

Basic Detail Report



Mandurah Patrol Dinghy

Vessel number

HV000661

Date

1958

Primary Maker

West Australian Department of Harbour & Lights

Description

Shipwright Jeff Beale built five double-banked rowing vessels for the Western Australian Fisheries Department in 1958 while working for the Department of Harbour and Lights. They were 4.3m long and 1.2 m wide. The design of the patrol dinghy was based on earlier Fisheries Department boats. Jeff Beale said: "When I was told to go ahead with the construction of these vessels, I had a good look at a really old one lying in the corner of the workshop. It was about fifty years old and I lifted its lines and went from there." It is similar to the small Swan River netting boats with batten-seamed carvel hulls but of lighter construction and finer lines. The patrol dinghy was designed to be sailed, rowed or sculled by fishery officers and steered with a rudder and tiller. The mast is freestanding and the sail used primarily on a reach or run. Fisheries inspectors used these vessels to police and enforce fishing regulations in protected waters of embayment, estuaries and rivers where overfishing was of public concern. Although used during the day, inspectors also went out under the cover of darkness and with muffled oars would sneak up to surprise and apprehend miscreants for violations of regulations. The craft were painted dark grey so as not to reflect light at night. Inevitably the fishers called the dinghies 'sneak boats'. The patrol dinghy in the Western Australian Maritime Museum's collection spent its entire working life based at Mandurah, a small town eighty kilometres south of Perth. Mandurah is on the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary, the catchment area for the Serpentine, Murray and Harvey Rivers comprises of an area of 136 square kilometres of saline water. In 1990 the system supported the largest professional and amateur estuarine fishery in Western Australia with a high catch of blue swimmer crabs and western king prawn. When the patrol dinghy was replaced by aluminium motorised craft it was stored in the rafters of Fisheries' Mandurah boatshed until it was donated to the Western Australian Maritime Museum in 1980. It was later restored and is now on display in the Maritime Museum, Victoria Quay, Fremantle. Prepared from research material provided by the Western Australian Maritime Museum, Maritime History Department.

Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 4.32 m × 4 m × 1.28 m × 0.18 m (14.17 ft × 13.12 ft × 4.2 ft × 0.59 ft)