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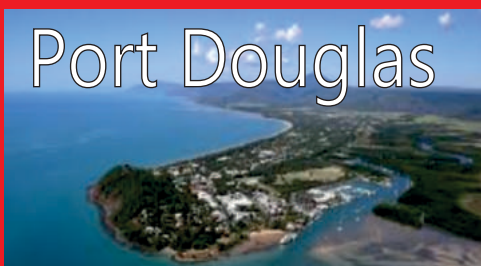
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Fishing Port Douglas News



with Heff

The word on the street is that it has been an awfully quiet month for all including that in the fishing sector. It's a pity because the fishing has exceeded as you'll read further and a big bonus for those who visited the region and partook in a charter. It was always going to be a challenging month in the business world following a natural disaster post Cyclone Jasper where so much business was literally flushed down the toilet. So much so I've noticed some long term businesses pack their bags never to operate again in Port Douglas, including fishing charters. March trade looks a lot more promising and there are some great holiday packages on offer for our visitors.

Now I'm not a real political type of fellow, but I was recently invited to meet with the potential new Ministers and Premier for the state government in an exclusive environment. The LNP in full force visited Cairns for a public forum recently but I was allowed following this to talk more openly one on one with a variety of potential new Ministers and also the next potential new Premier. I jumped at the opportunity which was arranged by Don Eccleston, a long term advocate for fishing rights in QLD. Now a bit about my background has been involved with QLD Fisheries Advisory Board representing the Recreational Charter Industry on the Great Barrier Reef for a few years. To be frank, this has been a waste of time with the Labour Government which has controlled this state for a very, very long time. They have so many politically far left people in power including those running the QLD

Fisheries, Environment and Agriculture, but in particular Fisheries from our point of view. In a nutshell they have introduced some of the toughest legislation and laws to all levels of the fishing sector in recent times threatening one of the State's biggest attractions of running a business, living or visiting here. Unfortunately they will keep going with little or no regard to what the public or advisory boards say with such a strong 'Green' agenda. That's some day down the track but they basically want to snuff out all facets of fishing if allowed to continue. Is that something you want for your children?

Anyway the LNP are listening and I had a 10 minute talk with the Shadow Fisheries Minister, Tony Perrot and a 5 minute chat with Shadow Premier David Crisafulli, an ex Ingham lad. Both were very interested in what we were doing up at Fishing Port Douglas employing around 20 people. It was teed up that Tony Perrot will revisit after Easter catch up with a selected few which includes the main stake holders in the recreational industry. We are currently working out an exact date and I'll keep you updated. We are in touch with his close political colleague, Bree James who is running for office in the Cairns region in the up and coming vote. Hopefully soon & leading into the election later in the year, we will have direct access to our potential elected representative that can create a new direction in the Fisheries Department.

Please Note: this article is not a political driven exercise to influence your vote but an opinion on our behalf.



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Fishing On the Daintree

with Jamie Beitzel



Hi to all from the magical Daintree River. To be honest it hasn't been overly busy up here which has forwarded me some time to get the boat ready with ongoing maintenance. It seems March will definitely pick up with more bookings.

In saying all this did conduct half a dozen or so charters on the river in the month gone by. For those that made the effort to visit in February were duly rewarded with some great fishing. There's just the right formula for the river at the moment with a bit of rain and plenty of sunshine keeping conditions almost at a prime level. The tides do play a part from day to day but overall I'm happy with the stability of the system to produce good results.

Barramundi is on everyone lips when they charter at the moment. They are not the easiest fish just to pluck out of the hat but I'm happy to say I produced the goods. I've got a good feel as to where they are mostly hanging and it's a matter of timing. The catches we boated were pretty much standard river barra for our system ranging from 60-75cm. Not huge fish by any means but solid fish, and a barra is a barra ! They tick all the boxes for the clients in regards to being a fish they always wanted to catch for the first time, they jump and carry on plus they tug hard on the end of the line. They are a challenging fish to boat in all departments. I'm

just wrapped to provide the experience they'll talk about till the end of days.

The main other species which rarely let me down is the Fingermark. If you've never experienced one of these on the plate then you don't know what you're missing out on - Mother's Milk in my opinion. I'm blessed to have access to probably the best river Fingermark fishery that I know of anywhere. That's a big statement but I'll attest to this and more often than not prove it on a consistent basis. These fish fight really hard and dirty and get quite big in the river. They are no easy feat to coax out of their habitat and land in the boat. I'm glad to say I caught plenty of these and happy to keep a couple for the clients to take home.

