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# FISHING PORT DOUGLAS .COM

By Heff

Firstly we'd like to welcome Adam Boone to the operation and he'll be operating our 6m Whaler vessel in 2019. There's a bit more of a write up on Adam at the back of the magazine.

There's no doubt the December and New Year period was one lined with peaks and troughs. It was either brilliant weather or simply disastrous. Unfortunately some of the bad weather coincided with the Christmas period which is traditionally a very busy week in Port Douglas. Luckily for us there were a few brave souls who were keen to hit the water despite the obvious challenges. The region recorded its highest rainfall for December since 1975.

Just prior to this though we had a week or so of calm weather and we found ourselves down the coastline catching a variety of species including nannygai, trevally, stripeys and tangling with a couple of big rogue spanish mackerel. From the point on however the forecast looked ominous as Tropical Ex-Cyclone Owen was making its way back up the coastline bringing with it horribly strong winds and plenty of rain to compound the situation.

Naturally we found ourselves fishing the local creek using varying methods depending on the clients. Family days using quality dead bait and also live baits we were able to secure mangrove jack, small fingermark, grunter, barracuda, bream and the those pesky eels.

On a separate occasion one lady dropped a colossal mangrove jack right at the boat. No kidding it would have stretched at least 55cm and this occurred in the upper stream of the system. It would have been a trophy sized estuary catch and would have made for a great photo. On another trip, Claudia from the Mirage Country Club joined us with her brother and she caught the biggest fish of the trip. It gave her a good tussle and the end result was a Morwong or also sometimes called a Blubber Lip Bream. It's definitely not a common estuary catch and the inclement weather must have dragged him into the calmer waters. Some other different species we came across included red throat emperor and pink eared emperor. We even caught a juvenile spanish mackerel in the cast net and it was obviously escaping the wild waters of the coastline.

On one trip we were joined by Jim Thompson from California and he has fished the world for every species under the sun using his fly rod. He has caught 150 different species from Marlin to Tuna to the exotic Rooster fish. Basically he is an encyclopedia on fly fishing. He was also accompanied by Michelle Timms, considered by many as the best ever Australian female basketballer alongside with Lauren Jackson. Michelle is an Australian basketball coach and retired professional basketball player.

CONTINUED PAGE 8 .....



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# Exceed Sportfishing

By Jake Wyatt



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I guess like many the last month or so has been a case of dodging the bad weather and making the most of it when the seas were calm and the sun was shining. It has meant I have had to be versatile and thus we covered quite a few different types of fishing methods.

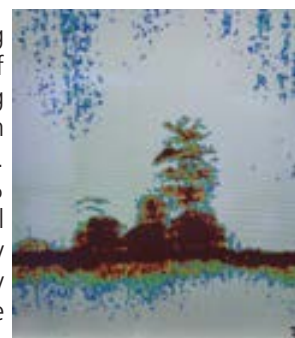
When we had those extended days of wild winds and rains we had no alternative but to fish the calm waters of the Dickson Inlet. To be honest there was only one really quiet day where we didn't see much at all. It was following several inches of rain overnight and the water was filthy. Other than that we managed to secure some pretty good fish for clients including mangrove jack which seem to relish in the tougher conditions, grunter, bream and some not bad sized fingermark. The beauty of the Dickson Inlet is that it doesn't have that volume of fresh water coming down from the mountains like your other systems such as the Mowbray, Mossman and Daintree River. The estuary seems to clear up a lot quicker and you get to see some action not too long following a decent dumping of rain. During our time up the creek we tried a variety of baits including live herring, prawns, squid and strip baits. However the humble pilchard out fished everything else and the mangrove jack in particular couldn't get enough of them down their throat.

We did see some good weather at times and it was a relief to be able to travel out through the harbour leads. We did quite a few half day trips and we headed south fishing the coastal reefs. Here we found an endless

supply of mid sized nannygai, caught a few trevally and other bits and pieces including some nice grassy sweetlip.

