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Fishing Port Douglas News



with Heff

It's been quite some time in the making but it looks like the nastiest & windiest winter we've seen in over a decade is behind us. September is always considered a blue ribbon fishing month on the calendar with a plethora of fish on the chew both inshore and offshore. How's this for a list just to whet the appetite - barramundi, coral tout, spanish mackerel, queenfish, large mouth nannygai, fingermark, red emperor and small black marlin. There's not many other places on the planet which can offer this as an entree'

Speaking of the calendar here's some important local dates to put into your diary:

Reef Fin Fish Closures

October 12th-16th

November 10th- 14th

Barramundi Closed Season

November 1st - February 1st

Port Douglas Marlin Challenge

THE 2023 TOURNAMENT IS SCHEDULED FOR FOUR CONSECUTIVE DAYS OF FISHING FROM NOVEMBER 15TH TO 18TH, 2023.

Presentation night on November 18th at Lure Restaurant, Port Douglas Marina.

Registrations and payments must be finalised and completed by 7th November 2023.

www.portdouglasmarlinchallenge.com.au

School Holidays - extremely high demand period, affecting fishing charters, accommodation, restaurants, car hire and other holiday experiences. 95% of our local trade during this period comes from the eastern seaboard states and forward bookings are essential to avoid disappointment. It is the busiest time on our calendar for the year.

NSW 22nd Sept - 9th Oct

VIC 15th Sept - 2nd Oct

QLD 15th Sept - 2nd Oct

SA 19th Sept - 16th Oct

TAS 29th Sept - 16th Oct

Heavy Tackle Big Black Marlin Season

Word on the beat this will start late September running through to mid December with ocean currents and sea temperature forecasts.

This is the time of year where the fishing peaks and living in paradise rings true !



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Fishing On the Daintree

with Jamie Beitzel



During the month of August we did turn the corner in regards to river fishing and for the better. As the days continue we'll start to see increments of improvement overall and it's good to see those grey, overcast days are behind us. A bit of healthy sunshine helps all of us including the attitude of the fish. Even though the strong winds have been persistent offshore for the most part, it hasn't compromised our river fishing efforts.

When I reflect back on the last few weeks I must admit there's been some cracking fish to be caught amongst others. I'll explain this a bit further.

Okay, barramundi came back on the bite with a bit more warmth hitting the water. My best was 90cm with a few smaller models around 70cm. In the process of specifically targeting them I few big one's did escape the clutches. It was more angler error than anything else which can be a bit disappointing despite being coached through the initial hook-up. You can't target barra all day but I've found the last part of the run out tide to be productive for me. A juicy live sardine has been my weapon of choice to gather their attention.

There's been a pretty good of run of big queenfish entering the system and have settled within for the moment. Again I hit their likely spots at various time of the tide with poppers and live bait drifting in the current. They are a real highlight to latch

onto and never disappoint as a sportfish. A chrome 1m sports ferrari grey hounding all over the place will do the job every time. I'm really careful obtaining a photo in quick time and release them in the blink of an eye so they return in good condition. They are a very fragile fish to release.

Another highlight was capturing a couple of 18-20kg giant trevally on one particular day on a run in tide. I suspect they came inside to escape the blow from along the coast and were a bit peckish. Well a combination of squid and pilchard did the trick. Once hooked up it was a fair bit of chasing down but I had some fairly open waters to work with, without too much trouble to worry about. Patience, boat manouvering and encouragement given towards the angler worked well over an estimated 20-25 minute tussle each time. You let the client know this is a river fish of a lifetime and they tune in pretty quickly to what your instructing. (Picture Front Cover)

Other bonuses I encountered were a few fingermark to 5kg which is a powerful fish amongst some really trick territory and requires a capable angler to pull off. They came back on the bite again with a better climate to their liking. I can rely on these fish to be a regular fish on my charters moving forward. Bookings are really heavy moving forward, be sure to book well ahead.



