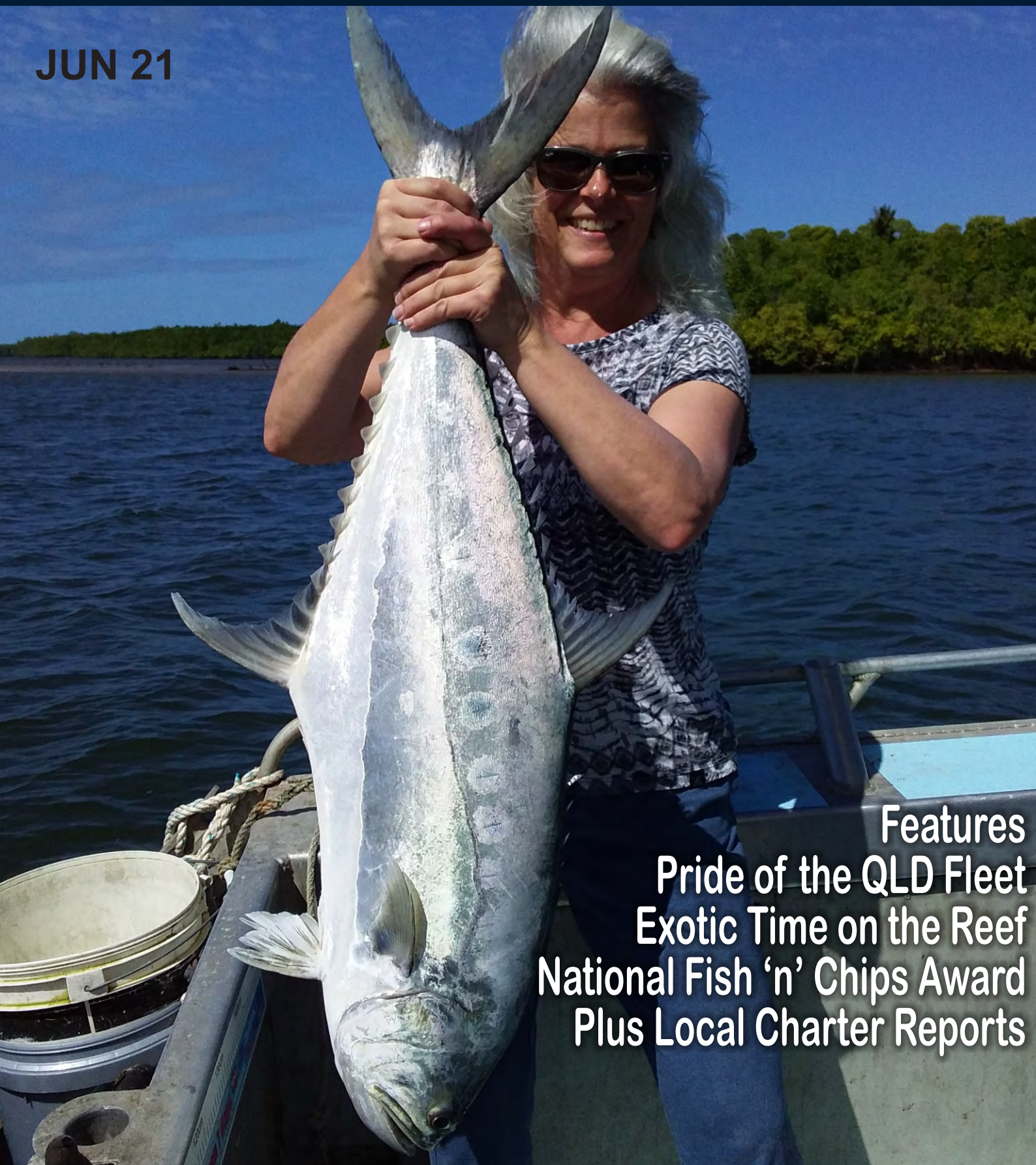


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VOLUME 247 PRICELESS

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JUN 21



Features
Pride of the QLD Fleet
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Contact Us if you'd like to
Contribute - Most Welcome

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Front Cover:
On the Daintree
smacked into a
host of Big
Queenfish
during the
month of June



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The Pride of the Fleet

By Heff

When you purchase a multi million dollar game boat you would think well there's not much more that needs doing - think again! We all know that owning a boat is an expensive exercise, no matter whether it's a tinny, to a bay runner to something a bit bigger. But when you want to improve a 60ft luxury game boat to your liking it is in another stratosphere.

