

LINEBURNER

VOLUME 249 PRICELESS

FISHING TROPICAL FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

AUG 21



Features
Lakefield Barra Fishing
Local Charter Reports
Cairns Bluewater Tournament

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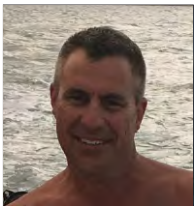
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Contact Us if you'd like to
Contribute - Most Welcome

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Front Cover:
A classic night time raft up of Game boats at Fitzroy Island featuring the 60ft Shaka vessel in the middle



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PORT DOUGLAS COAST GUARD

VMR 410 Channel 16, 72, 81

The Best Barra Fishing

By Jake Collete

With our charters dropping like flies in August on our Saltaire Charters vessel due to cancellations myself and a couple of mates took the opportunity to drive the 5hr trip north to Lakefield National Park for a 2 night camping trip. There's an old saying up here in the Far Nth, 'it's well worth the drive' because it's easily the best barra fishing you'll have on the east coast of Australia.

Naturally protected as a National Park it is well managed and stunningly beautiful with an array of places to explore, camp and fish. Yes you do need to book in but there are many locations to choose from. This time around we stuck with the Normanby River which I've become very familiar with over the years.

Boys being boys, we keep it pretty simple for such a quick trip. Eskies, good grub and the old fashioned swag to sleep under the stars around a camp fire. I wouldn't have it any other way. With a quick and easy campsite set up in no time it was off to snag a few barra.

The last wet season was quite good so we sensed there would be a few barra around land locked in certain sections of the river. In August the water levels are probably at their lowest for this system and the barra have no choice but to stay put and wait for the next big rains to move if they choose.

Now you may question our timing because

of the cool water temperatures accumulated over the winter or dry season. Barra typically don't appreciate these conditions in most situations. But over many years of doing this, there's fish to be found if you know where to find them in the colder months.

With the water levels low it was easy to navigate the banks by foot from river section to river section. We were armed with an array of soft plastics with a good beating paddle tail and surface lures. With former knowledge of the system we really stuck to fishing the real shallow parts of the water. Slightly deeper gutters only a couple of feet deep with weed bed coverage are ideal at this time of year. Also any bank lined with boulders or big rocks are worth working over. The barra do appreciate any warmer water and these places conduct heat over the course of the day. They will sit on the sandy type bottom with their eyes looking upwards for any sign of activity to have a crack at. Even the most shallow inconspicuous bits of water are worth casting over a few times.

The fishing was a bit slower or harder during the mornings until the sun was high in the sky shedding warmth of the water. We caught some really good barra during the daylight and more so in the afternoons. Fishing conditions were really comfy. ▶



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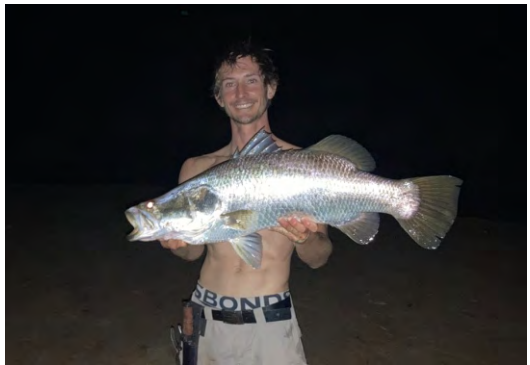
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Best Barra Fishing cont..


However the best bite was right on dark, particularly using surface lures which create a bit of commotion and attracting noise. Now you have to have your wits about fishing once the sun drops. This place is full of crocs and the big kind if you know what I mean. We saw several crocs up around the 14-15ft mark on the banks during the day. We fished together as a group often in shin deep water but we always had our head torches on scouting the water around us. Any sign of bright eyes on the surface in the area and we backed right off because the next time they could be right in front of you. You definitely wouldn't do this in the warmer months when they are super active and extremely territorial. Anyway the dusk period was awesome and we caught most of our big barra during this time. The best measured 94cm which is nothing to sneeze at. A fish this size in shallow water is something to behold and very exciting. It is sudden and instant mayhem when they strike. The big silver flashing flanks then turn the immediate area into a boiling froth jumping madly and often grey hounding because of the depth of the water. They are intoxicating to watch and then fight against their brute strength and power to be able to land them on the bank. It's this adrenalin rush you get injected with as to why we love coming to this place every year.

