



The Yokarra Crew – What we learned from catching and selling fish in and around Maningrida, Arnhem Land

Don, Wilton^{1,2}, Stuart Ankin¹, Jimmy Olsen¹, Clem Bresson², Natasha Stacey³, and Peter van Wyk³

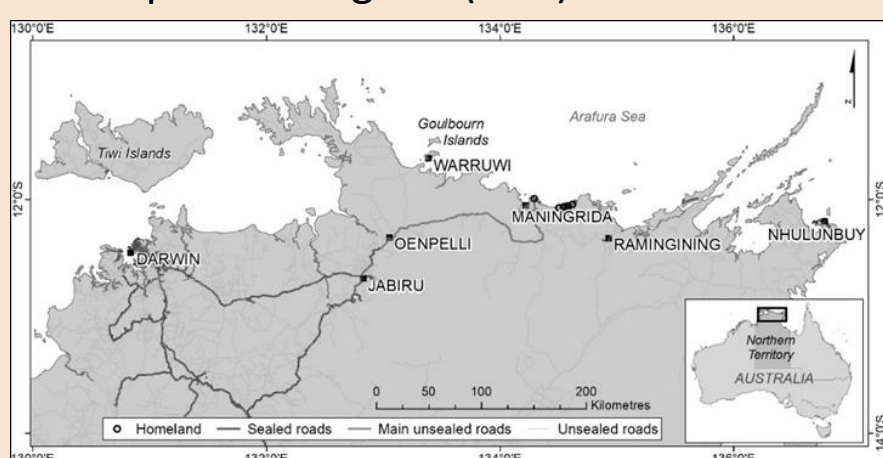
¹ Traditional Aboriginal Owners and Coastal Licence Holders, Maningrida, NT, Australia

² Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, Maningrida, NT, Australia

³ Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods, Charles Darwin University, NT, Australia

About the Fishing Crew

Our Yokkarra (meaning 'fish' in Njebbana language) fishing business was started in 2016 by Don Wilton, Stuart Ankin and Jimmy Olsen. The men applied for Aboriginal Coastal Licences (ACL) through the NT Government and asked Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC) in Maningrida for support, initially buying nets and equipment. Later we obtained support through our participation in the Community Development Program (CDP).



Since then we have been catching and selling fish directly to people in Maningrida community weekly. Sometimes we sell fish to the Ramingining community.



The Yokkarra crew use 100m gill nets to catch blue tail and diamond mullet and other inshore fish species using a pulley system from the beach. We process some of the fish in our filleting shed. We now have also been granted a boat so we can diversify our catch and get some reef fish.

What we needed to make the fishing business work



- Strong elders with motivation and skills, supported by family members to access and fish on country.
- Association with an Aboriginal organisation for administration, book keeping and funding applications.
- Training in *Certificate II in Fishing Operations*, with ongoing mentoring from NT Government Fisheries Department.
- The right equipment and infrastructure to support fishing such as nets, transport, ice-making machine, and fish storage facilities.

Benefits and strengths of the fishing enterprise

- We are all family, we know each other and work together.
- Participation in fishing maintains our social connections to one another and our cultural connections to country.
- We like working on our country – we look after country at the same time we go fishing.
- We follow traditional laws and customs when we work with family.
- We have strong leadership from our elders to run this business. It is good to have this licence and be in charge of our business.
- Fishing provides healthy food for our families and community.
- We can earn income through selling our fish.
- We have learnt from our experiences that we can start small and build things up along way.



Some lessons we have identified

- We are restricted in the species of fish we can sell through our licences – some customers would like to buy other fish like barramundi.
- Fishing is not the same every day, some days we catch more fish than others.
- We have to be careful not to flood the market with too much fish, so this means working and talking together.
- Wet season weather makes some roads impassable making it harder to get to our country to go fishing and travel to other communities to sell our fish.
- We have to keep good records of our catch and sales and make a good system for doing that.
- Currently, we do not make enough money to be a commercial business and rely on CDP workers. We want to run a sustainable business model in the future.

Acknowledgements

Research was supported by CDU and BAC with human ethics approval, and a research permit from the NLC. Fishing in Maningrida is supported by the Federal Government's Community Development Program. BAC has received support for the ALC enterprise from the NT Government and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation.

Contact Information

For information about the ACL business in Maningrida contact:

clem.bresson@bawinanga.com



MANINGRIDA
WILD FOODS