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NOV 19



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**Front Cover:**  
Dan Pagano & Bob Reynolds hold the Port Douglas Marlin Challenge perpetual trophies for Champion Boat and Champion Angler



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Owner / Editor



## Port Douglas Marlin Challenge 2019

By Heff

The 2019 Port Douglas Marlin Challenge got underway recently just as the magazine went to print for this edition. However we were able to get in the details of the Briefing Night and the traditional sail past of the first morning before the boats headed out to the fishing grounds.

Approximately 50 anglers and crew gathered for the briefing night before the tournament held in the plush upstairs venue of the Combined Club on the beautiful harbour of the Dickson Inlet. It's basically a very casual and social gathering to catch up, run through rules of the 4 day tournament and other formalities. Drinks, good food and good company was all part of the occasion.

This year marked the 10th Anniversary of the Port Douglas Marlin Challenge having first begun in 2010. Over the years it has become known within the industry as a very relaxed and social tournament done with a fine touch of Port Douglas style. In a very tough environment for game fishing tournaments due to various economic circumstances we remained the only tournament this year in Australia to hold a competition dedicated entirely to heavy tackle marlin fishing. Even the iconic world known Lizard Island tournament failed to get up and running this year after 32yrs of continuous running for various reasons. So in light of this as a committee for our local tournament we are very proud to still continue. This year a new aspect was created with an under 8m boat category which gathered the interest of a couple of local trailer boats. Luckily the weather permitted them to follow through.

The other bigger boats to enter included an annual 10yr commitment from the Gorilla game boat and the Wild Turkey game boat. They are long serving friends of the Port Douglas Marlin Challenge. Previous tournament winners also returned including the Reel Cross and Dyfken vessels.

The sailpast got underway in fantastic conditions and the forecast was going to be a glamour this year. The word on the street was the bite was going off up along the Ribbon Reefs and talking with a few crew that was going to be their starting point.

The rules of the tournament cover a lot of ground from the top of Ribbon Reef No 5 opposite to Cooktown down to the Jenny Louise Shoals opposite Cairns.

In the next edition we'll report on the outcome and all the trials and jublations that go on with tournament fishing. There's sure to be a story or two.



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# Exceed Sportfishing

By Jake Wyatt

Variety is the spice of love and that is certainly what this year has thrown down for us. The weather has been up and down which means we have been exploring new and exciting grounds and different styles of fishing.

This month has we had some exciting highs and also some trying lows. Just when school holidays was starting to kick in with the weather dropping down, we had a major engine melt down. For 2 weeks we were out of action as we had to get a whole new Power Head sent up from down south by road freight. It also didn't help as there was a public holiday thrown in the mix. The timing of it all could not have been worse. Good news is that it's all up and running and we have certainly been getting stuck into the fish.

Going from place to place it always pay to keep a close eye on your sounder screen. On Exceed we can get perfect bottom readings at 26 knots which allows us to mark the slightest little bump while under high speed. We have discovered some insane bumps and lumps lately which have been providing us with hot plastics and jigging fishing.

We smacked into good size nannygai, coral trout and many XL trevally species. The trevally in particular have really been going off lately with the main culprits being the golden, giant, gold spot and bludger variety. On certain days it didn't matter what you would send down to the bottom. Half the time it would not even make it to the bottom before line would start ripping off the spool. Clients then were given a quick lesson in hard pulling fish which would fight

for up to 10 minutes, sometimes more. You attempt this 2-3 times in a row and it will even tire out the fittest of anglers.

The 'Mackies' have also been pretty consistent also marking for exciting fishing on the 25lb spin rods. Once you hook one of these of the light gear, your in for one hell of a fight. They have been mostly those big rogue mackerel which tend to roam the ocean solitary.

With the warmer months now approaching which means calmer seas, we will be once again exploring our grounds north of Port Douglas, up around the sand cays of Mackay and Undine and beyond. There are some great spots up that way with not a lot of boat traffic. With twin 200hp engines we can quickly access these grounds without cutting into the fishing time. We will even try our luck out wide again chasing the black marlin and yellowfin tuna on the shelf. A recent trip out there was rewarded with several nice yellowfin tuna. As we speak the marlin catches are gaining momentum and in my opinion November is always a great time to fish our grounds. I suspect there will also be your spanish, wahoo and dolphin fish to add a bit of variety.