Recently at Fishing Port Douglas in association with Damian Collete of Saltaire Charters, we are ready to launch the new look Shaka Game Boat on its first 5 day charter as we speak. Already considered prior to this as the best charter game boat on the East Coast of Australia, it has gone to a new level.

We are talking about a multi million dollar vessel to begin with, so how far does 500K (commitment by the owner) get you to improve an already immaculate vessel in the first place. We'll step your way through the process.

Basically the original interior was stripped right back to bare bones including beddings, bathrooms, carpets, flooring, galley and saloon furnishings including entertainment systems. Literally it became a blank canvas to start all over again. To do this in a normal house would cost an arm and a leg. When it comes to a big house on the water, the marine work costs, you times this by at least three times as an indication.

The new look interior to put it simply is total luxury fit for a king.

Also up in the flybridge which is designed as a secondary dining area a well, all the outdoor furnishings were replaced brand new as well as fresh clears. It is the perfect place to enjoy canapes watching the sun set after a big day of fishing.

The whole boat was re-wired with state of the art electronics including the driving bridge upstairs and up on top in the tuna tower. No expense was spared in this department with the very best money can buy.

On the bow at the front of the boat, a state of the art davit system has been installed to accompany the new cradle which houses the brand spanking new tender ideal for island hopping and general exploration including fishing up on top of the reefs.

This is just a brief outline which has been a major project over the last 4 months. Lining up the various tradesmen to get the job done in time for the first trip was a task in itself. Literally no stone was unturned in the refurbishment of this vessel and the highest of marine standards applied.

With the ability to sleep 6 overnight in absolute luxury, the 60ft Shaka charter game boat has now surpassed all its peers by the length of a straight. Our first batch of clients on this first trip are in for an absolute treat! ■



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As essential as a Bung in Your Boat

AUS Fish 'n' Chips Awards

By Heff



In celebration of International Fish and Chip Day celebrated recently, Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) has announced the Great Australian Fish and Chip Awards will return in 2021.

They are excited to take over the leadership and management of the annual awards from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) who established them in 2017. The much loved awards will be renamed The Great Australian Fish and Chip Awards, to align with the industry's brand, Great Australian Seafood, which was launched last year as a COVID-19 recovery response.

The awards were not held last year due to COVID, however they'll be back up and running, and batter (sic) than ever in 2021. The FRDC has done a wonderful job establishing them for industry, and the SIA thank them for their hard work.

"The Great Australian Fish and Chip Awards will continue the search for Australia's best fish and chips. The national competition is set to kick off on October 19 to celebrate International Seafood Day, with the national winner announced in December.

In every town, across every state and territory, people spruik their fish and chips as number one, so they will be put to the test.

The SIA are in the process of finalising the details of this year's awards to ensure they can go ahead in a COVID-responsible manner. But, what can be said is they'll be looking for proper country of origin labelling on menus – close to 70% of seafood eaten in Australia is imported so it's important they get consumers asking for Aussie seafood.

They want to see fish species labelled and identified correctly as according to the Fish Names Standards. And most importantly, they are looking for crisp, golden fish batter or crumbing, and crunchy, creamy fries with just the right amount of salt.

There might even be bonus points for shops using some of our underutilised, but just as tasty, species on their menus. Things like Oceanjacket, Black Bream, Boarfish or Mackerel.

The 2019 fry-off reeled in more than 100,000 votes, across 800 stores, and this year they have their sights set on more. People will have a chance to mullet (sic) over their favourite store ahead of the October voting kick-off.

Friday nights have long been the one day Aussie's share fish and chips with the family, so it is encouraged to everyone to take the night off from the kitchen, support their local takeaway store and fishers, and enjoy some Great Australian Fish and Chips.

