

Circumnavigation of Moreton Island by Sea-Kayak

By Damian Lovejoy

It was early Oct 2011 and I was still trying to convince some of my friends to come on a paddle to circumnavigate Moreton Island over three days starting at Wellington Point. There were some umms and arrs but in the end it was not convenient for them (or they were too scared). This is the story of the solo paddle...

Day 1: Well I was lucky enough that a friend of mine dropped me off at Wellington Point at 3am on Friday 21st Oct so I could ride the outgoing tide to the South Passage Bar. After getting on the water about 4.30am it was a few hours and I was at the South East Point of Moreton looking at a pretty nasty bar and contemplating my next move. I walked to the top of the headland and saw that crossing breakers is pretty unavoidable so elected to head directly North from the South East Point. This way I thought I would avoid the worst of the breakers. After getting back in my boat and heading out through an angry little shore break I put my head down and made north to cross the bar proper. I was able to manoeuvre though shoals until it was just breaking everywhere. Then I changed direction to head more Northwest and head for the beach and the normal type breakers. The sea was about 1.3m (4 feet) so some of the bigger waves put the willies up me. the wind was East 18knots gusting to 20. I saw what looked like a set come though and made ramming speed to follow them in – it worked nicely and I was able to surf some pretty full waves in and broach at the end. This put me outside of the regular surf waves north of the bar and home and hosed. I stayed outside the breakers and headed north to the backside of the Big Sandhill's then decided to hit the beach. Some of the bigger waves/swell were taking three paddle strokes to get over and making big greenbacks in the surf zone. Like before this gave me the willies. I picked the biggest set I could find and put my head down to go in as fast as I could. All was well and I avoided the dumpers. The time was midday and I had a nice campsite under the shade of some casuarinas and the rest of the day was chilling and reading and sleeping.

Day 2: the sea had calmed down only a little bit and was now at about 1.2m. I was hoping during the night to wake up to glassy small surf but this was not to be. The wind was East 16 knots gusting to 18 and stayed that way pretty much all day. After getting my heart rate up nice and high in anticipation of a lonely working by the great South Pacific Ocean it turned out that I had a sweet run and was out the back after getting air twice of the top of a couple of big fellas making a late dash for my head. After heading north he sail system of the Natureline seakayak came into its own holding up nicely on a NNE bearing with an easterly wind. It is the best sail system for a kayak I have seen. After 8 hours of paddling I got to Comboyoro Point for a break and some lunch. I had a little kip then headed a further 10km to Cowen Point and a nice campsite.

Day 3: this day was all about getting back to Manly so Kirsten could pick me up easily. I put in about 9am with the wind blowing ESE. Unfortunately this bearing was too high to the wind for me to get any assistance from the sail. I paddled down the coast to Tangalooma Point where I set the bearing for Green Island. The paddle was uneventful and I arrived at Green Island in good time for some tucker. After lunch I continued to Manly Boat Harbour and my family – yeh!

This was a very good paddle but I recommend it be done over a four days or a leisurely 5 day trip.