Also for all the locals out there, we have been taking bookings for Christmas parties over the month of December. We can tailor a trip to suit your needs and also at a special Christmas Party rate.

Exceed Sportfishing is a family owned and operated business with one goal in mind. To give you the best possible day out on the water in regards to all aspects of fishing. Hope you can join us for some festive fun. ■



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# The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

The past month or so has been a fairly hectic period for us especially the first couple of weeks in October. There was a good run of tourists in town around the school holidays and the weather behaved itself for a change. There was a bit of a lull towards the end of the month plus we had 5 days of reef closure to contend with as well. I remember the old days when they first introduced the closures for 10 days at a time per month both in October and November. That was a lot of lost business to absorb (20 days) and to be honest the powers to be were extremely ill-informed with their accuracy on the reef fin spawning at the time. It seems nowadays with a bit more research behind them they are more realistic with their timings and doesn't impact on business as much as it used to. If you can also remember the new reef closures also had the green zones introduced around the same time. We all lost a lot of fishing grounds and it seemed the government at the time was determined to put an end to the fishing industry on the GBR in a very turbulent period for us fisho's. Anyway we have all learnt to live with it and there has been a bit of compromise along the way.

Getting back on track the fishing remained quite consistent in recent times. We never experienced any quiet days, in fact we produced good numbers of fish and had some bumper days as well. As to be expected it was a real mixed bag of fruit coming back to the docks at this time of year including coral and bar cheek trout, large and small mouth nannygai, spangled and red emperor, cobia, mackerel, sweetlip, trevallies, mooses perch and stripeys.



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At this time of year the shark population gets a lot more frisky and we endured some days where they would harass us into submission and we had to relocate. On the grapevine I heard this was the case across the board even as far down south to the Whitsunday's. We had some clients on board who had just come from there and they said they were vicious, so we are not isolated from this problem. Also talking with Laurie from the local prawn trawler, Santiago, he said on any given night at work they had up to 50 sharks following the boat consisting of a mixture of whalers and bull sharks. He also mentioned they weren't your average shark, they were bloody huge. If the 'greenies' think our local shark population is in decline I'd love them join a local fishing operation for the day and they would quickly change their mind. If anything they are going through a population explosion.

In other news we have a new boat wrap on the back of the transom which is rather funky and modern. It is a similar design to our new advert above and designed by local, Kaid Measday, a talented young fellow who is branching out his business into full body wraps for boats. I'm sure he will do very well and be extremely popular for the huge number of local small boat owners in the area.

Moving forward we'll have some quieter patches of work for the next month or so but if the weather remains good then we may just be surprised how busy we remain.

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## Camping with the Grand Kids

By Steve Adamson

With the Reef Closures enforced for five days at the end of October we couldn't operate the Dragon Lady reef charter. Months and months ago I promised the grand kids I would take them camping during this time. Well actually it started as a camp out in the back yard of all things. As the time approached it graduated to a proper camping trip for 3 days and I earmarked Rifle Creek, not far from Mount Molloy over the range as our destination. I remember when my kids were small we use to take them there and it was awesome. Fresh water, so no crocs and easy access with little travel time from Port Douglas. It is actually a beautiful system with mellalueca gum trees lining the water, heaps of wildlife and a very tranquil and kid friendly environment. Also having the place to yourself in the middle on nowhere is just gold.

Personally, I can't remember the last time I went camping but I knew I had some camping gear stored in the roof somewhere. So in preparation I scampered through the man hole with torch in hand to see what I had salvaged over the years. I found the tent covered in dust and a few chairs which I threw back down. Some of the chairs had rotted but the 'director's chairs' were still in reasonable knick. I also found an old camping mattress which would suffice for me.

The next task was to dust and air everything out, they were admittedly a bit musty having been kept like mushroom for god knows how long. I erected the tent in the yard to discover that the rats had chewed a few

holes over time so I patched these up with some duct tape which would do the job. I scratched up some old cooking pots and grill plate from the garage and with a bit of campfire heat applied they would clean up just fine.

So on the day in question the ute was loaded with the essentials including some fishing gear and yabby pots. Also included were a healthy supply of ice cold Lazy Bears for Grandpa. The grand kids joined me and were wondering where we were going. There's Jordi (5yrs) and he's the refined one, and then there's Baily (3rs). This one is a dare devil and if anyone was going to break an arm it would be him, so I'd have to keep a close eye on him.

