

## **Tough night at sea for NCYC fleet in inaugural 100 mile overnight offshore race**

A fleet of seven yachts lined up for the 1800 hours start in Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club's first race of the *Lion, Bird & Cabbage* offshore series on Friday evening. The race commenced in a 20 knot North Easterly with the fleet tacking out of Newcastle Harbor before turning right, setting spinnakers and trundling down the NSW coast to Bird Island just to the north of Norah Head. Phil Arnall's Corby 43, *Anger Management*, set the pace and rounded Bird Island at approximately 2030 hrs before settling in to a 55 nautical mile beat to Cabbage Tree Island situated to the North of Port Stephens.

*The Raging Bull* (Bull 9000), *She's the Culprit* (Inglis-Jones 39) and *Schouten Passage* (Beneteau 40.7) all rounded the Bird Island approximately 30 minutes later. With the wind increasing and clocking slightly left over the next 6 hours the fleet bounced their way upwind with reefs in and small headsails up in a short sharp seaway.

Casualties of the testing conditions on the northern leg were *Anger Management* with a suspected split diesel tank, *LMR Solar* (Sayer 40) which was dismasted directly off Newcastle and *Summersalt* (Beneteau 36.7).

With the Corby 43 out of the race *Schouten Passage* ground out a 45 minute lead through some solid tactics and commitment by the crew to forgo watches during the night and sit on the rail all the way to Cabbage Tree Island. A stoic performance was put in by John Streeter's *The Raging Bull* to be second to Cabbage Tree Island despite putting their spinnaker pole through their No.4 headsail and having to sail the remainder of the beat with a storm jib and one reef in their main. Third and fourth around the northern Island was *She's the Culprit* and Jim and Mary Holley's *Aurora* (Farr 40), respectively.

As another wet and overcast day was the day breaking and shortly after rounding Cabbage Tree Island *Schouten Passage* blew up their heavy air spinnaker resulting in the need to pole out a Jib Top which allowed *The Raging Bull* to make up a little but not enough time on the leader during the downwind slide from Port Stephens back to Newcastle. *Schouten Passage* eventually hoisted a lighter air spinnaker on approach to Newcastle and took line honors by 35 minutes.

Despite a proportionately high casualty rate caused by the testing conditions and with all boats safely home by midday on Saturday all crews no doubt enjoyed the remainder of the weekend catching up on some much needed sleep and drying out from the rain which fell continuously for the duration of the 14-17 hour race.

In addition to line honors, Rob and Jan Howard's *Schouten Passage* also took IRC honors with *The Raging Bull* claiming first place on performance handicap.

The second race in NCYC's *Lion, Bird & Cabbage* offshore series begins on 11 February 2012 with yachts racing to a rounding mark set in Broken Bay before returning to Newcastle.

For full results go to [www.ncyc.net.au](http://www.ncyc.net.au)