For more information on the Awards go to www.fishandchipsawards.com.au

The 2020 -2021 Fish and Chips Awards is supported by funding from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation on behalf of the Australian Government Here's the past winners this campaign was launched in 2019

Great Australian Fish and Chip Awards
National Judged Winner

QLD – Tobin Fish Tales, Townsville
State and Territory Judges Choice Award
Winners

NSW – Pelican Rocks Seafood Restaurant and Café, Greenwell Point

NT – Frying Nemo Fish and Chippery, Darwin

QLD – Tobin Fish Tales, Townsville

SA – Stunned Mullet, Henley Beach and Fish Out of Water, Hyde Park

TAS – Mures Lower Deck, Hobart

VIC – The Golden Flake, St Leonards

WA – Ocean and Paddock, Albany
State and Territory People's Choice Award
Winners

NSW – Pelican Rocks Seafood Restaurant and Café, Greenwell Point

NT – Frying Nemo Fish and Chippery, Darwin

QLD – Costa's Seafood Café, Capalaba

SA – Dolphin Fish Shop and Take Away, Netley

TAS – Fraggles Fish and Chips, Launceston

VIC – Trident Fish Bar, Queenscliff

WA – Pinjarra Fish and Chips, Pinjarra



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The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

For us at Dragon Lady we've had a steady month or so in regards to charter work but we know the barrage is coming in the next 4 weeks. July school holidays are typically an extremely busy time, one of the busiest periods in the calendar year. We just hope the weather and Covid scenarios deal us a kind hand.

It's a great time of year to be fishing on the Great Barrier Reef and as we saw in June it went to another level. We had days and days where the fish were just too frisky for us. We had to pull the pick and deal with the influx of fish that were caught in a very short period.

The small mouth nannygai were the main culprits and when they decide to bite it's all hands on deck. They went missing for a couple of years but their numbers have returned in a big way. Why they went missing I'm not 100% sure but it's great to have them back because they create a lot of excitement and their size is absolutely ideal for clients to take home and deal with for dinner.

They weren't the only fish to be played with as coral trout remained very strong, the large mouth nannygai were consistent enough and there were multiple other species on the go. We caught over the days almost every possible target species available including a few odd balls which include cattle dog cod, big fingermark, baldy bream and of all things big dusky flathead. Now catching a flathead on the outer reef is almost unheard of but we got two beauties. What made these coastal and river fish make the journey some 20 miles offshore has me flabbergasted. Anyway they make for great fish and chips. Overall it was like a



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lottery draw as to what was going to come over the side.

Now it has to be mentioned that the mackerel float at the back of the boat on any given drop got a serious workout in the past few weeks. There was not a day it did not sing merry tunes. Multiple spanish mackerel were caught every trip and also quite a few lost along the way to angling ability. Anyway there was plenty to share in the community chest which we divide up amongst the punters when it comes to this species. A big slab of mackerel fillet can feed a party of a dozen in one sitting. With our filleting restrictions it basically is the only fish we can process like this due to the size of the fillet taken from the frame. Otherwise all other species have to come off the boat whole in our situation - gut and gilled of course.

Moving forward we've experienced our fair share of cancellations to this Covid experience which is like water off a duck's back now. We do seem however to re-fill the positions quite easily which is a good sign I guess. As we speak Victorians are eagerly booking whilst they have the opportunity whilst Sydney is on tender hooks so to speak.

The fishing will remain at a fairly consistent rate in the next few months with currents and general wind coming from the same direction. We anticipate some big days ahead and if the weather is our friend it will be quite happy days and very pleasant temperatures. ■

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Breathing in the Saltaire

By **Damian Collete**



It has been a real positive for Saltaire in the past few weeks with a steady run of charters and to be honest the fishing has been relatively easy from our point of view. The weather has been very workable and at times the fish have been out of control. This is what we expect with the onset of our winter weather pattern and at times we've had to literally drive away from the bite with too many fish coming over the side. The southerly change of currents were a bit later this year and it can vary from year to year. But when it occurs it is game on.

