

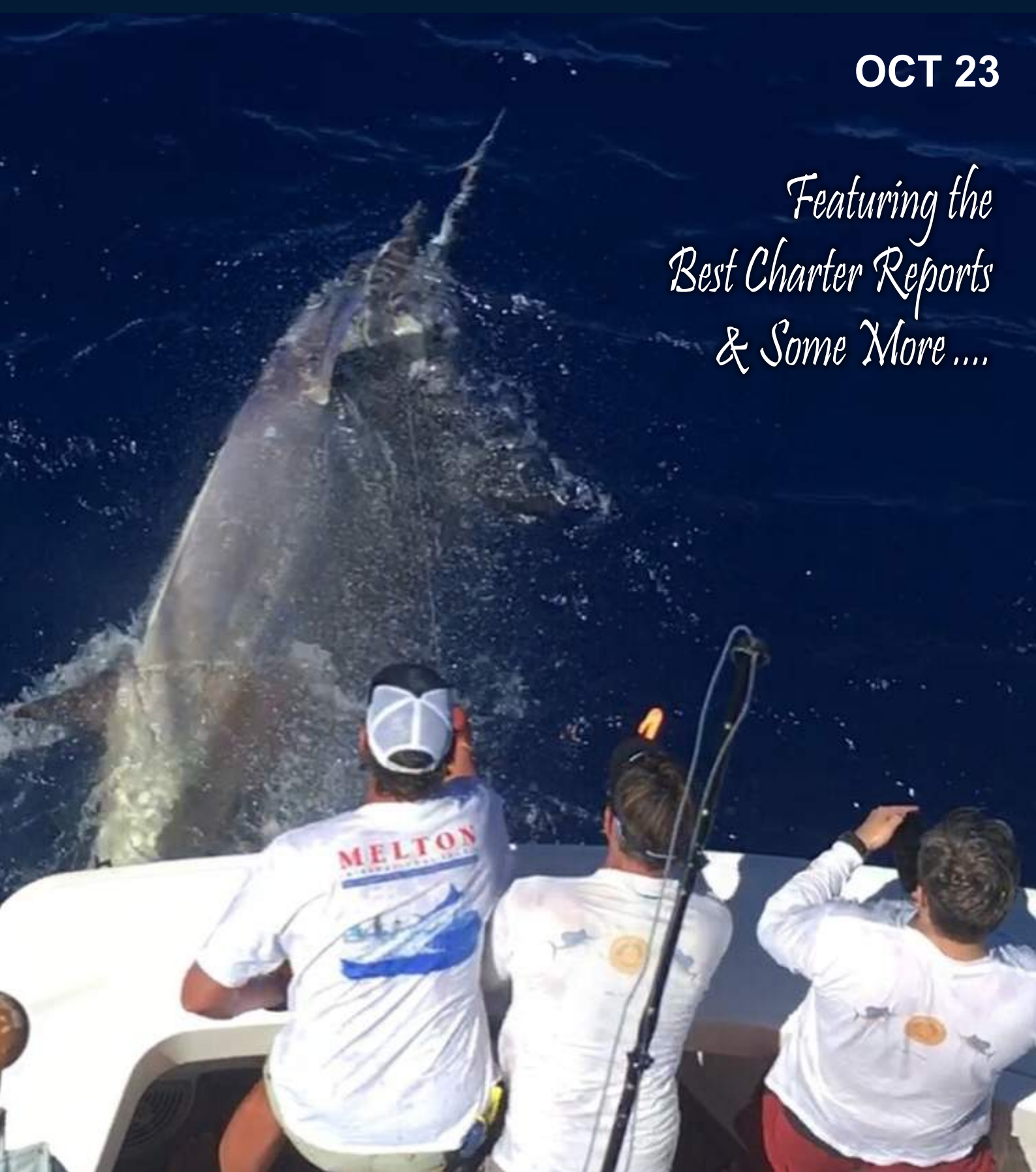
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VOLUME 274 PRICELESS