Only 40 minutes over the range I guess the adventure really starts passing through Mt Molloy which Rifle Creek runs past. We used to live at Molloy for years on a property so it holds a lot of memories. There's not much here nowadays besides the long serving National Hotel, a Post Office, some small cafe's and the remains of the old saw mill plant. It has been left in a time capsule but it did have a colourful past which I'll briefly outline.

### History

\* Prior to the arrival of Europeans the area was home to the Kuku-Yanaldji Aboriginal language group.

\* In 1880 Patrick Molloy found copper beside Rifle Creek.

\* By 1899 the Mount Molloy Copper Mining Company had been formed.

\* In 1901 John Moffatt's Irvinebank Company had taken over the Mount Molloy mine.

\* A private railway connected Mount Molloy to the Cairns to Mareeba line in 1908.

\* Timber cutting concessions were granted in 1908.

\* The local mines and copper smelter were closed in 1909 following one of Australia's worst mining disasters.

\* Work started on Johnston's Sawmill in the town in 1914.

\* By the mid-1920s the town had a butter factory.

\* Electricity reached the town in 1956.

\* In 1963 the town's sawmill burnt down.



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Just by driving through this sleepy hollow town you'd never guess its past history at first glance.

Getting back to the story, we headed west off a beaten track following the direction of the creek itself. My memory doesn't serve me so well and I initially took the wrong track. It was getting dark and decided to set up a makeshift camp for the night and reset in the morning. So I used the ute in circles to flatten out a grassed area, pitched the tent, ate some sausage rolls for dinner and got the kids into bed. With lights out I hear, "what's that noise Gradpa"? To that I simply replied, "shut up and go to sleep"!

At 5.30am the sun is up and so are the boys. We quickly pack up and look for a better spot. As it turned out the spot I had in mind was I was only one track further on around the corner. This was perfect, close to the creek, had an established old fire pit and nice flat ground. What more could you want. Here we set up camp properly.

Not many would know this but Rifle Creek originates from the foothills of Mt. Lewis north of Julatten. It always has a supply of water coming from the ranges. Then it gradually winds west through Mt Molloy before adjoining the Mitchell River which eventually reaches the Gulf of Carpentaria. It has the largest outflow of fresh water into the ocean anywhere in Australia, easily surpassing the Murray River down south.

First task was to set the crab pots and the

kids were inquisitive as to what I was going to use for bait. "Easy, the secret weapon, tins of John West Tuna". The kids thought this was amusing. So we trundled off following the bank and found some nice deep water to set the pots. Then it was back to camp for a swim. No. 1 didn't like the look of the dark water but No.2 was straight in, no surprise there. After a refreshing dip it was lunch on the campfire. The kids were eager to check the pots so we went to check them. They hadn't been in there long and to my surprise each pot had 3-4 nice big red claw in them. No.1 didn't want to go near them but No.2 had no fear in grabbing the biggest of them running around having a ball.

And so the weekend went like this and we managed a really good haul of red claw from the pots. I did a spot of fishing and I must admit my casting skills were a bit rusty. I must say I did spend a bit of time in the water swimming out to the lure to retrieve it from being caught in the snags from inaccurate casting. I did get my act together at times and did manage to land some nice sooty grunter on the small popper I was using. There was a good body of water to explore along this section of the creek with plenty to see along the way. The grand kids followed my every footstep and were basically my shadow.

**Continued Page 13 ...**



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# The Master & The Apprentice

By Fred Corrigan - Skipper Dragon Lady

Recently my phone rang with a voice I'll never forget with the name, "it's Toddy" at the other end (Peter Todd). I thought shit, what in the hell does he want. With the pleasantries done he said he a mate up called Ian and he wanted to travel up from Cairns for the day to catch him a fish on the Dragon Lady - yeah sure no problems.

Now I need to wind back the clock here, and I mean a long way. Peter Todd was the owner of the famous Aqua-Cat Reef Charter out of Cairns for 30 years. His reputation is second to none when it comes to charter work out of this town and is what one would describe as a pioneer in these neck of the woods and a legend of the fishing industry overall in Australia. He'd hate me for saying this but he still is part of the folklore talked about in the circles till this day. Peter nowadays is happily retired, even though he might say differently, and is still the feature interviewee on the ABC Fishtalk Radio program on most Friday afternoons in FNQ.