The reef fishing was easy pie on most days with whatever you wanted to catch. We fished the grounds that produce nannygai and coral trout and there was no shortage in this category. We also came across the biggest of cod species, red emperor, numerous trevally and these brutes gave our clients one hell of a workout. Some days were also mixed in with snorkelling when requested, so these trips proved to be very successful. A lot of families and groups nowadays weigh up the value in such a trip as they get to kill two birds with the one stone - fishing and snorkelling. If you actually look at the cost of doing this individually over two days with different operators the cost works out to be similar. The beauty with us is that you have the boat to yourself and you can avoid that thing called Covid when dealing with a crowd. It all makes sense and it is all accompanied by the best personal service. On the game scene we have been going gang busters with the spanish mackerel which have turned up in serious numbers. Trolling lures for them we have had double

and triple hook-ups at times and this is exciting for everyone on the boat. For people who have not experienced this, it is something else. Screaming reels and multiple rods keeled over gets the adrenalin going. Our multi skilled deck hand deals with the commotion and then gets people sorted fairly quickly to reel in a special catch. Two or three big spanish mackerel can be on the back of the boat after a real sporting effort. The mackerel are a top notch species to hook into and a great feed at the day's end. There's been a variety in size from the legal 75cm up to 12kg, with the average around 7-10kg lately. The important thing is there's plenty out there at the moment.

Now an interesting story was we did a maintenance job and took it out of the leads for a quick test run. We thought we'd give it a good 20 minute run to ensure everything was alright and put a couple of skirted lures out the back. Bugger me dead we latched onto a classic small black marlin barely a mile or so out to sea. On light gear it played up brilliantly on the surface and we soon had it on the back deck for a couple of pics before releasing. It shows the bait is along the coast and these little stallions are ready to play. We are excited as we have a couple of charters coming up very shortly specifically requesting to tag some of these puppies. Forward bookings are healthy despite the few invariable cancellations due to Covid. It is a sad fact of life and we just soldier on nowadays and try not get too disappointed. A complete roll out of vaccinations is the only way around this debacle. The fishing is great so hope to see you soon ■



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Exotic Time on the Reef

By Heff

The Great Barrier Reef is undeniably the most exciting place on the planet to fish and the past month or so has showcased just how brilliant and diverse a fishery it is. There's over a possible 225 recognised sport fish and table fish to catch from our closest coastal neighbour and at Port Douglas we are the closest coastal port on the east coast of Australia to this amazing feature.

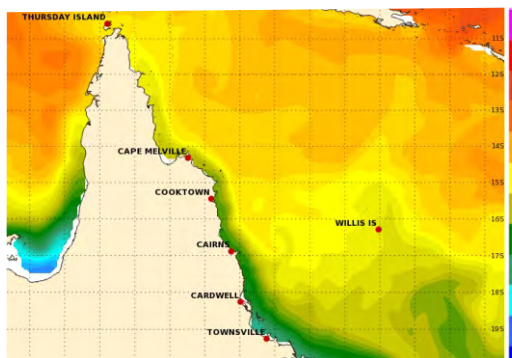
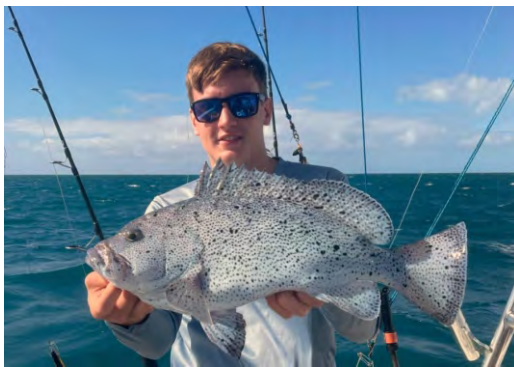
There's been plenty of your normal target species on the chew including coral trout, nannygai species, red emperor, mackerel and trevally. However, with the onset of the cooler months we have seen very regularly quite a few not so common species appear which are very exotic in nature.

Just to start with we've seen on our vessels at Fishing Port Douglas a couple of coastal fish venture to the outer reef for some reason including fingermark and dusky flathead. Not considered an outer reef fish at all. Quite freaky to be exact.

