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Front Cover:
Partners in Crime - Phil from Sydney and local Dan Musset fishing together with a couple of super sized Spanish Mackerel



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Nautical Marine Sales



Bruce Belcher
Daintree Croc Tours



Lynton Heffer (Heff)
Owner / Editor

Fishing Port Douglas Charters

By Adam Boone

G'day readers, what a whirlwind of a month July was! With school holidays spanning over 3 weeks across the southern states we were flat stick for the best part of the month with holiday makers and locals alike all wanting to get their fishing fix while up in the tropical paradise we call home.

The wind and the weather played the game for the first half of the month allowing trips out to the near inshore reefs and wrecks a common choice by punters. These trips coincided with the run of Mackerel we have at this time of year and anglers were able to test their hand at tussling with the doggie, spotted and the odd spanish mackerel. Pound for pound these fish fight really well with blistering runs around the boat keeping anglers on their toes! Our chosen method was small metal jigs, 25 – 60gm depending on the current, with Gold and Silver being the dominant colours.

Fishing on the bottom on these trips provided good numbers of nannygai, coral trout and plenty of gold-spot cod to be found in the mix as well. There was never a shortage of fish to keep the reels ticking over. My job was made fairly easy on these days.

Moving in to the second half of the month the south-east trade winds really took hold, restricting us to the confines of the Dickson Inlet and other close by creeks. We weren't to be disappointed though as catches of mangrove jack, giant trevally, queenfish and the ever present pikey bream were solid throughout. Some of the bream were quite big and had that big bump on their forehead, just like the snapper they get in the southern waters. On the right tides we also had crab pots in and it was a standard to be getting at least 1 size per pot, and with the size of these things it only takes a couple for a good feed! I did experience one hairy moment when dropping in the pots right up in the inlet in a small branch of water. The tide was low and out of the corner of my eye I saw a good sized croc, probably close to 2m in length come flying out of the mangroves landing in the water at the rear of the boat. It

must have been sitting on top of the mangrove roots and my presence startled it forcing it to flee. To be honest I reckon I was more startled than the croc!

While on the subject of the local rivers and creeks (and beaches for that matter), it's worth mentioning that even while it isn't our traditional 'stinger season' but to always remain cautious. This comes up after talking to one of the other charter operators who mentioned while on the anchor up the creek he witnessed a Box Jelly cruise past his boat with a bell on it over 15cm in diameter and at least a metre of tentacles hanging out the back. This was up the river where the water temperature has been sitting around 22-23C and at the end of July. This sighting came around the same time there was a Irukandji incident down in the Cairns area. So just a word of caution to remain vigilant especially if throwing throw nets or wading through the water.

Anyhow we are looking forward to see what August brings us on the weather front. With a steady run of bookings, hopefully the solid fishing continues and the 'Wind Gods' do the right thing and gives us a break from this relentless breeze! ■



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Exceed Sportfishing

By Jake Wyatt

Finally the weather gave us a bit of a break this month and we were able to get out and stuck into some quality fish. Things have been flat out with school holidays and the sun shining which made for some lovely days.

When we did head to the reef, the fish seemed to be on the bite. One morning in particular was very special where we headed to Satellite Reef on a half day trip to try our luck with a troll for mackerel. We missed a couple of good bites and then just happen to run over some awesome isolated rocks in the middle of nowhere. We only has the light plastics rods onboard and decided to have a hang and see what we could find. As soon as the first plastic hit the bottom, it was smacked by something large and shortly smoked us without even getting a turn on the reel. The next one went down and bang, it was on with a nice large mouth nannygai coming up around the 7kg mark. We were on a private charter so I only had one bloke on and he was in his element. We boated over 12 'nanny's' and let the majority of them go to fight another day. After an insane 20 minute session we left them biting and headed back to Port with smiles all over our faces. Another day saw us once again heading to the reef for a full day of exploration. With repeat clients onboard, beers in the esky, it was time to have some fun. Fishing proved to be a little tough although what we did land was of an exceptional quality bar

cheek trout of 80cm, the biggest bar cheek I have seen. On top of this we snuck in some quality 'reds' and a nice spanish mackerel on a stick bait to finish things up. The coastal and river fishing was up and down in recent times. Earlier in the piece the fishing was great with some monster jacks and bream in the rivers. One particular 'jack' measured a solid 43cm and was released to fight another day. Once the cold snap hit, the river fishing seemed to drop off a bit although has come back again as I write this article. Some decent coastal 'trouts' also came onboard for a photo before being released which were falling victims to live baits and the ever popular Nuclear Chicken Jerk Shad. You can find them at our local tackle stores. The coast was a bit bumpy at times with the winds funnelling up the highway from Cairns.