Now I might have to give you at his point a bit of my background. My last 5 years have been happily skippering on the Dragon Lady reef fishing charter boat out of Port Douglas which has easily achieved the same status as Toddy's Aqua-Cat. This been accomplished by Steve Adamson and his team along the way. Prior to my current position, I had the joy of working for 10yrs on Toddy's Aqua-Cat as the deckhand out of Cairns (although on many a day it was very hard work). Toddy was 'old school', always

working us crew to the bone, but developing valuable life long skills as we went. When I look back, what he taught me I still carry to this day with my fishing knowledge. He was the same on the clients, a task master but if they listened they caught fish, lots of them. Seriously, Toddy's operation was synonymous with big hauls of fish on a regular basis.

Now moving onto the day in question recently. I greeted Toddy and his mate at the back of the boat and immediately the banter started, it was as if we never parted. It has to be commented Toddy boarded the boat with what looked like a 1940 vintage rod and a reel to match. Underneath it all though I was keen to show him a good day and let him know he had taught me well and had learnt a thing or two underneath his wing. With this in mind and feeling a bit of pressure, I decided to take the group north for day to an area which had the potential to produce the goods and hopefully impress The Master along the way.

On the first drop of the day in 28m it didn't take long to establish who was the experienced angler onboard. Toddy snared himself a quality reef mangrove jack and a handsome coral trout. The old dog hadn't forgot his trade. Other fish caught by the group included nannygai, trevally, long nose emperor and more trout.


Moving onto the next location Toddy joined me in the wheelhouse eagerly looking over my shoulder. Pulling up on a likely spot in 38m he recognised the sounder markings



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saying there's Big Mouth down there. He had never fished this spot before but went by the look of the structure and fish life on the screen, so his call was going to be interesting. The Master was absolutely spot on landing himself 3 large mouth nannygai, 2 trout and a spangled emperor. The remainder of the group compiled a further 6 large mouth, 1 red emperor, 4 trevally and 6 trout. His commentary at this spot was classical telling others what they had hooked up to by telling the way the fish fought on the end of the rod before they got it to the boat. He was bloody right every time the old bastard.

Moving onto the third spot for the day in 32m of water The Master continued his trade mustering himself 3 coral trout and 2 spangled emperor whilst the others accumulated similar fish plus more trevally. By the next drop Toddy was up for a rest but as soon as clients started pulling up fish the bug got the better of him. Within minutes he dragged up another coral trout and a

spangled emperor with a grin as big as it gets.

The rest of the day rolled out perfectly with everyone catching plenty of fish and the freezer esky was bulging with quality catches by this point. With the last drop completed I pulled the anchor and headed home in ideal conditions. I was feeling as proud as punch.

On the way home Toddy joined me at the wheel and just receiving the 'thumbs up' from him meant a lot. We just spoke in general terms most of the way but I know deep down he was proud of me. To produce a big day like we had on the fish just reiterated what he had taught me during my apprenticeship under his banner. Being able to read the currents, tides and where to be at the right time I can proudly attribute to him. Furthermore I can easily say this day was the best of my angling career in FNQ because the Apprentice proved himself to the Master. ■

## Locally Designed Full Boat Wraps

By Heff - Fishing Port Douglas

It's exciting to see new talent emerging in the area, and Kaid Measday is one of those talents. Kaid for a little while now has applied his trade out at Craglie doing a bit of sign work and doing wraps for commercial cars. Having done some work recently applying a new boat wrap on the transom of the Dragon Lady Charter boat we got chatting and I eluded to him that there is a local market yet to be untapped in the shire. There are options out of Cairns but as we know it is time consuming getting a project completed such as this. Just to give you an example Kaid quickly whipped down to the marina, took some measurements and had some potential design work emailed through within a couple of days. It was a very simple process.

Now for you fisho's out there with boats, and it's almost every second man and his dog living up here, Kaid can easily whip around to your house, take measurements and have some artwork to you very quickly.

Nowadays fishing has it's own trend and trust me there's something mesmerising about seeing a boat being launched at the boat wrap with it's own designed hull.

