



## Tacoma Flattie

### Vessel number

HV000484

### Date

1960

### Description

The TACOMA FLATTIE is 4.27m (14 feet long), single chine and made of marine grade plywood planking on meranti keel, chines and other longitudinals. The original layout had two thwarts, a net bin at the transom, and was rowed by three people. It is now adapted to take an outboard as well, and serves as a tender for the re-commissioned MV TACOMA. The design was adapted from a north-west American beach based craft, the Oregon surf trolling boat, whose plans were featured in the book 'Fishing Boats of the World 2' page 606. The original design was a double-

ended dory style craft that was 20 feet long, but the Haldane Bros had limited space aboard the MV TACOMA for storage, and took six feet of the aft end of the original design. It now had a transom stern, but this suited the net fishing it was going to do, and the dinghy shape created was stable and simple to make. Stability and light weight were two requirements needed from experience. The Haldane's had built several other flatties before this one, and amongst the lessons learnt, they had been too heavy and needed improved stability in rolling conditions. The wide, plywood built shape they had created from the original design was the solution that worked. The TACOMA FLATTIE's main use was to act as a net boat for live baiting of tuna bait using a light at night, and for salmon fishing on surf beaches. Tuna bait was caught offshore at night using netting with three or four crew aboard, and by using oars only the sound was reduced as they encircled the school of bait fish. Once netted it was kept live aboard the TACOMA before being spread on the surface to attract the big tuna, the ship's main quarry. Another fish they sought was salmon that could be caught close to shore. The FLATTIE used the same method employed by the Tacoma Surf Boat that had been purpose built for this operation. A school of fish would be spotted from TACOMA's crow's nest or by an onshore party which had been stationed on high ground, using either 'walky talky' radio or flag signals back to TACOMA. The beach group would join the party of rowers that had come ashore. The shoal of fish usually travelled along parallel to the beach so the TACOMA FLATTIE started to shoot-set out through the surf at right angles, with one end of the net held onshore. The three rowers (without a sweep) would row until they reached a set coloured floats on the net then turn and travel along the beach again until set lengths of the net were reached. The boat then returned through the surf to the beach where the net was then pulled in until the bag could be secured. Once this was completed the net

was closed to herd the fish into the bag. The bag was then closed and either rowed out to TACOMA or a line from TACOMA secured to the net, and the bag winched to the boat. The fish were then brailled into the boat. It is estimated that up to 1600 tonnes of salmon were caught with this boat using this beach seine method over its eight years of use. A small number of other craft and fishermen used the same method, but it was not widespread in SA. The TACOMA FLATTIE also served as a tender when needed, and was retired from TACOMA in 1968. It then remained stored ashore and undercover. In 2009 TACOMA was re-commissioned by the Tacoma Preservation Society, and along with the Tacoma Surf boat, the TACOMA FLATTIE was restored for active use with TACOMA. It is in excellent condition and serves as a tender once again.

### **Dimensions**

Vessel Dimensions: 4.27 m (14 ft)