With the hard 6 months behind us, we now have to next 6 months of glamour weather and good fishing to look forward to - finger crossed. The juvenile marlin will hopefully be turning up in numbers and we look forward to some good surface action. All we require is a spell of good weather to make the southward trip to the wide grounds.

Bookings are filling up fast so bring it on. If you have any questions or are after some information about anything, feel free to contact us through phone or email. ■



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The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

From the archives of the Dragon Lady Den I can say it has been a much better and productive past month for our vessel. The July school holidays injected much needed finances and I'm sure this was well received across the board in Port Douglas and surrounding areas. Hopefully the remainder of the tourist season can turn things in a more northerly direction for many operators in the fishing and marine industry. The back end of the July month was a bit quieter but that was mainly due to the south easterly winds rearing their ugly head again.

Ok down to some fishing business !! As mentioned weather always plays an important role in our line of work. If the sun is shining and the seas are calm enough we are generally kept busy on our toes. The weather overall was mediocre but not enough from stopping us apply our trade. Luckily our sized vessel is big enough and quite comfortable enough to deal with most situations. We didn't lose any charters till the very end of the month which we can be grateful.

On the fishing front we did see a considerable shift in some of our targeted species. The previous month it was all about the Coral & Bar Cheeked Trout. We couldn't do anything wrong with these guys coming back to the docks with multiple numbers of big, plump models averaging between 4-6kg. I can say in the last few weeks these guys have dropped the ball. We are still catching them in reasonable numbers however they are anaemic in appearance and the size has been brought back to the 38 - 45cm range. There is a possible reason for this and I suspect they are already in preparation for an early spawn this year, particularly in our local waters. Different sections of the Great Barrier Reef can often be different with spawning periods for all manners of fish but the signs are there for the coral trout in my humble opinion.

In saying all this the previous month was considerably slower on the nannygai duo, small and large mouth, but this month they hit back with significant force. The small mouth were pretty much up and about in various places but the large mouth were just sensational. The log book indicated many a day with big hauls of these fish. Several times we made the sensible choice of driving away from the bite as we felt the clients had caught more than enough fish. After all the majority were visiting and we were more than satisfied with what we had achieved. These days we came earlier than our advertised time with good reason.

I'd like to elaborate a bit more on this topic. We are governed by strict regulations which are generous in regards to bag limits. We however are extremely mindful of what we keep on any given day. Any excess fish brought back to the docks is seriously a nuisance for us. Every now and then we do post socially what some may perceive as a 'fish kill' but the reality is it is shared between about a dozen or so clients. If you do the math it probably equates to around 3-4 per person which they are completely entitled to. That is a good return for their hard earned dollar they have spent with us. We see ourselves as an integral role model in regards to fishing sustainably. However in comparison to others - 'Over the Test of Time We Catch More Fish' when it comes to a charter operation and we are proud of that. Maybe that's where a few grumbles tend to start from.

Moving forward we are really hoping for some calmer seas as the winter season passes through. I tell you my good old aching bones could do with a bit of a break. Be sure to see our daily facebook posts when we run, you'll have no choice but to consider joining our friendly and experienced crew.