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In the add underneath are Kaid's details and he'll be able to give you a quick quote. His designs are sublime with whatever you



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## Sharks, Sharks and more Sharks

By 'Sharky' Shane Down

I have had a bit experience in this department over the years having featured in documentaries and TV shows literally swimming with them in their own natural environment. Personally I just love them to death but for the average fisho and fishing charter operator they are being a bit of nuisance as the days get warmer. I'd like to shed just a bit of light on the subject as to why they seem more prolific at the moment. The shark is the top of the food chain in the ocean, there's no question about that. The reason why they are making a more significant presence at the moment comes down to the simple fact that it's directly related to the circle of life. Like most aquatic species in our part of the world, whether it be fish or even the coral, everything is in the mode of spawning at this time of year. When it comes to fish they are congregating in numbers and so is the shark. A lot of sharks in our region are currently carrying pups and they'll congregate to where there is a ready supply of food for new borns when the time comes to release them. I'll explain this a bit further.

Let's start along the coastline. Even the tiniest of fish such as garfish, mullet, sardines and herring are spawning at the moment and they congregate along the beaches, flats and headlands. We put them in the category of bait but to the shark they are a ready made food source, no matter their size. Along the beaches in the shallows I've seen hundreds of sharks all together ready to give birth. They are mainly your

black tips, spinners, hammerheads and lemon sharks. They are not your biggest shark species but it is just an example of how they operate in their breeding process. That's why the land based and coastal fisherman will most likely catch a quite few of them whilst fishing at the moment.

Moving offshore and out to the reef the bigger varieties are applying their trade as well. You'll commonly come across black tips, whalers, bull sharks and tigers. They will do exactly the same and choose their preferred hang out where all the reef fin fish are congregating to spawn. Nannygai and coral trout in particular can get hammered on the end of the line by the sharks at the moment. These bigger sharks too are carrying pups and need to keep up the calories to ensure a smooth birthing process. When they release the young ones they will have a ready made food supply from the reef fin fish spawn to begin their life. It just makes logical sense.

Even the biggest of sharks, the whale shark, comes into our regional waters to take advantage of the fish spawn. Even though they don't eat other fish they feast on the eggs that are dispersed on the reef.

There's speculation that the shark population is going through the roof in the far north but I also suspect a lot of this is due to the fact that fisherman are also fishing often where the fish congregate to spawn. As I've explained the sharks will also be drawn into these same areas. Soon enough they will settle down and become less a problem. ■



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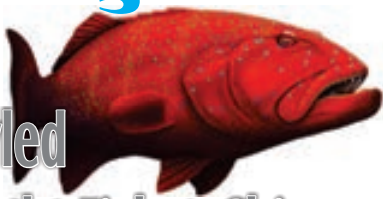
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# Reel Cooking

with Mick Hart



## Asian Styled Friday Night Fish & Chips



### Ingredients

Fresh Coral Trout fillets  
100g white miso paste  
3 tbsp rice wine vinegar  
2 tsp golden caster sugar  
100g rainbow radishes, very thinly sliced  
1 tbsp black sesame seeds  
2 large sweet potatoes, skin on, cut into chunky chips and oil, for deep-frying  
½ lime

For the tempura batter  
140g plain flour, plus 100g extra for coating  
100g cornflour  
200ml soda water  
For the wasabi tartare sauce  
140g mayonnaise  
1 tsp wasabi

1 small shallot, finely chopped  
1 tbsp capers, finely chopped  
¼ small pack coriander, chopped



### Method

In a large bowl, combine the miso paste with 1 tbsp rice wine vinegar and 1 tsp sugar. Put the trout fillets in the marinade and turn over so they are evenly coated. Cover with cling film and chill for 1hr.

Put the radishes in a small bowl with the black sesame seeds, the remaining vinegar and sugar, and a pinch of salt. Leave to pickle for at least 30 mins. For the wasabi tartare sauce, combine all the ingredients and season well. Set aside or chill in the fridge until needed.

Meanwhile, put the sweet potato chips in a large saucepan filled with cold salted water. Bring to the boil and cook for 7-8 mins until slightly tender. Drain and leave to steam-dry for 2 mins. Once the oil has come to temperature, fry the sweet potato chips in batches until golden and cooked through, about 5 mins. Transfer to a baking sheet, season with salt and place in a low oven to keep warm while you fry the fish.

Fill a large saucepan with the oil until two-thirds full. Place over a medium-high heat until the oil reaches 180C on a temperature probe (or until a piece of bread crisps up in 20 secs). Meanwhile, make the tempura batter by combining the flours and gradually whisking in the soda water. Whisk until the batter is lump-free, then chill until needed.