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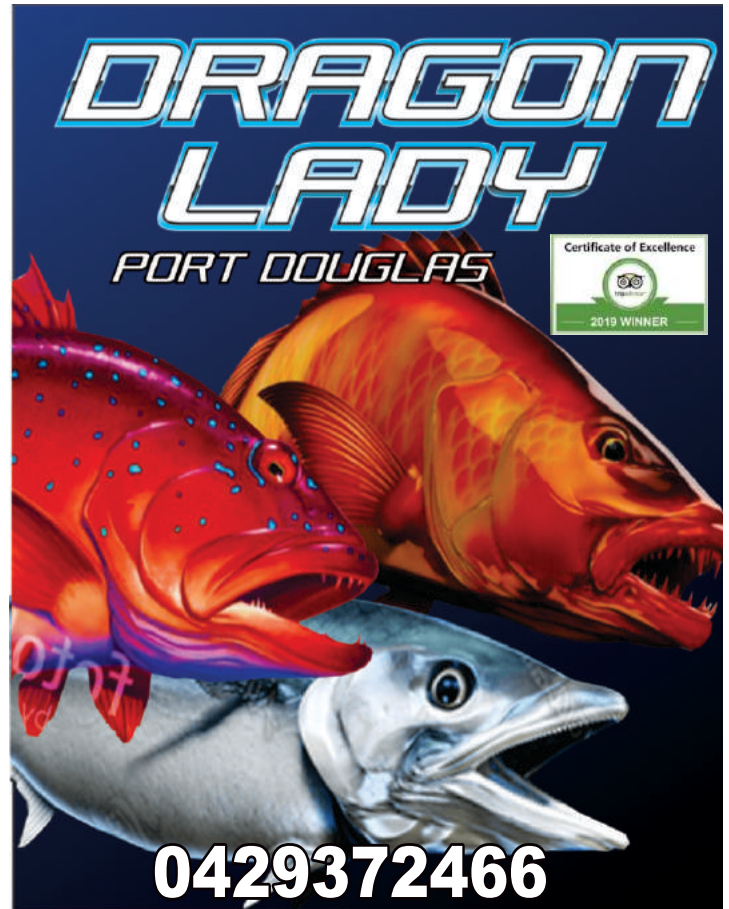
with Derek Brown



During the month of August there were flickers of hope in the weather department but when you look back maybe only 25% of charters were conducted in picture post card conditions. The other three quarters were achieved in acceptable conditions but restricted to certain fishing grounds.

Nonetheless we still punched out of a lot of great catches over the days. We were able to fish the deeper waters on a handful of charters and we know the large mouth nannygai are very receptive when we can get to them. 5-6kg models were about and we are super keen to explore our turf for them on a more regular basis. We also caught some nice mackerel on the float on similar ground holding a truck load of bait on the rubble patches and pinnacles. We just need the weather pattern to settle down for everyone including the local small boat brigade which would be accumulating a lot of dust on their pride and joy's over the past several months.

So we did spend a lot of our time back in towards the reef fishing the 25m range and the fishing was pleasing. There's no issue racking up good numbers of coral trout, spangled



emperor to 5kg have been a worthy catch and the list continues. These species have included baldy bream (a delightful fish for consumption), some hard fighting reef mangrove jack, sweetlip, stripies plus a few spanish mackerel that invariably had to be cruising through.

It wasn't till the very end of the month that we saw a positive change in the weather which hopefully trends towards better boating conditions for everyone. I know we are looking forward to hitting some of those spots we have been forced to neglect for quite some time.

Looking ahead September is always a great month to be fishing the outer reef with all manners of fish for the taking. It is also a very popular month for visitors and forward bookings are strongly recommended.

Saltaire Charters



with Craig Newbold

For the last few weeks we've had our team spread up and down the Great Barrier Reef. We've had 3 crew up at Lizard Island running the game boating options for the resort guests whilst another 3 crew have been kept busy running out of Port Douglas at the same time. So our boys have been kept on their toes. I'm proud to say that two of our youngest crew members, Marlin & Ryan have also just acquired their Skippers tickets and will be even more an integral part of our team moving forward. It's a great story being a couple of local boys, barely 18yrs old and love and breathe their fishing. They will have a bright future ahead and we have some great plans in mind for them.

The Lizard Island program varies from day to day from a lot of snorkelling / diving to a bit of fishing. This month in Port Douglas aboard Saltaire we've done several charters inclusive of family days, reef

fishing, light tackle fishing and our Emergency Air Drop Program.

The highlight on the fishing front were a few big days trolling lures on the Spanish mackerel. They were red hot at a particular spot on the reef and at times we had to drive off them to dust ourselves down and reset. It was excellent to get a serious run at the mackerel over a few days because they do have a knack of moving onto other pastures after having had a feast on an area of bait concentration. I wouldn't say they were big mackerel but your stock standard 8-12kg numbers which are categorically a great sportfish and ideal to feed a band of people.

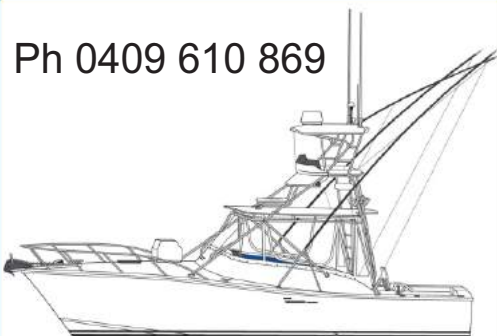
The bottom fishing was mainly fishing for coral trout which seem to be around in healthy numbers. There is a thought that they may be thinking of an early spawn this year because nearly all were male trout gradually moving up into the shallows in anticipation

to greet the females when they turn up full of roe and the breeding cycle continues.

The training air drops have kept us busy and recent exercises have seen the air flight crew calculate dropping emergency stores to within a 5m radius of the target buoy. Considering some of the stores drops up to 45kg are done from 500m in the air with a parachute attached it is highly impressive. Our emergency services are definitely A1 world class.



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