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Making the Most of Winter Bites

By Dylan Case - Nautical Marine Sales

One of the most deeply engrained myths surrounding the barramundi fishing scene is the perception that these fish will not bite in the cooler months. Of course, this is simply untrue, as barramundi can be caught every single day of the year. It's interesting to consider that as far as temperatures are concerned, our local area experiences some of the mildest winters country wide. Further south, around Central Queensland for example, water temperatures dip well below 20° throughout the winter months, yet large barramundi are caught daily. Temperatures in our local creeks are regularly >23° throughout this same time period. While temperatures do drop as expected through winter, barramundi still move around and feed throughout this period, even in the coldest water. Of course, with such significant changes that occur during the winter period (not just temperature), barramundi behaviour does change, just like it does for most living organisms. Thanks to this change in "typical" fish behavioural patterns, myths around their activity (or lack thereof) tend to arise. Fisherman tend to catch less on the same techniques they've been using throughout the warmer months and often attribute this to fish being sluggish or inactive. While different conditions, it pays to fish different techniques to get the most out of your sessions. With this in mind,

there are plenty of great barra sessions to be had throughout our winter months.

Over 'The Show' long weekend last month, Darryl and I joined the endless convoy of grey nomads and headed north in search of a couple fish. Early on the first day, we found a few barramundi holding out of the current amongst rocks. In the typically windy FNQ winter conditions, it was initially hard to find a cast angle at these fish as the Minn Kota's spot lock struggled to hold us in place. We ended up resorting to the old school spot lock (plough anchor) and found a position we were happy with. It often pays to take your time when approaching fish that you have located. Barra can be easily spooked and you may not get many chances to convert a fish, so it's important to not rush casts! Generally, we will sit and let the anchor or GPS spot lock settle, giving us a chance to think about what lures to first present fish in the given scenario. A few casts in, I drew a bite from a nice fish around the 80cm mark on the Molix shad 100, which we quickly landed and released. 2 more slightly smaller fish hit the deck in quick succession, falling victim to the same lure. After this early flurry of action, the bite on the Molix shad 100 died down, though Darryl was able to draw a number of hits on a 100mm Pointer from Lucky Craft, landing 2 fish in the 70s. We soon left these fish to see if we could pick up a few crabs for



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dinner. Exploring a small mangrove flat, we managed to find plenty of bucks sitting in shallow muddy depressions exposed by the receding tide. Inactive until disturbed, they quickly become less than cooperative and very keen to bite. After putting 6 nice bucks in the boat, we headed back to the area we back to the morning's barra spot.

With the sun starting to dip over the horizon, we managed to draw a couple more bites from the same patch of fish, putting two more fish in the 60s on deck. We decided to take one of these primo specimens back to camp for a feed. As we made our way back to the night's camp spot, we scanned past an isolated piece of structure we had found earlier.

Amongst the heavy cover we could easily make out the shapes of fish on the side scan, which we assumed to be fingermark along with other species. A quick spot lock and a cast with a vibe confirmed this for us, as Darryl put an awesome shallow water fingermark around 55cm on deck, which we also kept. He followed this up with another of similar size, and a cracker 65cm fish which was an absolute handful in 2.8m of water on barra gear! It was well and truly dark by this point, so we left the spot and finally made it back to camp. We made a quick meal from our seafood basket of an esky and packed it in for the night.

Day 2 started with some slow scanning of likely spots as we searched for a couple

more barra. We found some large fish in a loose school around a deep timber, though we felt present conditions weren't ideal to fish them. Nevertheless, we gave them a good hour of casting before leaving in search of greener pastures. We soon found a shallow, mid-river timber which again appeared loaded with fingermark. We had instant responses to our lures and pulled 10 fingermark from this snag in as many minutes, up to 50cm. After we couldn't find any barramundi worth fishing, we moved on to a new area, and quickly found some slightly more active fish. We sat on these fish for a while and tried a range of lures for no results. Eventually, Darryl drew an aggressive bite on a 7.5" soft plastic and put an 80cm fish on deck. Since this was the only lure we had got a hit on in 2 hours, I was quick to copy his selection. We landed 3 fish in the 80s in 10 minutes on this technique before they slowed down. We couldn't seem to get away from the fingermark as I even had one take the larger profiled plastic which was fairly surprising! As the bite dwindled into the afternoon, we retired to an isolated patch of beach to cook up the rest of our seafood, before heading back home. Overall, it was a successful trip, with plenty of fish caught and plenty more learnt. If you are lucky enough to get out month, try a few different techniques and areas to make the most of those winter fish. ■



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Mud Crabbing Make the Most of It

By 'Booney' & Heff - Fishing Port Douglas Charters

At Fishing Port Douglas Charters we've had a good run on the mud crabs over the cooler months when they tend to be at their best and full of delicious white meat, which many consider to be top 5 on any seafood list. We thought we'd share a few tips on our behalf as a favour for the great local support we've received by many of you.