Tip some seasoned flour onto a plate and dip the cod fillets in it, patting off any excess. Dip into the batter and fry in the same oil as the chips for 3-4 mins, until the batter is golden and the fish is cooked. Drain on kitchen paper.

Serve the trout with the chips, wasabi tartare, pickled radishes and lime for squeezing over.

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# Flat Water Antics

By Dylan Case - Nautical Marine

The long-anticipated break in the southeasterly trade winds finally landed early in October. We joined the masses and hit the water to try and put some fish in our very empty freezers. Darryl, Matt and I made our way north to a few of Darryl's favourite haunts. We stopped over on a few wonky holes on the way out, though they were all but devoid of life, barely worth dropping a bait. As we investigated other marks on rubbly bottom, we found plenty of life, but had very limited success pulling reasonable fish. Nevertheless, we persisted in the area and jumped from spot to spot, drift fishing each likely spot before moving on to the next.

Eventually, we found a spot that produced, boating a couple of mid-sized nannygai around the 2kg mark and a nice coral trout on the first drift. Subsequent drifts produced similar results, and we boated more nannygai and coral trout. As other spots hadn't been producing earlier, we decided it was probably worth anchoring up and giving it a proper crack. This was definitely worthwhile, and we started to pull some nice fish over the side! Thanks to a local shortage of bait at the time, we were running low and

pretty keen to put some fresh bait on the board. A 4kg bludger trevally did the job nicely. The bulk of the fish hitting the deck were small-medium size nannygai to about 3kg and coral trout to 60cm. In total we pulled 16 trout and a dozen nannygai off the spot, as well as a pair of nice red emperor, one just legal and one about 5kg.

With the esky filling, Darryl made the call to leave the still active spot and head to a nearby mark in pursuit of some bigger specimens. We picked up life straight away on this spot and prepared for a quick drift. First drop Darryl and I both hooked up, with Darryl getting roasted into the structure by a monster of the deep. I got lucky and pulled my fish up, a nice largemouth nannygai of around 9kg. After his previous dusting, Darryl played the skipper/net boy and put us on another drift, with Matt and I both hooking up again quickly. We managed to get both fish past a large bull shark we had seen cruising around the spot, landing a red emperor and a nannygai, both around 8kg. At this point it was around lunchtime and we decided we probably had enough fish in the esky.



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For a bit of fun, we headed to some nearby reef flats to burn a few stickbaits around. With water draining off the flats with the dropping tide, the edges were fairly active, and straight away we started to see a bit of action.

Coral trout, red bass, GT and other usual suspects were thick and aggressive on the hard reef edge we started working. We managed to bag a couple of trout for the esky reasonably early on in the flats session and ventured further on top of the flats for a prospect. This produced a typical mixed bag, from small emperor

species to bluefin trevally. The flats marauding giant trevally were also commonplace, and we landed a couple average sized models. We saw a few packs of these fish harassing other reef inhabitants in shallow water. In these cases you are basically guaranteed a hook-up as soon as your lure hits the water. We ended the session with a couple more snack sized coral trout and even a small maori wrasse which was safely released. A few beers were cracked as we made our way back to the ramp at 2pm. Just gotta' love the calm water which we have been starved of this year and I suspect we'll get the opportunity more often to head offshore moving towards Christmas.

**CAMPING WITH GRAND KIDS cont...**

There were a lot of questions as we explored the area which showed to me they were fascinated with the experience. All I heard all weekend was "Grandpa what's this and what's that"? I was more than happy to impart my knowledge to them and hopefully they might retain some of what I said.

The 3 days went very quickly and definitely wore the boys out, and myself for that matter. There's something about camping being up right at sunrise and come dark the weary eyes kick in fairly quickly. At the end of it the kids got see a whole lot more as opposed to staying at home including red claw, sooty grunter, catfish, cod, fresh water shrimp, the biggest of goannas and a myriad of bird life. I also enjoyed it because I had no

mobile reception for 3 days which was a treat and it was only one hours travel from home.

There's a lot destinations not too far away when you think about and it had me thinking that there's no excuse to this sort of thing more often. The boys did really well on their first big outing and I'm sure it will be on the cards again in the near future.



