

# Basic Detail Report

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## Aboriginal Kalwa Raft

### Vessel number

HV000039

### Primary Maker

Tommy Thomas

### Description

This Indigenous Kalwa raft is associated with the Bardi people of North West Australia, and was made at One Arm

Point on King Sound. It is an example of what are known as double rafts because they are made in two sections. It was made by Tommy Thomas (Djuboy) assisted by trainees Luke Thomas and Lockey Coomerang through Aboriginal Traditional Crafts, Perth, WA. Each section is made up from a number of poles secured together with wooden pegs. The poles are taken from mangrove wood trunks, and they taper with a distinct swelling in the diameter at the lower end. The poles are all secured with the larger diameter ends adjacent to each other. This larger end of each section is then placed at the bow and stern, and the stern section of logs is lapped above the bow section. The two sections are nailed together with wooden pegs. The pegs come from split hardwood sticks. This arrangement gives it the pronounced tapered shape where it is narrower in the middle than at the ends which flare out into a fan shape. The bow section was called 'tjuntjal' and the stern section (which sometimes appears to be made up of fewer logs) was called 'njengorol'. The bardi name for the raft type is kalwa. It was propelled by a single bladed paddle and some of the larger rafts could support four people, all seated. It was also possible to pole the craft from a standing position in shallow waters. Their main use was for hunting, fishing, egg collecting and transport between the mainland and the islands within the archipelagos of the region. Voyages tended to be over short distances, but rarer longer trips have been recorded. They used the currents and tidal flow to their advantage to move about this treacherous area in The Kimberly coastline. As a hull form it is remarkably well adapted to its purpose, despite its simple arrangement of materials. The buoyant ends and double layer of logs in the middle provide sufficient volume or buoyancy to support a modest load and comfortably operate in choppy but enclosed waters. One single part by itself can also support a person. When hunting for dugong, the hunter can secure the harpoon line to one part of the raft, and allow the harpooned animal to exhaust itself by towing the freed raft section while the hunter waits on the other section.

### Dimensions

Vessel Dimensions: 3.1 m x 1 m (10.2 ft x 3.3 ft)