One of the most significant factors to consider when targeting mud crabs is the tide. The larger the tide the better the crabbing opportunities. Therefore crabbing around the full and new moon is paramount. In fact as soon as the tides start to grow in momentum we find the crabs are already on the move.

When tides are at their absolute peak placing your floats high in the trees makes them easier to find and also prevent them getting swept to wherever. It's not hard to lose a pot, especially if you place them in the main part of the channel when the current is roaring. A simple brick in the pot will help prevent this. Having a long handled gaff is the best way to retrieve your pots.

The next factor to consider is where to place your pots. We are not going to give away our preferred spots, but for the average punter just remember a Mud Crab is a crustacean and the key word is Mud. Therefore muddy banks or flats are important no matter how big or small. Find a place with the most holes in the mud even if it's made by the smallest crab or yabby variety. Mud Crabs love to reside in mud as it keeps them cool and also acts as camouflage to hide from predators. Unassuming muddy drains are the perfect pathway for crabs as they shift from dense mangrove jungle into the main stream or flats looking for a feed.

Placing your pots is extremely important. The standard pot has two openings. Let's say at 12 and 6 o'clock. Make sure one opening is facing into the current or drain. As the tide changes the other opening will allow the best access for crabs to enter the pot.

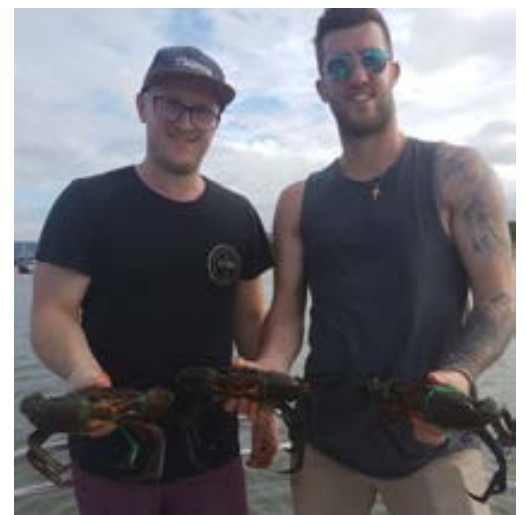
Bait choice is also a very important factor when chasing a feed of mud crabs. We adhere to fresh is best. It doesn't matter if it's a defrosting fish frame or even a solid

batch of fresh pilchards in a pouch if it's only for a short time.

We believe leaving your pots for at least a few hours is okay, especially when the tide is on its bike. It's even better if you have the means to leave them temporarily overnight but definitely no more than from dusk to dawn. Crocs can demolish a pot if determined and any contained crabs will eventually tear each other apart the longer they have to be in a confined space.

Obviously when you retrieve your pots you are looking for the big males - 15cm or more. Often referred to as big rusty bucks, these crabs will have a three-pronged brown star or sometimes even have possibly a blue tinge depending on the actual environment, just above their point which signals a full crab. Their massive claws are a dead give away immediately and it is a welcomed sight. These are the best quality crabs as they are full of meat and perfect for eating. Quite often you'll retrieve quite a few 'Jennies' which have to be let go and the biggest we've seen this period was 19cm across the carapace.