On my full day trips in glassed out conditions we hit various sections of the reef from Batt Reef all the way north to Mackay Reef. So we covered a fair bit of territory over several trips and each day typically provided something different. Some days it was full on nannygai fishing and when they are on the chew it doesn't take long to compile good numbers of fish. It was very rewarding too to nail a few ripping red emperor in the process and there's no better reef fish in my opinion. On other days we had more success on the coral trout and various other species such as moses perch, spangled emperor and stripeys. Pulling up the exotic looking chinese or footballer trout was also a bonus. During our time spent jigging slices and soft plastics on top of balls of bait we had arm wrenching fun tussling with heaps of bludger trevally and in the process nailed a stunning diamond trevally which was a bloody big one.

At the start of January I took on a job with AMSA for 11 days doing research out of Townsville driving the tenders from the mothership. I'm not 100% sure what we'll be doing exactly but will gladly report on it in the next edition. ■



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# The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

At the time of putting pen to paper for this report I must admit I am sitting here scratching my head as to what just happened in the last month or so. It was a very strange period that's for sure.

As to be expected the start of December is normally a little quieter and as the weeks go by it gradually builds into something quite significant. With the first sign of people coming into town we had Cyclone Owen rip across our coastline in its initial formation. That night it passed right over the top of our heads it wasn't officially a cyclone at this point but it might have well been. Gusts of wind to 100km per hour created havoc tearing up massive trees and dumping a serious amount of rain in the region. The aftermath was quite significant across the shire and reminded me of Cyclone Justin back in 1997.

Following this we enjoyed a week of vacuum like conditions as Owen passed over into the Gulf. It was good timing as we punched out several charters, most of them work related Christmas parties. These type of trips have become more and more popular at this time of year especially with the 'tradies'. The fishing at the time was quite good but there is one trip I will elaborate on.

It was with Greg from Eclat painting services. He did two trips with his work crew in the space of a week. The first trip was with a bigger crowd and the fishing was quite good. It was the second trip however with a smaller number of guys that I want to expand on. With the weather conducive we decided to venture way north to the Mackay Reef area which is a bit of a run. I hadn't been quite this far north in some time so I was keen to see if it was going to produce. We began our quest fishing roughly in the 30m water range. A couple of hangs produced one decent sized green jobfish and a few other bits and pieces. It wasn't quite what I was expecting but as always I have a back up plan with a secret spot or two to investigate.

Moving out into considerably more deeper water we hit the jackpot. What transpired even caught me by surprise a bit as the nannygai came over the side one after the other. Not in spits and spurts, but a constant barrage. Everyone was engaged and being a work party the boys were hooting and hollering. It got to a point where I had to say enough was enough and we drove away from the fish. In the cleaning process, which took awhile mind you, at the work station we processed 37 large mouth nannygai. Being local lads we knew the fish would be put to good use.

Once we had the situation under control we hit another spot or two and the good times kept on rolling. The log book recorded a further 10 good sized coral trout, 8 spangled emperor, a monster red emperor and two gold spot trevally. All in all 57 fish returned to the docks.

This was the last of the joy as Ex- Cyclone Owen, which had eventually dropped down the Qld state then hung off the eastern coast and bloody decided to move back towards our

neck of the woods. Well that was painful as it coincided with traditionally one of our busiest weeks of the year between Christmas and New Year. We had 'Buckley's and None' of leaving the harbour as 30 knot winds and rain peppered the region. From a business point of view it was a complete write off. Add to this the media were painting a shocking view of what was happening up our here (and completely not warranted) and I have no doubt it will have a very negative effect moving into the New Year.

It's a shame because as I write this the weather has just come good again and the fishing has been extremely productive. Hopefully the media bashing hasn't put too many people off from still coming up here in what is normally our last run before the traditional quiet season kicks in next month. ■



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## A Time for Discovery

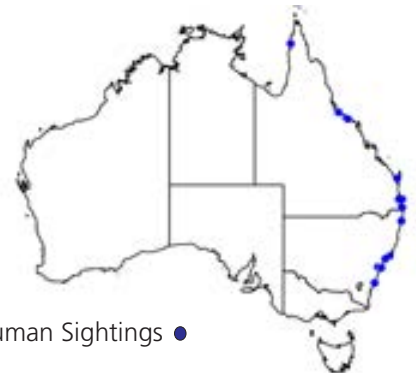
By 'Sharky' Shane Down

Well Ex-Cyclone Owen left its mark on the Far Nth coastline dumping copious amounts of rain and delivering unrelenting winds putting pay to any decent fishing for weeks. It will go down as one of the worst Christmas periods for many, many a year. The only upside is that it has meant a lot of bait has been distributed around including prawns, crabs and small fish. It will put the local fishery in good stead in the coming weeks if we can get some relief from the rain.

