

583 A/94

Mem. From Capt. Basteret's voyage round the world

"On the 28th Decr. 1767, a fleet of more than 100 of the small country vessels, called Proas, anchored here (Bouthian near Macassar); their burden is from 12 to 18 and 20 Ton and they carry from 16 to 20 men. I was told that they carried on a fishery round the island, going ~~to~~ out with one monsoon and coming back with the other, so as always to keep under the lee of the land: the fish was sent to the China Market, and I observed that all these vessels carried Dutch Colours."

Howesworth. vol. 1. pa. 640.

These were probably part of a large fleet of nearly 500 sail of proas, some carrying upwards of 36 men, which we were informed by a Malay chief at Timor (when there in the *Mermaid* in 1818) sailed annually from Macassar and the islands in its neighbourhood, to fish for Leping or Beeche/lemer on the ~~the~~ northern coast of New Holland. From what we could learn on this subject it appears that these vessels sail towards ^{the Gulf of Carpentaria &} the eastern part of the ^{the} coast of New Holland before the westerly monsoon breaks up among the Malay islands in March or April, & that they fish for Beeche lemer along shore in an easterly direction. At the close of the easterly monsoon in middle of October obliges them to make the best of their way to Macassar with the produce of their labours, as the flimsy nature of these ~~the~~ frail barks renders a favorable breeze indispensable to their reaching any fixed destination.

In the *Mermaid* in 1818, month of April, we fell in with 22 sail of these proas prosecuting their researches westward along the north coast of New Holland, and in April (25) we fell in with 4 others, which tends to confirm the above statement.



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