During winter when the rivers and creeks can be harder to produce, we as a charter value add the experience by putting out the pots. The clients, generally from down south really appreciate the experience and just recently some lucky punters went back to their accommodation with 3 big bucks on a 4hr trip with us. That's good going in anyone's books. ■




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Sarz Sanctuary

By Heff

This magazine is predominantly about fishing and boating but recently an event concluded in Port Douglas which compelled me to put pen to paper. It does involve the ocean, a different means of transport and a journey of epic proportions. After 2 weeks of logistics, battles and fun times a dedicated group of 30 people made it to Port Douglas on a fleet of jet skis having travelled from Weipa to Papua New Guinea before heading down the east coast finally arriving in Port Douglas as the final destination. It was all in the cause of a real personal charity with a heart warming purpose for all of us and below is a summary of the Sarz Sactuary:

OUR STORY

On Saturday, 3rd of June 2017, our lives changed forever when our daughter, Sara Zelenak, aged 21, was killed in the London Bridge and Borough Street Markets terror attack.

When Sara left for the UK a few months earlier to take the "Aussie rite of passage" of living and working in the UK and travelling around Europe, we never thought it would be the last time that we saw her. Sara had a passion for life and was filled with excitement for her new adventures overseas. We were also excited about visiting her in Europe and had planned to meet her in Paris at the end of June to climb the Eiffel Tower, eat cheese and croissants, and drink French wines. Sadly this never happened.

It is hard to put into words how unbelievably traumatic, shocking, painful and unfair it has been losing Sara. As parents, we don't think we will ever be able to come to terms with losing our child. We, along with our two sons and extended family, feel the pain of losing her every day – but we also continue to feel her love surrounding us and feel her guiding us in everything we do. Sara taught our family and our community about love: unconditional, unchanging, without barriers, forgiving, nurturing and supportive; a love that can lift others from defeat.

We want to honour Sara's life and give purpose to her loss by helping others who have, like us, suffered traumatic grief. We are motivated to find a greater good from what has happened. We keep a positive outlook and want to build this positivity in others.

"When seeking help and therapy to work through our loss, we discovered that everyone heals in different ways and that there is no one size fits all approach. However, we were unable to find an institution that provided a comprehensive

range of therapies to treat grief in one place – this is how the idea of Sarz Sanctuary was born.

Everyone's journey with traumatic grief is different – that's why we want to open a sanctuary where we can share our experience, offer true understanding and dedicate ourselves to guiding others on their personal journeys to find peace in their own way.

Together we can make a difference to the many people suffering from traumatic grief, and continue to honour Sara in the best way we know how: through unconditional love."

Mark & Julie Wallace

This Year's Fundraiser

As mentioned a dedicated group of 30 people which came from all over Australia, as far from as Perth, first met in Cairns for the initial gathering before transporting 14 high performance jet skis by 4WD on the challenging road ahead to Weipa where the oceanic journey began. It was heavily supported by major companies from its inception including Sea Swift based in Cairns who knows these far northern waters better than anyone.

I'm not sure of the entire journey and what transpired exactly but having met quite a few of 'The Survivors', as they became known, at the local boat ramp I am able to report on the following. They began with 14 jet skis, sunk one and two craft received punctured holes. In the end only 8 jet skis made the entire journey including a legendary Kawaisaki which was the pride of the fleet. Whilst in Papua New Guinea they donated a significant amount of money to a local community as well. **CONT Next Page**





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Sarz Sanctuary Cont ...

As all of us locals would know it has been a harrowing winter period with persistent strong winds and these guys did not escape it at all. Busted up craft and rescue was all part of the incredible journey.

Beers flowed and tears of enjoyment and reflection were very evident in the boat ramp car park in Port Douglas. I have no doubt quite a few of the group had experienced personal hardship of a similar nature. It is a timely reminder of our very own local young lass, Toyah who was tragically taken not so long ago through horrific circumstances. Maybe and possibly some sort of dialogue or communication line can be established between our local community and their fantastic organisation which has shared a similar story. Below is a strong statement from these amazing dedicated group of people:

"Our experience has shown us the devastating impact of traumatic grief. We understand that traumatic grief has a significant impact on people not only emotionally, but also physically and socially.

For up to 20% of people, grief can cause "prolonged grief disorder", a condition causing persistent impact on an individual's mental health, resulting in psychiatric problems that can affect everyday life, work and relationships. Those who lose someone to a sudden or violent act like terrorism, are more likely to experience this condition.

We want to support those who cannot function; who cannot find positives in life; who have deteriorated mentally and physically from the stress of grief; who cannot undertake basic household tasks; who cannot keep focus; who live with fear, blame or guilt; who have lost all purpose in life and who need greater help.