Other than this I had some success across the sand bar flats at certain times of the tide catching my fair share of good sized golden trevally and grunter. These are great fish in their own right but an added bonus on top of catching prime barramundi and fingermark.

Moving ahead I seriously believe the next month or so will ramp it up to another level. My intuition of 30 odd years of fishing this river tells me there will be other species on the run to add to what has been happening already.

Hope to see you join us in the near future



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Akula Sportfishing



with Jason Knack

When you reflect back on the month of February there wasn't a lot of activity when it came to bookings. Having lived in the area for nearly 30yrs you come to expect this. It's a bit of a pity that February is quiet on the tourist front because if you strike the good weather the fishing outside is quite good. In saying this it is a time to also find to fine tune your vessel for busier times ahead.

This month I really enjoyed the company of those that joined the charter, genuinely nice and interesting people. I'm a big believer that a good attitude from the angler from the moment they step on the boat will be rewarded by the fishing gods.

These last few weeks I've found to be a little bit tougher but it's a matter of moving around and keep moving if needed till you the bite. I found the period leading into the top of the tide was the optimum time when the better fish were active. This is not necessarily the case all the time but I was prepared to be exactly where I wanted to be approaching this window.

Naturally you tend to catch a lot of fish over the course of the day but my better catches of note were red emperor, large mouth nannygai and coral trout. I'm not sure why but the Chinaman fish



Great Barrier Reef Port Douglas



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were a constant hook up as well. If you are into fishing for a pure battle then this is your fish to hook into. There's room for argument here, but pound for pound they are possibly the toughest reef fin species to pull up from the depths. You catch a big one and compare it to another similar sized species and you'll get the idea of where I'm coming from.

We did do a bit of top water fishing across the reefs but unfortunately for our overseas client he could only fish right on the moon. The Gt's were 'slappy', meaning they'd rise to lure but continuously swipe and not fully commit. A couple were hooked up and lost but they weren't crunching the lure which helps to secure an ensuing battle. A few quality red bass were landed which to be honest don't disappoint as a consolation.

March appears to be a bit busier and it will be very interesting as to the numbers of people that arrive for Easter towards the end of the month. Hopefully current predicted forecasts improve.

Saltaire Charters

with Craig Newbold



For us as a business, February was as expected to prove very quiet with mostly Emergency Air Drop Servicing exercises and one particular charter which exceeded all expectations.

Recently we had a group of long term clients revisit and utilise our 35ft Saltaire Game Boat out of Fitzroy Island for a couple of days. The clients fished off our vessel each day and stayed in comfort, luxury on the island with swimming pools and restaurants overnight.

Rowan, Janelle, Huey & Duncan had a couple of days to remember. According to the log book on Day 1 they caught and released 12 spanish mackerel and 11 mack tuna. A total of two spanish mackerel were kept for consumption. There were also some other incidental bludger trevally caught trolling lures around. A snorkel on a private reef certainly capped off one of those days you wont soon forget.

On Day 2 they caught and released a few more mackerel species which included Spanish, Scaly and Spotted Mackerel all released. On their last hook-up with Duncan on the reel the vessel hooked up and released a highly

prized Sailfish. Here's a dedicated description of the event from the clients:

"The strike saw the sailfish leaping and twisting in the air. The shrieking reel was screaming as it took line. Then darting back across the transom, the sailfish entangled all the other lines. Luckily it was our heaviest game rod but a relatively light 50 pound line. After a couple of spectacular leaps this "sprinters" endurance was spent. Soon it was professionally & meticulously brought aboard, peacefully.

A very quick photo was taken then a successful live release, swimming it along the side of the boat. Watching it return in mint condition and swim off in good health was paramount to the whole experience.

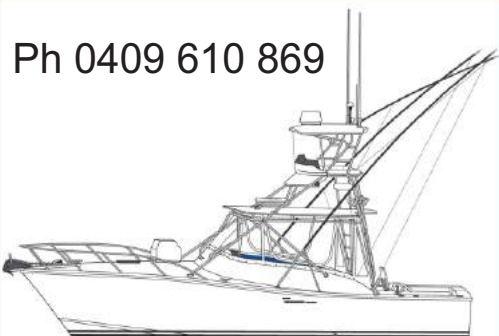
To be in its presence was completely amazing, like a prehistoric predator. This was better than the natural history museum, better than SeaWorld.

It was a huge thrill for all involved, even the Saltaire Crew who were Class A1." - end quote ...

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