Over the day and a bit of fishing we put into it we caught and released 20 barra ranging from 60cm to the impressive 94cm mark. Not bad for a colder month I must admit. Besides taking into account the fishing aspect, you never tire of the beauty of this place, the array of wildlife you see along your adventure and sitting around the campfire at night embroiling over the day's events over a cold beer. I definitely can't wait to get back up there as soon as possible. ■




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The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

By the end of July we had an inkling overall business in the Far North was going to come to an abrupt end. We managed to hang onto trade till the first week of August then it was lights out for everyone up here. With every state in lock down or restrictions in place it was like a bolt of lightening. Even south east QLD went into a lock down which snuffed out any hope of doing charters. Our boat manager Heff, from Fishing Port Douglas mentioned he was scared to answer the phone or email because it was invariably cancellation after cancellation. Still to this day the cancellations moving forward heavily outweigh any potential trips in the future. Just to give you an example, for the second year running the Kenworth Group have had to cancel a big corporate gathering for another 12 months in Cairns at the start of September which we are part of a 5 day exercise. This is only a snippet of what the diary looks like. The best way to describe the look of the diary is to see several months of red crosses page after page. As I put pen to paper we have just accomplished our first charter at the end of the month in weeks and we don't know when the next one may occur.

This time around there is literally no support from the government in regards to my team barring a tiny grant which will barely cover our mooring fees. This will be the biggest test without doubt. Even the bigger dive boats have barely moved in weeks and the marina is like a barren, desolate land of inactivity. In town my missus runs a clothes shop and she has experienced days upon days of no takings. I'm also hearing the accommodations are bone dry as well. By the time things return to normal I think Port Douglas will be in a world of pain for many businesses.

Anyway enough of the doom and gloom and we'll touch on what has been biting with the handful of charters we've conducted. If it's coral trout you want then coral trout it is,



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we've been sourcing really good numbers in all levels of the water column from the deep into the shallows. The nannygai have been here and there with some bumper days thrown into the mix. The spanish mackerel on the float have been busy enough and we've been able to manage 2-3 fish per trip. These go into the community chest to share amongst everyone at the end of the day. There's been some really decent spangled emperor come back to the dock at around 4-5kg and their colours are very vibrant at the moment and they look impressive. We've picked up a few solid reef mangrove jack which are a bonus as well as a steady supply of gold spot trevally which give a spirited fight for the angler. Overall the fishing is quite typical for this time of year, so yes it is productive.

Looking ahead, August proved to be a windy month so I sense this style of weather pattern will subside. It actually proved to be the windiest month so far for the year. There's always one winter month which can play up. September normally offers calmer conditions and the day time temperature is really comfortable to be on the water. We expect to catch good numbers of fish with some outstanding quality behind it.

Let's hope the vaccination roll out continues at fast pace and we'll see more of you up here. It's the only hope to see happier days back in the Far North. ■

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Breathing in the Saltaire

By **Damian Collete**



As with the majority of tourism businesses in FNQ we experienced a complete blanket over our bookings for the month of August. What promised to be another good block of work quickly turned to mush and things aren't any better moving into September. We've already cancelled over 75% of bookings in the coming weeks. I am blowing steam from my ears with the whole way our governments have handled Covid. Anyway let's talk about some fishing whilst you have my attention.

At the start of August we submitted a family team into the annual 3 day Cairns Bluewater Billfish Tournament run out of Fitzroy Island. This is by far the best social and fishing tournament in FNQ and has been for several years now. A truckload of local vessels make the effort each year and basically anchor in the bay at the island for 3 nights and then enjoy the big finale at the resort on the last evening. Basically you fish hard during the day and then you party hard at night on the water often rafting up with fellow mates. It's a lot of fun and the best time you can have in a boating sense.

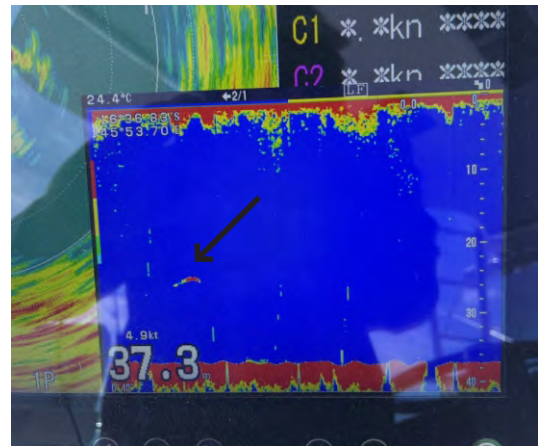
This year we utilised the 60ft Shaka vessel which is now part of our banner and she was an absolute head turner. I've already published this is the classiest charter game boat in QLD. That's her on the front cover in the middle towering above the others. With myself driving the wheel and the boys on the deck we left the angling mainly up to the ladies.