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# Turning that Special Fishing Moment into Modern Art

By Heff

It used to be that photographs were expensive to take and just as expensive to develop. Cameras cost a lot of money and weren't commonplace in all homes. When you did take pictures, you chose sparingly which moments to catalogue. As a result, when you went to develop your photos a few months after taking them, you had an opportunity to relive those moments all over again. Now you can print your photos onto acrylic from your home computer. Today, in many ways, we are living in the golden age of photography. Virtually every person of a certain age has a smartphone in their pocket that can take photos of reasonably high quality. Digital cameras themselves are affordable, and even professional grade cameras are no longer prohibitively expensive. Along the way, photo quality has become better and better, with recent cameras offering higher megapixel counts and producing photos with richer colour, sharper focus and greater detail. The Digital Photo Conundrum unfortunately, is many of us aren't taking full advantage of the technology at our fingertips. We have these beautiful, high-quality photographs, preserving all of the best moments of our lives, but we aren't displaying them on our walls or organising them into photo albums. Instead, our photos stay on our hard drives, our social media profiles or our phones.

At Fishing Port Douglas in conjunction with Image Bank, we want to give you the opportunity to enjoy your favourite photos in a more traditional way. Clicking through a photo album on Facebook or looking back at the photos on your phone's camera roll can be fun. However, usually, you are viewing

these photos on small or medium-sized screens and aren't getting the full quality or detail. Plus, you probably don't look through your photos that often when you can only look at them on the computer or phone. We can give you back the joy of seeing your photos in physical format. For instance, photos will be printed onto acrylic, for when you want to display your favourite moments throughout the house or wherever you decide. Whether it's a photo from your biggest fish catch, a great family moment on the water, a wedding, a family reunion, the time you met your favourite songwriter at a concert or any of the million other moments you probably have persevered in a photo somewhere, we will convert them into gallery standard prints. Our photo to acrylic service can deliver both large wall art and smaller acrylic blocks, for flexibility of decoration. The acrylic ice mount blocks are perfect for desks, night stands or bookshelves. Our wall art is lightweight and compact, with thin prints that sit flush against the wall. Hang one in the pool room, office, living room or master bedroom to add a personal feel to your interior decoration.

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# magical daintree

## I'm No Scientist when it comes to Palm Trees with Bruce Belcher



The iconic coconut palm is in the media again. This time an arborist from Babinda has expressed his concern about the reducing numbers in the area by about 60% since the 1980s. He claims that the palm is valuable to beach ecology, helping to reduce erosion, and that they attract tourists to the region. He has made no mention about the ongoing debate about the palm's status. Is it a native or not?

Some months ago, I read a report in the local newspaper about scientific concerns of the palm's presence along the beaches at Cape Tribulation by Dr. Hugh Spencer. I read that because it is not a native it would be a problem for beach ecology.

Some years ago, there was debate in the Douglas Shire about spending money on maintaining (de-nutting) palms to avoid danger to tourists being hit on the head. There was advice from some that it would be less expensive to eradicate them. Then we had views from conservationists who claimed that the palms were natives and needed to be protected. Some people claimed that Lt. James Cook made mention of

coconut palms on the beaches while others say that it is not so.

I raised the issue in the media at the time and gave my views that I didn't believe that they were natives, however being that I'm not well educated, there were no responses as I'm no scientist!

In PNG where they are natives, the palms dominate the beaches and obviously have done so since time began. The natives use them well, even cultivating them on plantations of half a million palms. This produces copra which is made from the nut's meat to produce a valuable organic oil.

Promotions to encourage tourism in various parts of the world depict swaying palms, hammocks hung between two palms and a general "feel good" situation for relaxing on holidays. So, the palm has been made iconic and almost vital to tropical paces.



The main argument arising from the desire, by authorities, to decide on the palm's future, is to determine if it is a native. Obviously, a native would not be dealt with without a permit. If a coconut is a plant likened to a weed, then the problem would be less difficult.

When I was a child, growing up in the Gulf of Carpentaria, the only coconut palms I knew of were adjacent to the aboriginal community. My father told me that they were planted there so that the people would be encouraged to gain employment from developing the products. I had not seen them anywhere else, whereas just north in PNG they're everywhere. An expert once told me that the ocean currents directed the floating nuts there but avoided the Australian coastline.

The simplest way to determine their status is to ask the indigenous people. They don't know any more about the palms than the rest of us. Then again, don't ask me, I'm no scientist! See you next month.

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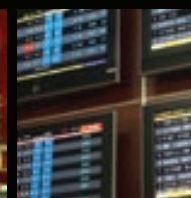
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