The first Sarz Sanctuary will be located on Australia's Sunshine Coast and will offer 5 day programs through its onsite facilities. It will be open to people who are in mental turmoil or who have physically deteriorated, after the loss of a loved one from a sudden or violent act.

We aim to offer more unique and comprehensive alternative to standard government funded services, by providing personalised traditional and non-traditional therapies. The program will include access to the following services:

- General practitioners
- Counsellors/psychologists
- Physiotherapists
- Kinesiologists
- Reiki therapists
- Massage therapists
- Yoga instructors
- Dietitians
- Naturopaths
- Aromatherapists
- Personal trainers/rehabilitation
- Course facilitators/coaches/educators



Overall, the sanctuary will empower people to regain control of their lives and take a positive and proactive mindset, which will in turn spread to their families, friends and community. By providing support to guests of our sanctuary, we hope to expand our reach and positivity to others, who have also suffered traumatic grief.

We therefore believe it is important for us to build a sanctuary so those experiencing traumatic grief feel that they have somewhere that they can go to find the right therapy and support for them. We hope to build a strong community and expand our reach to not only help people in Australia, but extend to the UK and all around the world."

For more information go to sarz-sanctuary.org or you can follow on the Facebook



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Reel Cooking with Mick Hart



Golden Moroccan Kebabs

Ingredients

Golden Trevally fillets x 2 (about 250g in total), cut into 3cm chunks

Rose or regular harissa 1 tbsp, plus extra to serve

Lemon 1 large, juiced

Mixed grains 250g pouch (we used Merchant Gourmet Glorious Grains)

Cumin seeds ½ tsp, toasted and lightly crushed

Spring onions 3, finely chopped

Cucumber ¼, cut into small dice

Mint a small handful, roughly chopped

Flat-leaf parsley a small handful, roughly chopped

Natural yogurt 4 tbsp

Method

Soak 4 wooden skewers in water.

Toss the Golden Trevally with the harissa and 1 tbsp of the lemon juice, and leave to marinate for 10 minutes.

Heat the grains following pack instructions, then toss with the cumin, spring onions, some seasoning and 2-3 more tbsp of the lemon juice, depending on how zingy you like it.

Thread the trevally chunks on 4 skewers. Heat a grill pan to hot then grill the skewers for 1 minute on each side (or cook under a hot grill). Toss the cucumber and herbs through the grains. Serve with the trevally skewers with the yogurt swirled with a little more harissa on the side.

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New Evinrude Dealership in Town

By Heff

EVINRUDE®



Recently we touched base with Chris Wierzbowski at Port Douglas Marine Engineering as his business has expanded very quickly and recently he obtained a new outboard dealership which will excite the small boat brigade. We posed a few questions about his expansion which he was more than grateful to answer.

Your development as a business since the beginning to the new established premises at Craiglie is an awesome local story of success. How has the journey been?

It has been a very quick learning curve for me only starting out a few short years ago with a 3m x 5m storage shed on Warner St. Fortunately I was in the right place at the right time as a long time local marine diesel business had recently closed down. My experience of 5 years in the Superyachting industry set me up well to dive straight into performing some general maintenance on the local commercial vessels around the marina. Word of mouth quickly took hold and it seemed like my phone wouldn't stop ringing. I knew if I ensured that every job we took on was completed professionally I could slowly grow and establish a good business in this town. Some 3 years later and on our 3rd (the largest) premises we're now working out of a large yard and workshop located on the Captain Cook highway (next to NQ Homes). We have recently acquired an outboard dealership being Evinrude. We also have Volvo and Yanmar dealership which give us access to Marine Diesels and Generators.

Why did you want an outboard dealership on top of your marine diesel brands?

It seemed like almost every week we had someone coming in asking if we sell

outboards. Our answer was "no but we do have a small range of used engines for sale." There was quite a market for used engines however I knew that this wasn't going to cut it. We inquired with a couple of engine manufactures about possible dealership opportunities with mixed feedback. Many were concerned that we would cut into the territory of the already established Cairns based dealers. This obviously doesn't help out our locals as most people would dread dragging their boat all the way to Cairns for a dealer scheduled service (especially the commercial operators). We contacted Evinrude and by the end of the first phone conversation the paperwork was in an express post satchel. We were all very excited!