There was one decent window in between Owen passing through the first time and making a return the second time. It was a week before Xmas and I experienced a good bit of action along the beach heading into dusk. The first adversary was a decent spinner shark which leaped all around the place before being beached and released. I followed this up with a reasonable blue salmon which stretched 52cm on the tape. It wasn't a big fish but it was damn well tasty cooked fresh. There's a bit of a stigma about the eating quality of these fish, but I say that's rubbish. When dispatched properly and bled well upon capture and cooked fresh they are as good as any. My next encounter was a good sized 68cm barra which paraded around the surface in spectacular fashion. It was full of vigour providing some serious pulling power before being dragged to shore and then released. Next month see's the opening of the barra season and this capture gives me hope that it might be a good one considering the bait that has been recently

flushed along the coast.

At other times during this good spell of weather I went polaroiding for squid and spotted a few really good ones but they weren't interested in taking my lure. I also spotted a shoal of eagle rays patrolling the beach which is not a common sight and I tossed a lure around them in the hope that some trevally or queenfish might also be following their moves. This didn't eventuate but I did come across a fly fisherman who had foul hooked one of these rays. I followed this chap as he fought the ray as I was hoping to get a closer look at what type of eagle ray it was. I was maybe guessing a spotted variety but this ray was going really crazy which had me undecided because the spotted species are normally a bit more docile. Finally I got a good look at the wings as they broke the surface. The were light brown in colour and not black with white spots - thus dismissing it as a spotted ray. Eventually the fisherman was able to drag it up onto the beach and I immediately recognised it as a Cow Nose Eagle Ray! In all my years of diving and fishing up here I had never seen one before and I was extremely excited, more so than the angler himself. The ray was hooked in the left wing and the hook was fairly easy to remove. I was eager in taking a few pictures before helping it back to the water where it could rejoin the shoal and join her mates. It was for me an amazing moment. Here's a few reasons why this was so exceptional.



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According to the National Museum there has been only a handful of human sightings ever in Australian waters as displayed on the map. They are known to travel in large schools with only a couple of rare pieces of footage ever filmed. This goes to show that our famous Four Mile Beach is so special considering in recent years we've also reported fish captures of both the extremely rare green sawfish and the prehistoric Shark ray caught by yours truly. This Cow Nose Ray only adds to the aurora of such a magical stretch of beach.

On another day I decided to walk the flats on a low tide with Thresher my pup, to see if we could find ourselves a mud crab for Christmas. It was going to be a stinker of a day so we did this nice and early in the morning. I come across all sorts of creatures on these walks and this time was no exception. I stumbled across a pike eel which had beached itself. It was barely breathing so I pulled it to a nearby shallow pool and helped revive it moving water through its gills. Soon enough it came back to life and I was happy to leave it where it was as the tide would eventually come back in a couple of hours. A bit further on I discovered a sand anemone and it had a pair of magnificent shrimp on it. The bigger one was the female and she was loaded with eggs, the smaller one was obviously the male. This was something pretty cool seeing a pair together. Unfortunately we found no legal mud crabs

but it was well worth the walk.

Back home from the mud crab walk the temperature was going through the roof. It was time for a cool change so I jumped in the 4WD with pup and headed for the mountains for the afternoon. We headed up through the range and drove to Julatten which was considerably cooler once you hit the area. At the Julatten Tavern we turned right off the main road and took the route to Mt Lewis. It one of the highest rainforest-clad mountains of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and is a treasure trove of unique and endemic wildlife. The beautiful upland rainforest dates back to the evolution of flowering plants on earth. Some flowers are indicative of Australia's link with the ancient landmass of Gondwana. I wasn't there however for the flowers but one of those endemic wildlife species - The Spiny Crayfish or Mt Lewis Crayfish. This freshwater crustacean is found exclusively only in this immediate area and no where else on this planet. The round trip is approximately 55km from the Tavern.