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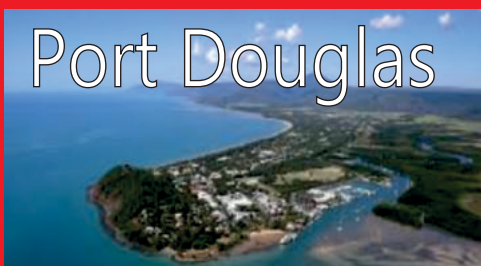
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Fishing Port Douglas News



with Heff

It's been very exciting times in tropical Far North Queensland with the Heavy Tackle Marlin season stealing the spot light. The fish are well and truly here on our local grounds along the shelf. There's a lot of smaller ones up to 300lb running around at the moment with the bigger females just starting to turn up as we speak. The month of November is traditionally the best bite and we'll start to see more and more monumental encounters with fish pushing towards the magic 1000lb mark and possibly beyond this. This is the ultimate timing with the annual Port Douglas Marlin Challenge run over days starting on the 15th November with some of the best game boats in Australia competing. For light tackle enthusiasts the yellowfin tuna schools are working similar grounds so there's a bit of action outside of the reef.

The top water sportfishing on the actual outer reef has been superb with calmer weather becoming the norm at the moment. Big Gt's, red bass, coral trout, emperor and trevally have been providing a very stimulating experience for those who prefer to cast lures across the top of the reefs.

The reef fishing has been good but there's been a lot of issues with the shark depredation rate as the waters get warmer. Some days trips are free of this but getting closer to the moons they have been relentless to the point of pure frustration.

The likes of the Daintree River have been awesome of late with a big variety of species on the go and some monster river fish at times. That style of fishing has been thriving as we would expect.

It's all systems on the go in our fishing world and we expect much of the same in November with a few big results still yet to develop.




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Fishing On the Daintree

with Jamie Beitzel



In my world the October period is nothing short of full on with charters and the fish are playing the game. The rain has been pretty much non-existent and the weather has settled beautifully which allowed some coastal excursions to satisfy some clients.

These coastal trips produced some high quality fish which included large mouth nannygai, golden trevally, island bar cheek trout and some of the biggest small mouth nannygai I've seen in quite sometime. These three mentioned species ranged from 5kg to 8kg which is not a bad effort only a short distance from the coastline. It did at times even raise my eyebrow as to how good it was on these trips. You throw in some hard fighting trevally amongst the action and this sort of fishing doesn't get much better. Nowadays my preference is to stick to the river but there was no excuse to explore outside of the river mouth on some of the nicest days we've seen this whole year.

If you were inclined to stick to the river fishing you were not disappointed in the slightest. I caught some of the best river species in quite sometime with the odd surprise thrown in. The lucky dip species included an 18kg giant trevally, 15kg giant trevally and bugger me dead a 8kg jewfish. Now this was a proper jewfish and to be honest you only see these guys once in a blue moon. You tend to find them very occasionally along the coast and for some

reason they decided to enter this magnificent river system. These fish were all caught in the deeper sections of the main channel. They were also released in pristine health but not before a quick pic otherwise people wouldn't believe you.

Along the banks I caught my normal run of fingermark ranging from 3-4kg, some solid mangrove jack and quite a few ripping barra. I was grateful when the barra were biting I had decent anglers onboard which were able to handle their antics. They can be the expert escape artists pulling every dirty trip in the book. The trick is to encourage them immediately away from the bank and into open water. Locked up drags are quite necessary at times. They barra were in excess of 80cm and a great sized fish for this part of the world.

Other than this I always found some quality javelin fish and sizeable golden trevally down towards the mouth and flats to value add to a great river experience. I'm so lucky to be fishing this system and October never disappoints.