Tell us about the new Evinrude outboard?

We understand that a couple of major outboard brands have dominated the North Queensland market for a long time. However now that the latest emissions regulations have been introduced there are no more new 2 stroke outboards for sale in Australia. Except for the Evinrude ETEC. This is where we now know we can compete with the "others". Evinrude ETEC is the only emissions compliant 2 stroke outboard on the market in the world. We're excited about this because the old school boaties and fishermen that are used to the midrange 2 stroke power and torque are not forced to downgrade to a 4 stroke. On top of this the new ETEC is more fuel efficient, often quieter than a 4 stroke and produces virtually zero smoke or smell. It also comes with a 5 year warranty.

For our commercial customers the biggest benefit is this. Naturally being a 2 stroke engine there is no oil or oil filter that needs to be changed every 100 hours. That means less haul outs and less maintenance costs. The standard maintenance intervals for the 25-90hp range is 300 hours and for the 115hp-300hp range is 500 hours which is unheard of for a 4 stroke outboard.

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Just remind the public of your services in general including at the marina and to the local fishing fraternity?

We are very excited about doing the best deal on an Evinrude outboard for our locals. But we are still performing all types of maintenance on trailer boats right up to the world travelling Superyachts that visit the town. We have recently installed a few Motorguide trolling motor setups in various trailer boats. We feel that a trolling motor with spot lock is one of the best ways to improve a day out fishing, rather than trying 1,2,3 times to get that hang right on the bommie. A trolling motor makes it

foolproof! We can supply and fit any make and model of trolling motor including the battery and DC charging setups. For the last 2 years we have been servicing all makes and models of inboard and outboard motor and will continue to do so.

Do you have any tips for the small boat brigade with outboards for basic maintenance?

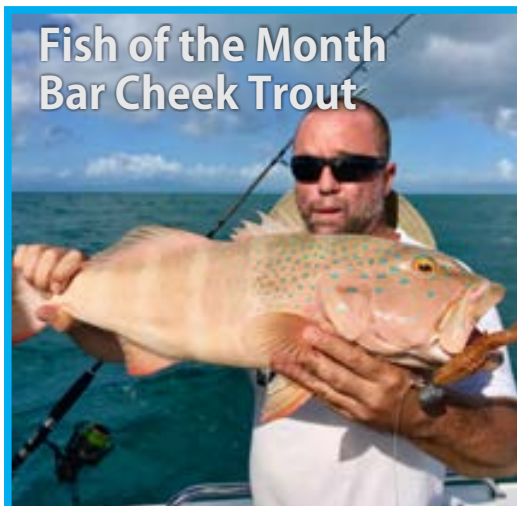
A few tips for the recreational fisherman. Be sure to give your engine a good check over and run after a long time in storage BEFORE you arrive at the boat ramp. It's true that most breakdowns and failures of engines relate to them being

used not enough rather than too much. Unleaded fuel only lasts about 3 months if you're lucky since we're up in the tropics. Condensation and water related contaminates in fuel is probably the biggest killer for an outboard motor. Not too mention it can be very costly to fix!

I know were all hoping that the second half of the year will produce much better boating weather than what we have seen so far. Your outboard is the most integral part to a safe day's boating. Be sure to give us a call or swing by our new premises to view the new Evinrude ETEC or if you have any questions related to boating or outboards. I know we will be able to point you in the right direction!