I made my way through the National Park and finally came a creek crossing to my liking. As we were in between significant rain periods the creek was at a fairly low level. Walking through the creek there were hundreds of big tadpoles the size of a small teaspoon. These tadpoles would eventually evolve into the Northern Barred Frog and is native only to the wet tropics of Far Nth Qld. Soon enough I started to spot the Mt Lewis Crayfish and they were quite abundant.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE .....



  
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They were varying in sizes from small up to what you would consider a good sized red claw or yabby. I eyed off one of the bigger ones, nearly as long as my foot and spent quite some time obtaining some underwater photos, plenty of them in fact. They are a spectacular coloured cray with amazing flashes of red colouring dawning its body. There's simply nothing quite like them. Being a National Park they are naturally protected but you probably would not take them as they are mostly head and shoulders with very little tail meat. I'm sure though they'd have



their own distinct taste by living in the rich nutrient waters of a rainforest stream. Having not visited the Park for a very long time it was a trip well worth taking. Getting away from the coastal high temperature was just a bonus.

Following this the heavens opened up just prior to Christmas and we all know what was install for the next two and half weeks - nothing but wind, rain and misery ! Once it clears it will be just awesome as to what will be roaming our golden beaches. ■



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FISHING PORT DOUGLAS.COM Cont ....

Michelle became the first Australian (male or female) to play professional basketball internationally including representing for the Phoenix Mercury in the Women's National Basketball Association in America. Michelle was named the Women's International Player of The Year in 1994 and 1996. She was selected to the WNBL All Team 7 times (1988-92, 1994, 1996). Also in 1996, at her second Summer Olympics, she helped the Australian national women's basketball team earn their first Olympic medal, a bronze at the Atlanta competition. Four years later in the historic 2000 Olympics she was on the squad that captured the silver medal in front of our own home crowd in Sydney. At the end of the day she was just such a nice woman and an absolute pleasure to have on our boat.

Back to the story though, Jim cast his rod relentlessly throughout the morning in extremely challenging conditions. He knew it was going to be tough going but was glad it wasn't raining (rare moment at the time). He'd been cooped up for days inside and was just glad to be casting a line. The water was like the colour of coffee particularly in the main parts of the channel. Anyway up in the back parts of the estuary we found some better water clarity and he hooked up to something decent. After a fair old battle he dragged the culprit to the boat to find he had hooked a stingray. This creature being a typical bottom feeder saw his fly mid-water and flew upwards to attack it and hooked itself right near its mouth. Now that's a first in my books and glad to say we got Jim his 151st different fish species on fly. Watch for our write up next month ..... ■

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# Formidable Four Mile

By Dave Dormer

I have fly fished all around the world including Christmas Island in the Pacific which is highly considered an absolute mecca fly fishing destination. When the conditions are right, our local Four Mile Beach is right up there in my opinion.

Okay what are the right conditions ? Firstly you need a good supply of bait and that normally follows are solid supply of rain in the warmer months. In recent times we have experienced this on a few occasions and its been a decent drop. It flushes out of our coastal mangroves, creeks, rivers and estuaries all sorts of tasty morsels for the predators. These include garfish, mullet, herring, sardines, prawns and also the tiny jelly prawns which hatch along the shoreline along our beaches and mangroves. It is an absolute smorgasbord fit for a King.

The next key is the time of day. For me you can't go past first daylight, then less favourably late afternoon. Following this ideally you require a rising tide across the flats or beach and this is 'the Duck's Nuts'. I find the neap tides just leading towards the new or full moons for a few days are 'supremo'. As with any form of fishing you don't want any moderate to strong winds and more so with fly fishing. It becomes impossible.

