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Fishing Port Douglas News



with Heff

State of the Great Barrier Reef

Conditions have been mostly favourable across the Marine Park recently, with temperatures close to average for the end of January.

Monsoon conditions have eased over Northern Australia in the past week, however recent flooding has caused flood plumes to enter the Marine Park, particularly in the Cape York, Mackay and Whitsundays regions.

Sea temperatures have remained near or just above average across the Marine Park and are expected to remain so for the coming weeks.

Monsoon conditions will return next week with average rainfall forecast across most of the Marine Park, and heavy falls expected across the Cape York region.

The Bureau of Meteorology is predicting above average sea surface temperatures for the remainder of summer, but with a low probability of exceeding those averages by more than 1°C. Temperatures have been slightly higher in some offshore locations.

In regards to the reef health situation there's been mostly minor bleaching reported in surveys conducted across the northern and central Reef, while isolated physical damage and minor coral disease were reported on a low number of reefs in the central and southern regions. Crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS) outbreaks remain the most severe in the Reef's central and southern regions.

News in Town

January proved to be not quite up to expectations for quite a few in the fishing charter industry. It was busy enough but not to traditional standards. Theories thrown around as to why included: hiking plane flight prices, increased interest rates, higher costs of living and a bit of rain in the region. It has been a combination in my opinion.

Looking ahead we are well and truly into our quiet season already with not much expected to cross the trade floor till later in March when Easter starts earlier this year. We expect a more typical wet season with rainfalls mainly occurring at night. Ocean and river conditions presently however remain great for anyone visiting the area and wanting a fish.

For most of us the next few weeks will be a time for maintenance and updating our status for the coming year, which at Fishing Port Douglas will see some new exciting product come into play in 2023. We'll keep you duly posted.




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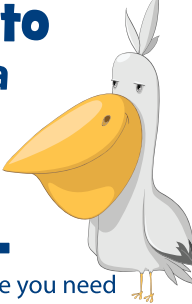
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Fishing On the Daintree

with Jamie Beitzel



Hi to all for another year of fun fishing on the mighty Daintree River. After a bumper year in 2022 the new year got off to a similar start especially for the first two weeks of January. I did hear that overall trade was a bit slower for many during this period but for me I guess I was a lucky one. Maybe the weather was a bit indifferent with a bit of rain about and that helped make the decision in my favour. Yes we did have quite a bit of rain in the Daintree region but not enough to force the river into un-fishable conditions.

With abating winds I did manage to fish along the coast at some wrecks and inshore patches and was able to pick up some handy large mouth nannygai to 6kg. There was always a contingency of trevally around as well and they know how to put a client through a decent workout. with a bit of fresh coming out of the river it did spread a good bait supply along the coast and thus the fishing was quite pleasing.

Outside of this it was a lot of half day river trips trying to concentrate efforts towards the river mouth where

there was bit of salt. I was lucky this past month being able to source live bait on every occasion despite the sometimes challenging conditions. This in turn resulted with a good run of fingermark along the banks, grunter across the flats and a few good sized river trevally in more open water. When the water is a bit discoloured I also like to have a line out with a combo of pilchard and fresh squid which again produced some good sized grunter and invariably ran into some massive shovel nose ray which never disappoint in the angling stakes dragging the boat around in pursuit for some time.

Towards the end of the month charters dried up somewhat but there's been enough to keep ticking over the engines. I suspect we'll see consistent rain continue but it doesn't seem it will be over the top. If it can remain at a sensible rate I'll start to target a few more barra spots with the opening of the season at the start of February. Any charters we do in the coming month will be a bonus and we already have a sprinkle of work ahead which can only improve.