Then you start to add to this, species such as barramundi cod, maori seaperch, speckled scale seaperch, coronation trout, passionfruit trout, cattle dog cod, green jobfish, reef mangrove jack, small black marlin and various huge cod species it then becomes a lucky draw as to what you might just catch at the moment. It is testimony as to why we offer the most diverse fishery in the world.

The change of cooler current coming from the south according to our skippers is the catalyst to spark a huge range of fish to come on the bite with some surprises thrown in as well.

It's a great time to be fishing the GBR!! ■



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Latest Update from the QLD Tourist Industry

In a devastating repeat of previous holiday lead-in periods, we are again facing travel restrictions for interstate visitors. This time it is residents of most of inner Sydney who will not be able to visit Queensland, or anywhere else for that matter, for at least the next week.

This takes some of the joy out of yesterday's announcement that travel restrictions into Queensland for all of Melbourne will be lifted from Friday morning. It is a cruel COVID merry-merry-go round that we appear to be on, wearing down the resilience of the industry and the confidence of domestic travellers.

It yet again draws attention to the fact that we must continue to build the effectiveness of all our virus-fighting tools at our disposal: tracing, testing, vaccine roll-out, quarantine facilities, health services capacity, as well as appropriate hygiene measures. Given that some variant of the COVID virus is likely to be present somewhere in the world for years, governments will have to map a pathway to 'living with it'. And living with it must also include the freedom of movement – eventually also internationally. We need a coherent plan.

Meanwhile, in much better news, the Queensland Government has responded to industry concerns and has substantially eased operational COVID restrictions for tourism and hospitality operators. The new provisions for COVID-safe operations will make it easier for operators to remain viable with increased venue capacities and a reduction in staff requirements for food services (self-serve buffets are back!). We appreciate the government's proactive response in this.

On another positive note, the Federal Government has just announced changes to the Working Holiday Maker visa arrangements which will be good news for people current holding visas, those applying for visas in the future and for tourism operators. They are the backbone for many tourist and hospitality industries.

Daniel Gschwind
 Chief Executive

Very Controversial UNESCO Listing

Reef tourism operators say they are

bewildered by a draft recommendation to list the Great Barrier Reef as "in danger", saying the world's largest living organism is "healthy" and "beautiful".

Key points:

The World Heritage Committee will consider the recommendation at a meeting in China next month.

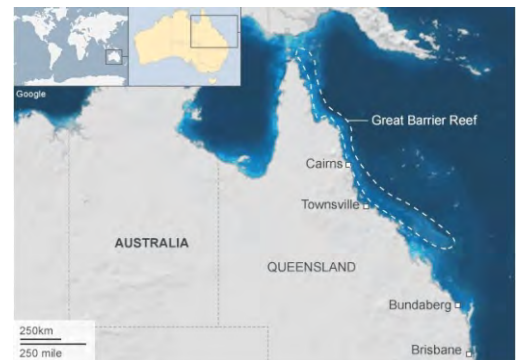

Great Barrier Reef operators say reef is healthy.

Any "in danger" listing will impact on tourism.

The World Heritage Committee, which sits under UNESCO, has proposed moving the reef to the list because of the impact of climate change, and will consider the decision at a meeting in China, which is the chair, next month.

The recommendation has sparked fury among those who work on the Great Barrier Reef including us at Fishing Port Douglas and associated our operators. The same consensus is also felt amongst local snorkel & dive operators. Biologists also agree the reef does have some challenges but overall it is in really good shape.

The reef tourism industry has been heavily impacted by the closure of international borders in an industry worth billions to the Far North Queensland economy. Any recommendation to list the reef as in danger would have a negative impact on tourism. It's not just for FNQ or the Great Barrier Reef that it will have an impact on, it's the whole of Australian tourism as well. Climate change is the certainly a hot topic around the world and you watch a real shift in focus will come from our federal government in regards to doing what it can to be seen to protecting our National Treasure even further.

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Chance to Have Your Say

By Heff

Since my involvement with QLD Fishery Advisory Board the governing bodies are committed to obtaining as much information as possible from within the immediate industry and also from the enthusiastic recreational fisher. This information is vital to making informative and the right decisions moving forward for our fishing industry. As a household recreational fisher here's your chance to have your say and shape the future for yourself and your kids. At my last meeting an expert data person said to me that it takes around 15-20% of the target audience to make informative decisions. These surveys are conducted by independent contractors so there is no influence in the results by government. They are quick as easy to participate and have your say. Go to the FDRC website and find the current topic in relation to this and follow the prompts.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Is fishing important to you?