Fish of the Month
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Behind the Scenes

By Heff

Lakefield National Park

According to locals in the know the post wet season fishing in the Lakefield National Park has been nothing short of brilliant. Following a significant rainfall early in the year it has set this iconic place alive with big, plump barra. Talking with a few locals who have made the journey in recent times, they said it was steady, steady with plenty of quality barra to be taken. The main rivers are fishing well and the lagoon angling has probably even been better. They are holding a healthy water level and chocked full of nice fish. The fish in particular this year are very silver in colour which suggests they have not been land locked for too long having likely travelled well inland during the recent wet period. There are ample cherabin to be caught as live bait and they can never be knocked back by a barra if dangled in front of their nose. The old cake of soap and cat food in a tin was the choice to catch the bait in the nets. Also soft plastics with a good sized paddle tail have produced more than its fair share of fish. Between a small band of locals up to 120 plus barra were caught over a few days. Only a few were kept for the BBQ and the rest were released. Road conditions are quite good and you definitely need to book your campsite ahead with the National Parks.



Port Douglas Marlin Challenge 2019

The Port Douglas Marlin Challenge held between the 8th - 12th November in 2019 is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. It has been well supported over the years by local and visiting boats, state and national wide. It has stood the test of time pulled together each year by a small band of dedicated committee members. There is a lot of interest already for the up and coming event and the club urges the local fraternity to be part of it this year for this great achievement. For more information go to www.portdouglasmarlinchallenge.com Otherwise call president Damon Gruzdev on 0408400090.



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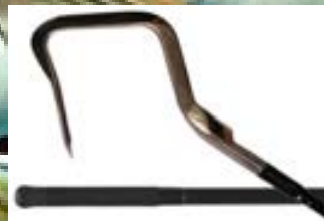
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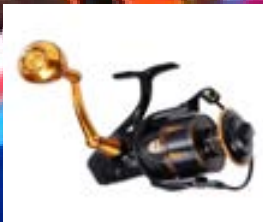
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Mangrove Watch with Bruce Belcher



A few weeks ago, my son Griff invited me to a Bar-B-Q at our neighbouring tour operator's place, the Cruise Centre, hosted by Kianna Lafferty. The 'barbie' was to encourage locals with a wish to learn more about mangroves and to be volunteers for any of the activities conducted by Mangrove Watch, alongside JCU's professor Norm Duke, a mangrove expert. This gathering was at the week's end of research that they'd conducted earlier.

Back in the mid 80s I remember seeing a research vessel named the "Harry Messel" which was anchored periodically just upstream of the ferry, on the north side. I remember it was under the banner of AIMS (Australian Institute of Marine Science), based in Townsville. This was the earlier operation before Mangrove Watch continued.

This was Griff's second involvement and he acted as the coxswain. So, he spent much of the time waiting on the boat. Before they headed off, I'm told that some members of the Kuku Yalanji attended at the Cruise Centre for a smoking ceremony for a "Welcome to Country" introduction.

Professor Duke's mangrove studies started back in the early 70s. Many years later, around 2002, I heard his name linked to Lee Lafferty, who owned the Cruise Centre and they became friends. As a result, Lee's knowledge of mangroves was unmatched in the district.

So, about twice a year, perhaps before the wet and before the dry, these scientists and their helpers inspect 24 "Patches" along the river, to collect data relating to their observations. The overall observation tells them about changes to the ecosystem determined by time, weather, man-made interference and, of course, the contentious subject of climate change.

We all went for a cruise after hours and before the 'barbie'. The leader of Mangrove Watch is Jock Mackenzie, from Melbourne and he invited Prof. Duke to explain how their work was co-ordinated. Volunteers were asked to form teams on the boat for a trial exercise. One had a timer, another a GPS, another a clipboard collecting information and one had a camera, pointing outwards. Over a period, this information is valuable to these people who battle with time to carry this out.

As Norm said, "No mangroves, no fish". I detected a note of subtle encouragement perhaps suggesting that we need more volunteers to get involved.

You'll find their Website quite interesting: Mangrove Watch. See you next month. 🇺🇸

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Local Bragging Board



Some wonderful Spanish Mackerel were caught on the Dragon Lady Charter in recent times



Wow, that's a nice coastal Gold Spot Cod caught by Fishing Port Douglas Charters



Jodi Francis with a ripper Lakefield Barra caught recently camping with family & friends



Exceed Sports Fishing caught this Spanish Mackerel across the top of the Reef with a Stickbait

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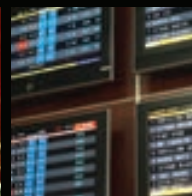
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