

Torres Strait and the Fly River

Dates

Thursday, 9th November to Friday, 24th November, 2006

16 days

Cost: \$5900

Start: Port Moresby

Finish: Thursday Island

This live-aboard safari is timed to coincide with the best weather for cruising in this region as well as being adjacent to a coral cay to view the annual Great Barrier Reef coral spawning event. The Fly River is an even larger river than the Sepik. Large vessels carrying the ore from Ok Tedi mine navigate it for hundreds of kilometres. It abounds with wildlife. It has a rich cultural history, but the villages are set well back from the river. In addition, the cruise will include several of the islands of Torres Strait, including Murray Island.

Draft Itinerary

Safarists may wish to extend their stays in Port Moresby or Thursday Island. Due to the continually changing channels of the Fly River this itinerary may be subject to some variation.

Thursday, 9th November: Depart Port Moresby 4.00 pm for a long 24 hour cruise to Bramble Cay. Australian and PNG customs laws require the safari to start in Port Moresby. Safarists can board straight from Cairns and Brisbane flights.

Friday, 10th November: Arrive Bramble Cay about 4.00 pm. After dinner watch turtles nesting in a big rookery. About 10.30 pm, as the moon rises, witness the phenomenon of the annual Great Barrier Reef coral spawning.

Saturday, 11th November: Visit Sagero Village on the north bank of the entrance to the Fly River. Then head up Sagero Creek, a tidal tributary of the Fly, where mangroves and nipa palm mark the entrance. Visit a village in dense jungle approximately 12 nm up the creek.

Sunday, 12th November: Cruise to Bituri Creek, then follow the creek through dense jungle and village hunting camps to wetlands and lagoons with lots of birdlife.

Monday, 13th November: Cruise up-river to Suki Creek. The river changes from being over 20 nm wide to approx 0.5 nm wide. The bushland along the banks offers opportunities for bird and wildlife spotting.

Tuesday, 14th November: Head into the vast grass-covered Suki wetlands surrounded by low eucalypt-covered hills. Visit two villages and experience the birdlife.

Wednesday, 15th November: Explore an unnamed wild blackwater creek flowing into the Fly, where the tidal influence stops. Observe the wildlife, including wild Rusa Deer, pigs and assorted birdlife in the thick jungle and open woodland.

Thursday, 16th November: Visit Sapuka Village before heading up Burei Creek, which flows through thick jungle to open wetlands.

Friday, 17th November: Visit villages and cruise along the south bank of the river as it opens out to the 50 nm wide delta.

Saturday, 18th November: Head through the narrow channel that separates the mainland from Parama Island. Visit the village, then head into Daru.

Sunday, 19th November: Go ashore at Daru, the provincial capital. Clear PNG customs, then head out to Darnley Island.

Monday, 20th November: To beautiful Murray Island to explore the lovely island made famous by the Mabo High Court case, which rejected the legal concept of *terra nullius*. 45 nm.

Tuesday, 21st November: Cruise in daylight to Tudu, an uninhabited coral cay in the Warrior Reefs. 70 nm

Wednesday, 22nd November: To Warraber Island, a neat, well-organized community on a coral cay. 30 nm

Thursday, 23rd November: To Badu Island, another Torres Strait community. Enjoy our final night aboard. 45 nm

Friday, 24th November: To Thursday Island, where the cruise terminates. There will be a two-hour bus tour of the island, finishing in time for flights south. 40 nm

