

One of four Kirby 11.3m Naiads for Western Australian Fisheries

By MIKE BROWN

'FD12'



The Western Australian Fisheries Department continues the re-equipment of its patrol fleet, taking delivery of yet another Kirby Marine Naiad RIB.

'FD 12', an 11.3-metre Naiad, will be based at Mandurah and will patrol the coast as far south as Cape Naturaliste.

Her 2C survey is for the full 30 nautical miles offshore, and she is effectively able to take over a role that would previously have required a far larger vessel. Naturally, for occasions needing more than 15 nautical miles offshore, she would need to take on a Master 5 rather than the normal Coxswain-qualified skipper. Intended to operate purely as a day boat, 'FD12' has emergency sleeping accommodation for three in case of being weatherbound down the coast.

The structure is unique: Fisheries wanted wider side decks of 800mm to avoid any chance of pinching a crew member when boarding another vessel, and Kirby achieved this by making the sides more upright within the standard collar.

This allowed the wheelhouse to remain its normal size, and it is indeed a very roomy space. It contains three KAB seats and a toilet compartment with flushing toilet and sullage system, the latter being something new. Mixed sex crews becoming common and the possibility of over-nighting made it a logical addition. The internal volume is increased by the forward-raked windscreen, and made more habitable both by that and the large area of opening side glass.

Previous Naiads for Fisheries have featured forward cockpits, but the department specified a flush foredeck for 'FD12'. This was to make boarding easier, pilot boat style, and mini pilot boat rails are installed forward. The space under the deck is a storage void, and to deter loading gear there that might influence trim Kirby went to great lengths to build in abundant storage elsewhere.

The cabin between foredeck and wheelhouse, where the emergency bunks are, is mainly used for the storage of bulky items. Every other part of the vessel has storage boxes and pockets wherever they can be fitted in, including the cockpit sides.

The electronics suite is comprehensive and complex. The full range of radios from

UHF to HF includes secure bands, and the large Furuno screens handle a good deal of computer traffic as well as input from sounder, GPS and radar. Registration and licensing details can be called up, and incident data can be logged.

The cockpit is usefully large, has pot slide rails at its sides, and contains a commercial pot winch and tipper. This needed to be a serious piece of equipment because it gets a lot of use, not only for pulling illegal lobster pots but also clearing stray pots after the season's end. Electrically driven by a Muir winch, it has a custom automatic brake and is powered by a bank of deep cycle batteries of awesome capacity. The twin 261kW Yamahas' exceptional alternator output replenishes them with only short running time between pots.

The four-stroke Yamahas take the Naiad to a top speed of 45 knots, although normal cruising speed is a more modest 28 knots. At the latter speed, range from the twin 700-litre tanks is 350 plus nautical miles. Actual performance is far more significant than those raw figures.

On trials the positioning of the wheelhouse was found to be ideal: besides being far enough aft to add extra softness to the ride, it had no influence on the angle of drift. The ride was outstanding even by Naiad standards; the extra beam added an unknown element, but in very poor weather the vessel punched above its weight.

A long series of Naiads, all with the genuine Kirby policy of constant improvement applying to them, means that the latest is a refined vessel indeed. The ergonomics are just so: everything falls to hand and eye. No vessel ever had too many handholds but 'FD12' must come close – there is nowhere on board you feel one is lacking.

Maintenance is eased by an unswerving devotion to accessibility to everything that could need it. The yacht-quality finish that hits the eye continues into the places where the eye does not normally penetrate: there are absolutely no raw edges anywhere.

Kirby Naiads historically are sold on at prices similar to or even higher than the original cost; 'FD12' is likely to attract a bidding war when her time comes.

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'FD12'

SPECIFICATIONS

Type of vessel:	Fisheries patrol RIB
In survey to:	USL 2C
Home port:	Mandurah, Western Australia
Owner/operator:	Fisheries Western Australia
Designer:	Naiad Design, New Zealand
Builder:	Kirby Marine Fabrication, Western Australia
Construction material:	Aluminium
Length overall:	11.3 metres
Beam:	4.1 metres
Draught:	0.55 metres
Displacement:	5.6 tonnes
Main engines:	2 x Yamaha 261kW outboards
Steering:	HyDrive
Maximum speed:	45 knots
Cruising speed:	25-30 knots
Range:	400nm
Electronics supplied by:	Taylor Marine
Radars:	Furuno
Depth sounder:	Furuno
Radios:	ICOM
Autopilot:	Coursemaster
Compass:	Plastimo
Other electronics:	NavNet vx2
Winches:	Muir
Capstan:	M & J Engineering
Paints/coatings:	International Paint
Windows:	Beta Marine
Fuel capacity:	1,400 litres
Freshwater capacity:	200 litres
Crew:	3 + 3