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Dragon Lady Charters

with Steve Adamson

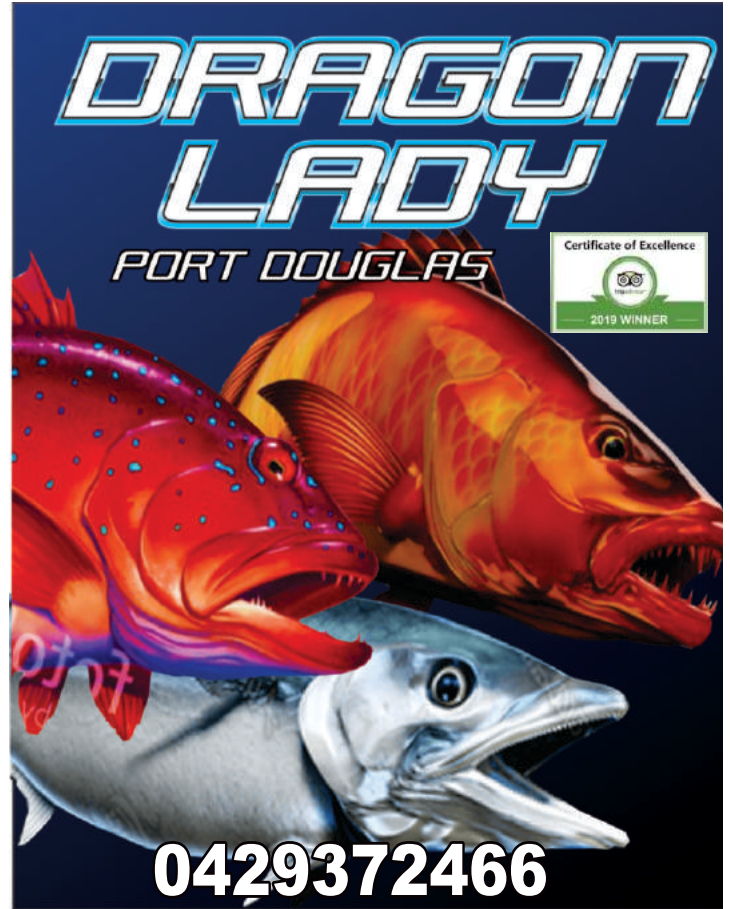


Welcome to the New Year and for the first month of 2023 there were a couple of things that shaped our course. Initially there was quite a bit of rain for the first week but the winds were quite reasonable. The second half of the month saw the sun return and the winds remained moderate.

Following a strong Christmas to New Year trade period we expected this to roll into the first couple of weeks of January, which is the norm. However this didn't transpire and in comparison to previous years probably ran only half the days we expected. Maybe the rain factor played a part but from off the ground it was a very soft fortnight across the board in Port Douglas. Plane flights were the highest they've been in many a year and household budgets definitely would have tightened with a gloomy year ahead predicted with interest rates and higher costs of living.

The second half of January did provide some hope with an unexpected run of charters when we had basically written off the rest of the month.

Down to the nitty gritty and the fishing was I



consider to be of good quality for this time of year. Cooling water temperatures and better wind direction certainly assisted our endeavours. January normally can be a bit tricky with difficult currents and variable winds but this wasn't the case.

Each day brought along a different result but plenty of fish to tangle with. We experienced a good run of small mouth nannygai, coral trout always seemed to be present, the mackerel certainly played a role and then there was a mixed bag of different hard fighting trevally species, spangled emperor, cattle dog cod and the elusive barramundi cod (which was released).

Moving forward any charters will be a bonus in the coming month and we will remain open for business if you'd like to join us.

Saltaire Charters



with Craig Newbold

The last month or so has seen us conduct quite a few charters, especially around the New Year and a few more towards the end of January. Clients were blessed with some pretty handy weather with the seas remaining quite calm on these charters.

The majority of our work entailed a lot of light tackle game fishing travelling that bit further offshore and sometimes into the continental shelf country. The edges or openings of the outer reef proved to be extremely productive and a bit further out in the open ocean produced similar results. The high speedsters we tapped into were mainly big spanish mackerel to 20kg and yellowfin tuna around 10-15kg. These fish were eagerly smashing Halco diving lures and the bigger spanish were partial to rigged skipping garfish. The best coloured Halco lure overall for us was a white underbelly with dark green along the top. Different coloured lures each have their own day in the sunshine and it's a matter of swapping around till you find what is taking their fancy at the time. Extremely sharp hooks certainly puts the advantage in your favour to a consistent hook-up.

Our best day saw the boys tangle with 8 spanish mackerel, 6 yellowfin tuna and a couple of massive toothy barracuda. They also dropped what we estimated to be a 300lb black marlin which put on quite a show for several minutes - it eventually threw the hooks from a Halco lure which in fact did quite well to stay connected for as long as it did. Generally there's been plenty been quite a bit of bait

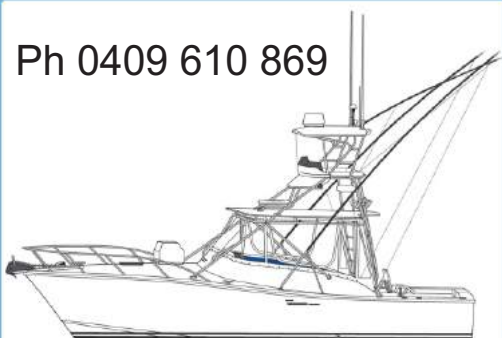
around out wide and instead of using all the modern technology we have, we just followed our eyes and gut instinct focusing on the surface action around us. Invariably that's where we found the bite.

Things are going to definitely quiet down for the next month or so but we have a full maintenance program ahead with a very exciting year forthcoming with a few different projects not far from coming to fruition. I'm not quite at liberty to say what just quite yet publicly but be assured no matter what style of charter, numbers or budget you have in mind, we'll have the portfolio in 2023 - River, Coastal, Reef, Game and Extended trips. Call 0409610869 if you are planning anything from big to small trips and we are happy to discuss over the phone.

Thanks to our dedicated crew behinds the scenes in the last 12 months and a huge thanks to the many return clients we've seen as well.



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