So with three days of fishing using 10kg line class and almost \$30,000 in cash and prizes, it is highly competitive. With over 20 boats entered we were all out to chase the juvenile black marlin which dominate the area at this time of year.

The weather this year was extremely rough with a lot of smaller type boats pulling out at the last minute. Luckily we were aboard the biggest vessel in the field which made it a lot more comfortable for us. Still it was hard work ploughing the paddocks in the slop and the

marlin weren't exactly on fire. We positioned ourselves well with a couple of tagged marlin on the first day and then could only manage one each day after this. Naturally you always miss a couple of hook-up but that's small black marlin fishing. They are frisky little stallions with plenty of acrobatical tricks up their sleeves. With the conditions they way they were this was suffice to come 3rd overall but importantly we secured runner up in the Female Angler category. For many years now we have always walked away with a category representation on the podium so it was pleasing.

It was the first time I've driven our new Shaka vessel in a tournament and it was a dream. The electronics on this boat to help navigate your way to a bite are amazing. This boat has the latest electronics to be fitted on a charter boat in Australia. With highest standard Simrad radar and sounder working in tandem we were able to source a lot of bait and also marlin as pictured. It didn't get us first prize but it will moving forward. I have quite a bit of work coming up on Shaka if things go to plan and can't wait to take her up against the mighty big black marlin. Go to www.fishingportdouglas.com.au to see her capabilities. ■



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On the Daintree Charters

By Jamie Beitzel - The Local Huckleberry Finn

Up in our neck of the rainforest woods it has gone from chocolates to boiled lollies. From literally working 7 days a week for a while the past few weeks have not required me to put the boat in the water at all. It makes you scratch your head as to how quickly the water drained out of the bath tub with this latest Covid debacle. Mass cancellations unfortunately have been a daily occurrence including moving forward into the coming month. We still have quite a few grey nomads in the Far Nth staying at van parks which have decided to stay put for the mean time, however they did their trips weeks ago and are just now sitting on their hands. We do rely on a turn over of people coming through the area which does happen in normal circumstances.

It's been an absolute shame because we had some idyllic tides to work with during the bulk of August but we had no bookings. Right on the cusp of the melt down I was having a ball on the Daintree River catching big 1m queenfish, quality fingermark, excellent golden trevally and big javelin fish across the flats. The river was producing as good as I had hoped for. The croc spotting and mud crabbing was also a big bonus for my clients. August proved to be a bit windy offshore also, so my demand would have been sky high if we had people around.

By the end of the first week of August it was obvious the times ahead were going to be quiet and decisions had to be made.

I had been itching to literally pull the boat apart and also re-paint the decking floor.



So I put my bum up and head down for two weeks and to be honest it looks like a brand new boat. It's amazing what a bit of elbow grease and application can achieve. I'm pleased with the outcome and hopefully we get some visitors soon to appreciate my hard work behind the scenes. My tackle also went through a vigorous make over so I'm rearing to go.

Looking ahead if we are able to manage some charters we are seriously coming into the best time of year to be fishing the Daintree River. More brighter and warmer days will see water temperatures rise and the likes of barra and mangrove jack come back on the agenda, plus the already mentioned species will be primed as well. The water clarity will also be significantly better to aid our efforts.

Other than this I'm a bit over doing the maintenance thing and super keen to be on the water where I'm most happy. It seems to have a calming effect on me. I genuinely hope things improve business wise, even the local Croc tours have taken a massive dip in trade. We're a resilient sort up here on the Daintree and hope to see you nearby soon ■



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Top 6 Ranking

Dated 22nd August By Google Business - Fishing Port Douglas
Our 362 photos posted got 41,761 total views in the last month



Reel Cooking with Mick Hart Ultimate Sunday Brunch



4 SERVINGS

Ingredients

4 x 150gr fillets of any red fish - Coral Trout, Nannygai or Red Emperor

8 large eggs

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp sea salt plus a bit more for final dish

Freshly ground black pepper

6 tbsp. unsalted butter, divided

4 x 1 inch thick slices sourdough or country-style bread

3 tbsp. sour cream

1 lemon, halved

2 spring onions, thinly sliced on a diagonal

2 tbsp. coarsely chopped dill

4 cups of baby spinach

2 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil

Method

Lightly pan fry fish fillets with a drizzle of olive oil and a knob of butter till cooked

Toast Bread and butter when cooled

Scramble your eggs with a sprinkle of sea salt using the sour cream to add closer to the end of the cooking process

Place the cooked eggs and then the fish on top of your toast. Finely grate a lemon zest on over the dish and then with scatter dill and spring onion.

On the side of the toast bunch your baby spinach with a drizzle of olive oil. Season the dish as you see fit with a final touch of salt and pepper



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