We want to understand what is important to fishers and seafood harvesters from the commercial, Indigenous and recreational fishing sectors to better understand which values are shared (and not shared) among and within these three fishing sectors.

The study is being conducted by NCEconomics with funding from the Fisheries Research and Development Cooperation (FRDC). The results of the study will be used by the FRDC and other policy stakeholders to build trust across the fishing industry through an improved understanding of values and will contribute to the achievement of the FRDC's vision for 2030 of fair and secure access to aquatic resources. The FRDC are not involved in the study design or analysis, and funding is not dependent on the research outcomes.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

This study does not entail any significant risks beyond those presented by everyday living. If you have any concerns or negative experiences as a result of your participation in this study however, please contact Tracy Schultz, tracy.schultz@alluvium.com.au.

COMPENSATION

As compensation for your time, participants will be entered into a draw to receive a \$50 gift card from BCF. Simply enter your email

address at the completion of the study to be eligible.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Beyond an email address, you will not be asked to provide any personal information that could be used identify you. Any data relating to the study will be stored in a password protected file. Participant's email addresses will be temporarily linked to the data collected for the sole purpose of providing compensation to participants. Once the study closes, the email addresses and data will be separated. Once the draw is complete, all email addresses will be deleted except for those that have opted to receive a copy of the final report. Information obtained from this sample study will NOT be used in further research. Any data used for publication will be kept on file for five years after the last date of publication and will then be destroyed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to participate in this sample study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You can request your data to be removed from the study by the end of July by emailing tracy.schultz@alluvium.com.au. After July, the identifying information (your email address) and data will be separated, and you can no longer choose to remove your data from the study because there will be no way to link your identification with the corresponding data.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or would like to receive a summary of the results, please feel free to contact Tracy Schultz.



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On the Daintree Charters

With Jamie Beitzel



From our point of view in our humble, but beautiful part of the region it has been smiles all round. Nice winter conditions, some good tides to play with and pleasant customers has made my job easy. We've run more days than not, with the days off nominated by myself so I could catch up with home life, boat maintenance, accountants, banks and all that sort of thing which does surprisingly chew into any spare time you have been afforded. So the days just flash by before your eyes. This past month I've really relished most of my time on the river with some great fishing to be had. Even though the days were a little bit cooler, the abundance of sunshine and good weather kept the rods bending over consistently.

Live bait has been relatively easy to source and is a huge advantage. Tasty sardines have been welcomed by the likes of big queenfish and golden trevally in the main channel. Across the flats oversized grunter or javelin fish have been tempted easily on the rising tides. Amongst the snags quality fingermark and mangrove jack have been eagerly nattering away and not too hard to source.

My preferred method when using live sardines is to get them as quickly as possible out of the cast net and into the live bait tank which has a lid. As they are easily stressed the darkness seems to calm their little hearts down and they soon relax. Oxygen circulating is also key to keeping them alive and on most

occasions I've let any remaining alive after a full day on the water, swim away as if nothing had happened.


I do use a running sinker bottom rig or if need be, especially for queenfish, underneath a float in the main channel. The trick here is to penetrate the upper mouth at the front just before their nostrils which is a bit firmer and a good anchorage point. You put the hook in there which then allows for them to keep their mouth open. Once in the water they will look naturally swimming in the current. Fish will generally attack a bait head first which is ideal because that is where the hook is placed.

Other than my successes on the river I spent minimal time along the coast mainly because of the excess traffic from the Grey Nomad fleet swarming like bees to a honey pot and the netting by commercial larger vessel on the grey mackerel grounds. It's a sad fact of life that extensive commercial fishing of this magnitude still happens from time to time on our own back doorstep.