Well last month this recipe concoction came to fruition not once but twice. On the first occasion it was just prior to that terrible blow when the forming Cyclone Owen literally blew the town down overnight. Four Mile Beach at this point already was holding a healthy supply of bait including the top of the list, jelly prawn hatches right up in the shallows. The tides were right and there was not a puff of wind. On the fly and not casting far from the shoreline I was nailing many a

Tarpon to 4kg and mid sized GT trevally to 1.5kg. There were also an army of half kilo Queenfish that were turning the shallow waters into a bubbling froth as they roasted through the jelly prawn schools. I did get bitten off by a couple of toothy critters and I highly suspect they were barracuda as I managed to land quite a decent one as well. The bonus to all this was the scenery was just as spectacular, the morning sunrises were out of this world and a picture tells a thousand words. You wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

At this stage I'll give you a quick run down on the outfit I was using. I recently upgraded to an 8 weight set up loaded with a floating line and I use between 20-30lb floro carbon tippet or leader. I tie all my own flies and during this first burst of fish I was using clouser patterns and what I call a Durgle Popper, self made, all to great affect.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE .....





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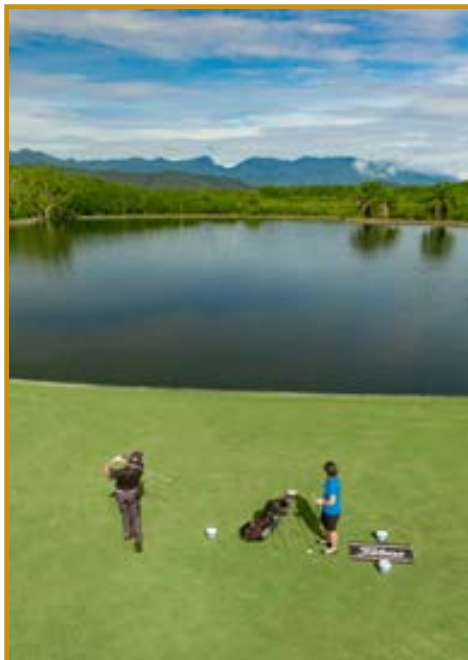


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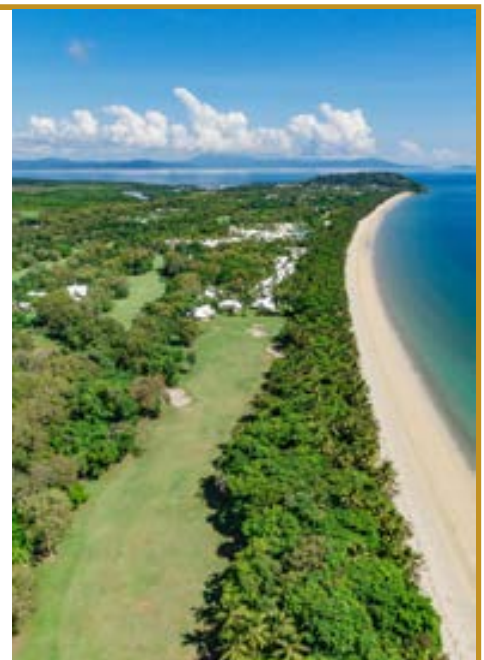


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FORMIDABLE 4 MILE Cont ....  
Following the initial passing of Cyclone Owen I was able to hit the beach again in the 3rd week of December. Everything had turned back to normal and conditions were ideal in every single aspect as I've already mentioned. Naturally I was filled with anticipation and I was not disappointed. This time around I changed up my fly selection and cast a variety of different presentations including various poppers, clousers and a new style jelly prawn imitation which I actually picked up from Bransford's. Man do they work like a treat as they are 'rice like' in appearance and resemble a jelly prawn which is so hard to achieve. Literally when the fish are busting up the jelly prawns in the shallows it looks like a pot of rice grains getting thrown up from the water surface. It's amazing to watch! When the fish are entirely focused on the jelly prawns nothing else will work.