Looking ahead the day temperatures are going to soar, so will the water temperature. Finding live bait will become harder so I will have to work a bit more smarter in November. After 30 plus years I'm sure I will adjust and produce very similar results. Available bookings are very limited so get on the phone ASAP is my recommendation. See you on the Daintree or nearby soon



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Akula Sportfishing



with Jason Knack

October was another hit and miss month as far as south easterly winds were concerned. It was more miss than hit as far as offshore boating was concerned. When the windows of opportunity offered themselves up, we made the most of it with some memorable bottom fishing and a few outstanding topwater days. The water temperature has risen through October and we have noticed the Nannygai especially, and Red Emperor, have started to migrate out into deeper water. I was fortunate to follow their movements and we caught some cracking 'red' species on those calmer days.

We also had the first of two demersal fin fish closures, in addition to a brand new Spanish Mackerel closure through October, so everyone's tactics and methods had to be flexible. These closures basically coincide with breeding cycles of these fish.

Tip for the month for those anglers wishing to be more successful in the offshore topwater fishing caper is to know where the current pressure points will be on the reef systems you will be targeting. Pressure points are not necessarily created by wind and wave action,



Great Barrier Reef Port Douglas



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but the current relevant to the stage of the tide you are fishing on. This varies considerably in direction and strength as the tide floods and drains. Getting your timing right to fish the ideal location and at the optimum time is critical to your success. This is a learned trade and the more time you spend on the water the more you'll be able to pick these points. These spots attract the bait and the bigger fish wont to be to far away.

This month on the surface we caught Gt's to 18kg, Red Bass to 6kg, Spangled Emperor to 6kg and various other species of trevally. We did lose some unstoppable fish but that's part and parcel of the game. It was a lot of fun however and a bit expensive on the hip pocket losing quite a few surface lures.

Anyway we'll press ahead with the same intent and plan for November. The weather appears to be settling nicely for some red hot fishing in the coming month.

Saltaire Charters



with Craig Newbold

Our schedule over the past month has been constant with a variety of charters undertaken from standard reef fishing to Emergency air drops and our favourite light and heavy tackle fishing. Don't be mistaken we enjoy all our work but as a bonafide game boat we relish this time of year when the big black marlin enter our garden and we get the opportunity to have a play with them.

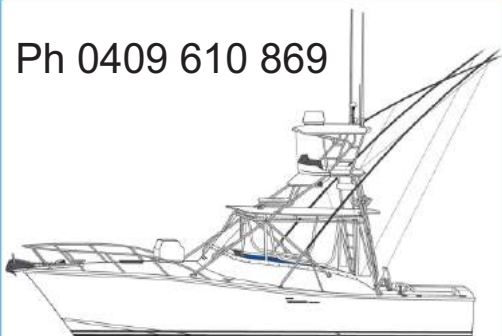
Our reef fishing efforts were duly rewarded with some handsome specimens including coral trout and large mouth nannygai as the main species. We did experience at times though, and at no fault of our own some torrid episodes with the 'men in grey suits' - Sharks. They ruined a lot of opportunity on occasions devouring some high quality fish which could have been a big point of difference. With the increased water temperature and particularly on the high moon phases, it triggered their behaviour into an uncontrollable predicament. They were hell bent on causing chaos and some heartache. I heard we weren't the only victim at times in the charter game and is unfortunately part of the gig in the warmer months when they get really frisky.

Our light tackle efforts were far more successful acquiring some cracking northern bluefin tuna on the lures. We also secured a good supply of scaly mackerel and mack tuna which we convert to heavy tackle skip baits for the big marlin. The seas certainly worked in our favour for the first time this year and our clients certainly enjoyed some high energy moments.

We started to do some heavy tackle charters in the back end of the month before a big run in November. Our initial observations were extremely positive with the season well and truly kicked into gear. Our most recent trip was over three days and the fish were biting. Our statistics read 10 - 8 - 5 , meaning 10 marlin strikes 8 hook ups and 5 fish getting tagged at the boat. The average tag rate is normally around 33% so our conversion was very good. Fish ranged from 150lb up to 450lb and these smaller fish certainly know how to put on a show. During the coming month we'll start to see more and more bigger female fish move into the area to breed with these smaller males. 600 to 1000lb will feature more heavily and we can't wait to tangle with the ultimate fish at this size of calibre.



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