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Fishing Port Douglas News



with Heff & Jaeden Vardon of Sunshine Coast Uni

Research testing various shark deterrents to reduce shark depredation with fishing along the Great Barrier Reef is progressing well, with early research indicating use of shark deterrents to result in less depredation. This research funded by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, involved testing two deterrents available to commercial, charter and recreational line fishers onboard Dragon Lady fishing charters operating out of Port Douglas in Queensland Australia. These deterrents tested included the electric FISH01 shark deterrent by Ocean Guardian and the magnetic Zeppelin shark deterrent fishing sinker by SharkBanz. Testing so far onboard Dragon Lady Fishing Charters has found use of both these deterrents to result in less depredation, giving fishing customers onboard greater success in landing fish.

Throughout this research the use of underwater cameras has allowed us to better understand the behaviour associated with depredation and what goes on below the water when fishing is occurring. Camera video has found that sharks are common at certain sites and sometimes already below the boat before the first line is even dropped in the water. Other situations have found sharks to turn up after fishing has commenced and follow boats from site to site to depredate catches. Cameras have also shown multiple sharks at depredation sites with competition amongst sharks to depredation fish.

Although use of shark deterrents so far has resulted in a reduction in the rate of depredation, testing has found some fish to still be eaten even while using shark deterrents. This was due to the restricted range of shark deterrents and challenges with using them while fishing is being undertaken. Further, Grouper Species have also been found to be as frequent as sharks at some sites depredating fish and as these deterrents do not impact fish species, depredation still is resulting from the Groupers while using deterrents.

Although not completely effective this early research demonstrates that use of a shark deployment can result in less depredation experienced by fishers and greater success while fishing. This research would not be possible without Steve Adamson and the crew onboard Dragon Lady Fishing Charters and we look forward to continuing to work with this operation over coming months to find which shark deterrent is optimal to use while fishing.




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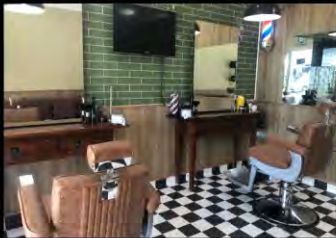
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Fishing On the Daintree

with Jamie Beitzel



As expected the August period proved to be an extremely busy time for me, mainly with charter work but also adding a couple of additions to my boat which included new engines and a high end side scanner. The side scanner can detect life in the water from a lateral point of view. So for example if I'm slowly moving along it will pick up fish life 20-30m either side of the boat. It's handy for searching along the banks for barra but also in open water whereby you may be looking around a mark and the fish are just sitting off the area which the main sounder is looking at directly below. It certainly does give me more confidence and ability to source the fish. I'm keen to really see how it performs out along the coast when searching for mackerel and other pelagic fish. Having all the modern accessories is great but the fish still have to be in the right mood to get the results. Barring one day where we had a fish around Snapper Island catching some nice Island Trout, the rest of the time was spent in the river. The fishing was a bit tough on the roaring big tides around the moons and there was a minor flat spot when the tides were very neap. Other than this it was a great time to be fishing the river. My best days saw me tap into the big 1m Queenfish which were thick at times. They were concentrated in the main channel but also up on the flats

at times on the high tide. Catching them in skinny water is a real buzz I must admit as they have little choice but explode all over the surface. I was able to get these fish with traditional live bait drifting in the current but also on surface poppers which make for a very visual strike.

My old favourite, the Fingermark was typically up and about and on the odd occasion seemed to be the only fish I could find at times. There's been at various times a run of river trevally which can really turn up the dial as they tend to swim in schools and can be super aggressive with whatever you present to them.

Amongst the snags I started to see a lot more interest from the barra but at times due to angler error they didn't get the job done. That's all part and parcel of charter fishing with inexperienced anglers on some days, but with the new side scanner I'm expecting the return rate to improve considerably with the water temperature slowly rising.

Other than this it will be head down and bum up as there no end to the bookings moving forward. I also think the next month or so is the best time of year to be fishing on the Daintree and I'm looking forward to some great action.



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Dragon Lady Charters

with Steve Adamson



The month of August to be honest went fairly quickly for us with solid bookings and mostly reasonable weather except for the back end with a good blow coming through lasting several days.

We had some really interesting days with some producing completely different results which I'll elaborate on.

The first particular trip saw the bottom fishing a little quiet but it was floating mackerel rod which produced the goods for the day.

From memory the weather was a bit bumpy but it was the float line which seemed to ignite all day. We kept 6 spanish mackerel to divide amongst the punters which is our allowed quote per day for our vessel. I suspect we could have caught twice as many but once we reached our allotment we put it away for the day.

On another trip we had a big day on the coral trout up in the shallows whereby we came home with about 25 of them. They were all sizeable fish too up to around 5kg. The interesting thing we noticed when processing them is that nearly all of them were full of roe. Normally you don't expect to see this until a few weeks later but they were full in the belly. It may suggest an earlier spawn at some locations this year and we'll have to wait and see. Apparently they have the ability to carry this roe for quite a period and wait for the ideal conditions to present, even if they wait till the October prediction on the new moon. If water temperatures can go up even a bit, it maybe an early event in September.

