, diamond trevally and vast schools of giant herring patrolled the beaches. Around a creek mouth, there were more mid-sized queenfish and trevally than you could imagine, including a school of GTs all around 25kg that had the creek mouth as their ambush point. It was an extraordinary day and I spent much of it snatching my fly away from fish because there was so much we wanted to have a look at for the coming week — this was what we'd come for and we had huge plans for the following days.

Unfortunately, a very early cyclone had formed and passed across the Top End to the west of Arnhemland. Consequently, for the first few days the seas were quite bumpy for that normally placid time of year, and most of our fishing was creek fishing, casting to snags and gutters. But guess what? Between 7 fly fishermen, we had a 90-barra day, a 70-barra day and several 50-barra days. We caught 32 species, lost countless flies and fly lines, got thoroughly beaten up on the offshore reefs by things we never even got to see and generally had a fantastic time...WITHOUT EVER SEEING THE BEST OF IT...

We travelled along the coast on most days and, because of the unseasonal onshore wind conditions, drove past kilometre upon kilometre of white sand beaches that no fly fisherman had ever walked before!!!

So we're back in 2010 at a slightly earlier date on some tides that should better suit those vast untouched beaches. I really hope you can join me for a week of incredible fly fishing at the Lodge and be amongst the first fly fishermen to experience this great adventure.

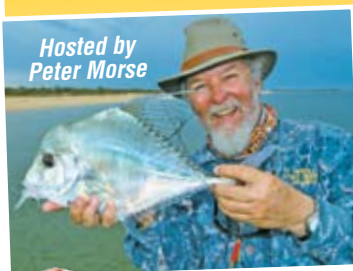
**Peter Morse is widely regarded as Australia's foremost salt water fly fishing authority. He is a member of Team Sage and an FFF Master Certified Casting Instructor.**



*\*2009 winner of the Sage fly rod for most-meritorious catch was Geoff Smith.*



## Arnhemland Fly Fishing Week 7-14 Dec 2010



Peter Morse will be conducting fly-tying workshops as well as tactical discussions on flyfishing for local species. Everyone will get a chance to fish with Peter & learn from his vast experience and enormous skill.

Specialist Top End Fly Fishing Guides include Graeme Williams and Roger Sinclair.

**CONTACT: Roger Sinclair for more details.**

A magnificent 8-weight Sage fly rod will be awarded to the angler who makes the most-meritorious catch.

**SAGE**  
(Prize donated by J. M. Gillies)



**ARNHEMLAND BARRAMUNDI NATURE LODGE**

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