For quite a few mornings I had great success catching endless Tarpon ranging from 2-4kg and the Gt's remained around the 1.5k range. I caught a few bigger queenfish this time probably up to 2kg and what we call the Common Dart. The Dart are really good fun and pound for pound they are tough buggers. If you ever happen to latch onto their bigger cousin, the Snub Nose Dart then you definitely will have your work cut out for you and they are considered one of the 'Holy Grail' sport fish on fly.

It's only a small downside, but on this second bout of fishing you had to be very weary of jelly fish as you traipsed through the shallows. I was bumping into the less

dangerous variety shaped like a square with a tentacle hanging off each corner. They give you a sharp sting similar to a Paper Wasp bite, painful enough but no consequences. It's the Box or Chironex Jellyfish which can be the really nasty one with multiple long tentacles. Simple solution, don't enter the water or wear a stinger suit from this point on.

In the coming weeks and even the next month or two, when the recipe is right I'll be down on Four Mile Beach towards the southern end and I got no doubt there will be plenty of action. Hope I've given you a bit of hindsight to get into fly fishing - you won't regret it for a minute once you get the taste for it. ■



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# Reel Cooking

with Mick Hart



## Grilled New Year Nannygai

### Ingredients

- 2kg Nannygai Fillets
- 3 cloves of crushed garlic
- 2 lemons
- Olive Oil
- 1/2 bunch of fresh parsley
- 1/2 bunch of fresh basil
- Black Pepper
- Sea salt
- Fresh Garden Salad to your liking

### Method

In a stainless steel or glass bowl, combine crushed garlic, olive oil, basil, salt, pepper, lemon juice, and parsley. Place the nannygai fillets in a shallow glass dish or a resealable plastic bag, and pour the marinade over the fish.

Place in fridge for at least 2 hours to absorb the flavour.

Prepare the hot grill on the BBQ and get the plate nice and hot.

Cook your fish fillets and serve with a delicious fresh garden salad.

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## The Gunnell Rod Set for World Wide

By Jase Teelow

It's been a little while since I've put something in this great local magazine. The reason being is that I've been working tirelessly behind the scenes setting up exciting and new prospects for my invention 'The Gunnell Rod'. It has involved a fair bit of traveling particularly to the States and China where we have made great inroads into finding new distributors and manufacturers. All this hard work will come to fruition in 2019 and just for an example you'll soon be able to purchase the Gunnell Rod on the online juggernaut Amazon. That will be exciting times!

This is what we have currently in place:

- I have an Australian Patent in Full. (20 Years).
- USA Patent Pending.
- China Patent Pending in Progress.
- Trademark: YES (Gunnell Rod).
- Alvey still remain our main distributor in Australia

We are about to launch a whole new sales and marketing program in the next few months and here's a more comprehensive run down on the product itself.

"Simple", every boat on the planet that has a Rod Holder, should have one of these stowed away on board for many, many reasons.

The Gunnell Rod is suited for all types of fishing:

- Bottom fishing
- Hand lining
- Trolling Lures
- Down Rigger
- Out Rigger
- Floater Fishing
- Marlin Teasers
- Live Bait Drifting
- Small Bait casting / overhead reels
- All types of larger overhead reels
- Electric reels
- Deep sea fishing
- Inshore fishing
- Estuary or River fishing with a floater or live



bait (so that rods are not in the way while still casting with lures).

The Gunnell Rod has been put through its rigours on several charter boats and what better place on the planet to test drive it - The Great Barrier Reef.

The feedback from charter operators is that they have found the product extremely effective for the following sort of clientele.

- Elderly people
- Disabled
- Uncoordinated Fishing Persons
- Inexperienced new comers on day trips out
- People who often don't get the chance to get out for a fish, maybe once a year type thing.

The Gunnell Rod is not for everyone to fish, however having at least one on board your boat allows anyone and everyone who requires a bit of assistance to join in the fun. It is a simple concept that will have them enjoying the sport in a very short time.

Do yourself a favour and go to You Tube and look up The Gunnell Rod. We have a short promotion clip that shows just how effective this product is.

We'll be up in Port Douglas very soon to continue obtaining more footage for our major promotional clip. I look forward to letting you know how we go.