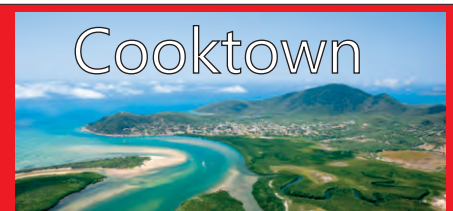
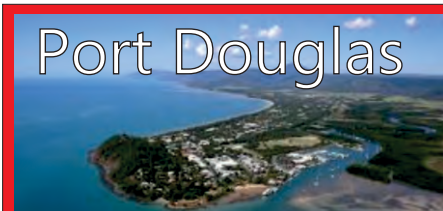
Anyway I'm more than content to explore the vast expanses of the Daintree River where I have dozens of places to fish for my clients making them feel they are the only people in the world fishing the waters. The croc spotting and array of surrounding nature, both floral and fauna are a serious bonus for my line of work. Bookings look really busy ahead and I'll see you on the Daintree or nearby soon ...



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Reel Cooking with Mick Hart

Small Mouth for a Big Mouth



INGREDIENTS

4 x 150g Small Mouth Nannygai fillets
 ½ cup (75g) plain flour
 2 eggs, lightly beaten
 1½ cups (150g) dried breadcrumbs
 Sunflower oil to shallow fry
 1 each carrot and beetroot, shredded
 2 tbs mayonnaise, plus extra to spread
 1/3 bunch dill, sprigs shredded
 Juice of ½ lemon, plus wedges to serve
 1 baby cos lettuce, leaves separated
 4 x burger buns, lightly toasted

*Everyone Loves
 a Good
 Fish Burger*



METHOD

Place flour, eggs and breadcrumbs in three separate dishes, then season each bowl. Coat the fish in the flour, then the egg, then breadcrumbs. Heat oil in a frypan over medium-high heat. Fry the fillets for 4-5 minutes, turning, until golden and cooked through. To make the slaw, combine the carrot, beetroot, mayonnaise, dill, lemon juice and season. Place some lettuce on the bottom of each burger bun, then top with the fish, slaw and the bun lid spread with a little extra mayonnaise.

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magical daintree

Rogue Vegetation in the Area with Bruce Belcher

Throughout the countryside you will have seen vines smothering trees on the edges of cleared forests. The vine is conspicuous by large heart-shaped leaves. This plant does not have a common name but a scientific one known as *Merremia peltata*. It is a vine species in the morning glory family, Convolvulaceae, that is native to Madagascar, the Seychelles, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, French Polynesia, and Northern Queensland (Australia).

In Polynesia, like Palau, where it was introduced as a decorative plant, it has become invasive. Public effort to control this species involved people becoming more physically fit and to improve the ecology by using machetes to cut the vine. Continuous cutting will eventually exhaust the plant's ability to recover.

This vine has an obvious white flower about the size of a tennis ball. As it belongs to the morning glory family, another vine in this area can be seen around here and I believe it was introduced. I don't know its common name, but the flower is dark blue and can be seen among the hibiscus trees opposite the Wonga Beach servo as you travel north.

M. peltata is a vigorous climbing plant with twining stems that scramble over the ground and climb into the surrounding vegetation. The stems are somewhat woody and persistent and can be up to 90cm in diameter and 50 meters long and grows from a large, tuberous rootstock. This plant is sometimes harvested from the wild as a medicine, food, and source of material.

From my observation, the indigenous people had no use of it. Sap from the tuber and stem is considered as a treatment for worms and is a laxative. It is used as a remedy for cough and diarrhea. The diluted sap from young stems is used as eye or ear drops. I am assuming that these remedies were used in the aforementioned countries.

A drink made from the juice of the leaves is reputed to be a treatment for hernia. The crushed leaves are used for boils. The leaves are used as a maturation for treating inflammation of the breasts, while the heated leaves



are used as a poultice on superficial wounds. The tubers are mildly laxative, becoming purgative when crushed. The crushed roots are used to treat muscular stomach rigidity.

Aesthetically, this vine is ugly as it spreads like a blanket over trees. As this proliferation was caused by humans through land clearing, I believe it is our responsibility to control it. The most effective way to do this is through a responsible procedure of spraying herbicides, a bit like Agent Orange!

I'm sure an expert can find a solution but then there would need to be funding. See you next month.



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