Another interesting trip we experienced was in moderately deep waters and caught half a dozen ripping red emperor. On a good day you would expect to maybe accumulate 2-3 fish but this was a bit of an exception. Considered by many as the ultimate reef fish



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this was a pleasing result.

Other than this it was a consistent month overall with a band of other species getting in amongst the action. These included baldy bream, cobia, sweetlip, stripeys, gold spot trevally and also the old bludger trevally which turned up later in the month. At this time of year all manner of species seem to enjoy the conditions and will have their moments at various times.

In association with Jaiden from the Sunshine Coast University we continued our Shark Depredation program deploying anti shark devices. From what I'm seeing I'm guesstimating around a 50% reduction in activity from the toothy critters. Still there's a long way to go with different times of the year. In saying this we are collecting a lot of data and associated underwater footage to fully gauge the research. It is becoming quite obvious that the bulk of fish eaten are a result from the Pig Eye Shark with the swabs taken from any remaining fish we retrieve to the boat.

This coming month sees us down in Cairns for a week chartering with a big conference group which will be a change of scenery. Other than this bookings are very solid back here locally.

Saltaire Charters



with Craig Newbold

The month of August saw us complete the bulk of our scheduled charters with mostly affordable conditions to deal with. There's still a fair bit of south easterly wind at times but one can feel this will start to ease off a bit. In saying all this it has been a windy year to date and our boys are really hanging for things to settle down.

We had some massive moments in recent weeks with one particular session proving to be incredible. It was on day one of an overnight charter with Mum and her two teenage sons all the way over from Denmark. Within the first hour of fishing our skipper Troy, ran across a big patch of surface activity which was on fire. It resulted in 9 Spanish Mackerel and 8 Northern Bluefin Tuna being hooked up to. The teenage boys had an experience they'll never forget and will spread the word how good the fishing is 'Down Under'. A few fish were kept for consumption and rest released. These purple patches don't happen all that often but goes to show that the Great Barrier Reef can dish up some of the best fishing on the planet.

Other successful days saw us fishing in the deeper water and plucking some classic large mouth nannygai up to 9kg. Add in a

few hard hitting chinaman fish and gold spot trevally into the mix, it certainly left behind some battered up anglers but all with big smiles.

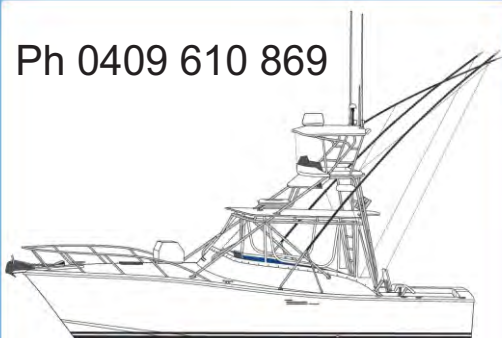
It was a positive month in regards to catching quite a few nice cobia or black kingfish as they are called. These fish have the pulling capacity of a freight train no matter their size. They have the knack of going to a new level when being fought in closer to the boat. By this point most fish have given up the ghost somewhat, but these brutes find a reserved burst of energy unlike no other and are a real handful. Once boated and on the deck they require to be dispatched very quickly as they can cause chaos and also injury. The end result however is a beautiful table eating fish and just another feature of what we can catch on our local waters.

Other than this we had some days involving some snorkeling at lunch time and also a dedicated dive trip with a local company.

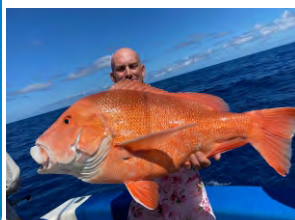
September starts to see us punch out quite a few overnight charters as well as the normal day work. We are looking forward to some exciting fishing planned ahead and fingers crossed the weather will allow us to accomplish this.



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Top 6 Ranking

Dated 22nd August By Google Business - Fishing Port Douglas
Our 697 photos posted got 65,778 total views in the last month



Reel Cooking with Heff Crunchy Pelagic Sashimi

With a lot of Spanish Mackerel and also Northern Bluefin Tuna around at the moment this is a refreshing dish which doesn't get any healthier.

Ingredients

Fillet of Spanish Mackerel or Northern Bluefin Tuna

Soy Sauce for a dipping marinade with fish

Go for it with your own salad dish combination - we suggest crunchy very thin Chinese noodles not cooked, raw snow peas, fresh cabbage very finely chopped, very finely chopped carrot, some capers sprinkled in and all with just a hint of sesame oil.



Method

The salad is the easy part to assemble and your call

The fish however has to be basically sliced into a few millimetres thick and in a 5-8cm in circumference. Basically the size of a medallion. This requires a chef knife sharpened to the maximum.

A hint, place the fillet for 10 minutes into the freezer to firm the flesh and this will assist with the carving process into thin slices.

Just dip fish into Soy dish before adding to plate. Basically a 'Super Food' dish!



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