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# Around the Local Traps



### Favourite Son Returns

Former Port Douglas AFL Premiership Captain of 2014, Adam Boone has recently returned to the area with Kiara his partner and young beautiful child Edie and will settle down in the local area. He has spent the last several years over in WA working and coaching AFL football, however the calling of a return to the FNQ tropics was too much to ignore. Being an avid fisherman he has invested into the Fishing Port Douglas.com business and will skipper the boat conducting river, coastal and reef trips. It has been a tough initiation back to the tropics in his first week or two considering the very awkward conditions and challenges, especially



over the Christmas and New Year period. As predicted though, he most certainly showed he has the personality, fortitude, knowledge and necessary attributes to make a fist of things in the local fishing industry. We wish him and lovely family all the best.

### Fishing Competition Winner

A couple of months ago at Fishing Port Douglas we offered a cool fishing package to anyone that signed up for it on our Facebook page. We had just over 1800 entries and the winner was drawn on Christmas Eve at 5pm.



We are proud to announce that Stan Novak from South Australia was the lucky recipient. We contacted Stan by phone and he was ecstatic with his announcement. He has booked his flights and will be joining us next month for 2 days of charter fishing, 3 nights of accommodation and restaurant

vouchers included.

We'd like to thank all those who entered but particularly Tony & Leanne Prior for their Air B&B accommodation at the Portsea Resort and Paddy's for the vouchers.

When we first announced the competition we weren't sure what response we would get but it has proven to be a very valuable experience. I'm very positive we will do the same again towards the end of the year.

### One Very Lucky Angler

Recently on the Dragon Lady charter boat this 4-5kg coral trout pictured below was always destined to be someone's or something's dinner. Somehow it made to the boat in one piece having not once been bitten, but three times by sharks below. The last of the attacks happened right at the boat. Incredibly the lucky angler was able to salvage the entire fish to take home.



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# magical daintree

## Crazed Man Causes Calamity with Bruce Belcher



The discussion about crocodiles and the associated risks come up frequently during our tours. Almost everyone has a perception that crocs will attack you at every opportunity. From my observation crocs are shy, cautious and would generally avoid people. The actual incidences when a croc kills a person are rare and involve some bad luck, irresponsible behaviour or in some cases sheer stupidity. To highlight my point, I usually relate a story that happened about twenty years ago.

The community was alerted to a missing person in the vicinity of the Daintree River mouth. The first thing that comes to the public's mind is a croc attack. Several members of The State Emergency Service were sent out in tinnies, down to the river mouth. This went on for several days before a hint of the details surfaced. Apparently, a family, with children, were holidaying at Wonga Beach (or thereabouts). I heard there was a problem whereby another man was involved in an affair with the man's wife. Speculation was that the father lost his mind and perhaps decided on suicide. We understand that he left the family and walked north along the beach towards the river mouth but did not return. Perhaps he wanted to make a big impact statement by being killed by a croc. At that time, I was operating my tours adjacent to the boat ramp and we heard several reports from recreational fishermen who claimed to have seen the man in the river, obviously trying to attract the attention of crocs, it would seem. These points were probably not mentioned officially. Anyway, several days passed and no more was heard. This happened in a February which is potentially the most dangerous time of the summer, when they need more food, as they are more active. A couple of weeks later the man gave himself up to a group of people on a beach, up near Cape Trib somewhere. It was reported that he was emaciated and had been bitten by a snake. Reports suggested he had been stealing food from campsites, all the while still trying to kill himself!

The story made the front page of Brisbane's Sunday Mail, I believe. I vaguely remember a suggestion of the headline's story describing the man as a "Born Loser".

Again, I impress the suggestion that crocs are not as horrible as they are described. Then, as usual, a tourist would ask me if I would consider swimming across the river. My obvious answer is "no". Now, that would be stupid, wouldn't it? See you next month.



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Adam Boone with a Bar Cheek Trout skipping Fishing Port Douglas Charters



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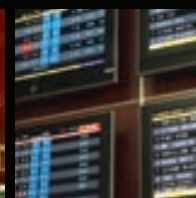
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