IT'S not surprising that an increasing number of keen Darwin and Katherine anglers make regular forays down to the Roper River.

Usually, trips are planned to coincide with the run-off, but only when road access to Roper Bar is available after the wet season.

Stories of hundreds of barra caught by one boat in one day are not uncommon, and often there are some true monsters among them.

However, the opportunity to catch a Roper River whopper barra has become so alluring that anglers now head down to fish the build-up.

Mostly they take enough fuel, provisions and ice to last three or four days, swagging in their tinnies and fishing from dusk till dawn.

It's actually a tough gig, and you need to be pretty pally with your fishing buddies, but it can pay off in spades when those big Roper girls start biting.

Darwin's Bonnie Keogh and her partner Russell Hanton are not new to the Triple R Club (Roper River Regulars), and their latest trip yielded some great fish, including an absolute slapper for Bonnie.

Here's what she wrote to me:

“Now I know why they call the Roper River ‘the land of the giants!’

“A couple of weeks ago, we went down to the mouth of the Roper River on a four-day fishing expedition.

“As always, heading off on these adventures always gets me excited about what the trip could bring, but never did I expect to catch the fish of a lifetime.

“It was only the first full day of fishing when everything broke loose.

“After trolling big pink Strada lures all morning and catching a few decent barra, the fish went off the bite and we thought they’d stopped feeding.

“Everyone was quiet on the boat and we were trolling at a slow speed.

“Normally when fishing, everything happens when you least expect it, and that’s exactly what happened!

“Just as I started to relax and enjoy the stiff breeze, my Shimano Core started to scream!

“As always, I jumped up with excitement, and Russell yelled: ‘Good fish, good fish!’

“Little did we know how good a fish it was!

“The fight was epic, taking at least 15 minutes to wind in.

“I knew it was a metrey from the strength of the fish, but it wasn’t until the big girl did her first jump that we all realised how big this fish actually was.

“After 15 stressful minutes and two or three jumps, we finally had her by the boat.

“Catching a big barra like this is most definitely a team effort.

“Without Russell’s netting skills, Jason Francis’ boat driving the boat organisation by Steph Trewartha, I could not have landed this fish.

“With the monster by the boat, she launched into the air and Russell scooped the net and had her in the boat.

“It was at that moment that I realised this was the fish of my and every fisherman’s dreams.

“I love catching big barra, but I love releasing them just as much.

“After a few trophy photos, we had her back in the water in no time.

“We kicked the boat into gear and swam her into the middle of the river.

“It took about 10 minutes to get her going and she swam off with a huge kick, and we think she lived to see another day.

“Fish like this don’t come easy. I’ve spent many hours on the water chasing a beast exactly like this, and the experience was everything I had imagined and more.”

Congratulations to Bonnie on a fabulous catch.