

Basic Detail Report



Lizard

Vessel number

HV000848

Date

1980

Primary Maker

Neil Drake

Description

Lizard is a 17ft net fishing boat designed and built c. 1980 by Neil Drake in Triabunna on the east coast of Tasmania. It was used for seine netting Australian salmon from beaches in the south east of Tasmania, the fish then processed in Triabunna for both human consumption and cray bait. Lizard is now on display at the Spring Bay Marine Discovery Centre in Triabunna. Lizard is a carvel planked dinghy and built lightly for launching at the beach and rowing. Its hull is constructed of local King Billy pine with copper, silicone and bronze fastenings. It has a

transom mounted roller to allow net setting with ease. The following is an abridged account of Lizard's design background and fishing operation by ARHV Steering Committee member and Councilor Peter Higgs: The boat builders, Drakes, Neil and Mike, of Triabunna were, supposedly related to the Scottish boat builder who established his boat yard in 1855, John Drake of Torquay (now East Devonport Tas.). Many Triabunna based boat builders came from families in the NW of Tasmania. Others included the Wilson family in the early 1950s. I believe Bernard Wilson's father, who moved to Triabunna first and once his son Bernard finished his carpentry apprenticeship in East Devonport, he soon joined his father in Triabunna. Dean, Bernard's son also assisted in boat building, but is also a house builder. Bernard has spent his life fishing and building boats in Triabunna and still volunteers at the Spring Bay Marine Discovery Centre restoring and maintaining boats in their collection. Both the Drakes and the Wilsons dominated the fishing boat building industry in Triabunna. During the 1980's a group of local (Triabunna) fishermen (Michael Jarvis, Malcolm Fergusson, Reg Bolton and others) worked together to catch Australian Salmon in Lizard with a large beach sein net about 600 mts long. Farmer/fish-spotter, John Salmon, would fly his Cessna 180 over the schools of fish and direct the fishermen via VHF radio to the school's location. The fishers rowed the Lizard very gently to a position behind the fish school and then carefully set the net around the fish school and then fix it on the beach. Then they commenced the long process of hauling the net by hand to the beach until all the fish were forced through the funnel in the centre of the net and into the cod end or bag of the net. This stage was often difficult and grueling as human effort was hampered by the forces of

the beach surf and undertow. The cod end would then be detached from the funnel, tied off tightly and hauled out into deeper water alongside a larger fishing boat for loading via a brail scoop net in a frame to be hauled aboard. Schools of up to 25 tonnes were caught using this method. Some of the fish were canned for human consumption in the very processing shed that the SBMDC now meet and work in currently. Spoiled Australian Salmon was sold for cray bait. Australian Salmon fishing only ceased in the Triabunna region because the local processing facilities closed down. The beach seining net fishing method was also used by the Ritchie family on the NW coast which also used a plane spotter. Completed with the assistance of ARHV Steering Committee and Council Member Peter Higgs