

Basic Detail Report



00000446

Title

Pearling lugger COONAGLEBAR II

Date

c 1940

Medium

Timber, paint, varnish

Dimensions

Overall: 960 x 1030 x 300 mm

Name

Model

History

Pearling has been a major industry in Northern Australia since the late 1860s. It was initially a practice of the local Aboriginal population who traded pearls with neighboring islanders including Macassan traders. Pearl seekers started to operate in Torres Strait's waters by the early 1860s with the Indigenous population at first largely not welcoming their presence. The first pearling station was set up in 1868 by Captain Banner and by 1883 there were 33 licensed stations operating in the Torres Strait. Pearl shell was a valuable material before the days of plastic and was used to make buckles, buttons, jewellery and cutlery. Shells from the Torres Strait were popular with the English and American clothing industry of the time for the manufacture of buttons and buckles. Pearling luggers are designed expressly for pearl oyster gathering. Luggers towed their divers over the pearl beds by drifting, often with just the sail on the aft mast set. The older traditional vessels utilised sail power featuring two sails, two masts and local timbers. Contemporary vessels have become motorised with no sail power.