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# Fishing Port Douglas News



## with Heff

The 14th Annual Port Douglas Marlin Challenge 2023 came to its conclusion on the weekend and was deemed a tremendous success by all involved.

Nine of the country's best Marlin Fishing Boats competed for the coveted Leon Thomas & Brett Thomas Memorial Trophies for tagging the most Black Marlin over 4 days from the 15th - 18th November.

Club President Lynton Heffer said, 'with a combination of sensational weather and with the billfish on the bite it surpassed all previous tournaments. This year 35 Black Marlin were tagged and released eclipsing the previous best of 26 tags. It put Port Douglas well and truly on the world map as the best marlin fishery in the world once again'.

Tournament highlights were a plenty but the stand out moments included the Iluka game boat tagging a 900lb black marlin, Gorilla game boat with a double hook-up resulting in a 750lb black marlin and the Weapon vessel catching a 700lb black marlin on 80lb stand up gear which took 3hrs to complete the tag.

Club President locally known as 'Heff' further commented, 'we had competitors from Switzerland, Germany, and from all over Australia, with our furthest vessel coming from Sydney. We also had a strong contingency of local vessels and crew from the Port Douglas and Cairns region. This is the absolute Formula 1 of Fishing, basically the Grand Prix of Angling in the world and we produced it in spades. We are so proud of

those who competed and the conduct in which the tournament unfolded'.

He also went on to thank its small hard working local committee, sponsors which accumulated over \$20,000 in prizes and for the skippers and crew which kept all the punters safe and sound in what can be a very dangerous sport at times. It was celebrated on the final evening at the Port Douglas Marina at the appropriately named Lure Restaurant, where 85 participants shared their stories and congratulations accompanied by legendary local band Seachange.

### Tournament Results Champion Team

Iluka 8 tags  
Gorilla 7 tags  
Weapon 5 tags  
Miss Nic 5 tags  
Shaka 3 tags  
Freedom Shores 2 tags  
Wild Turkey 2 tags  
Aspro 2 tags  
Saltaire 1 tag

### Champion Angler

Ben Atkins 5 tags - Weapon

\* Please note there will be no Line Burner just for December



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# Fishing On the Daintree

with Jamie Beitzel



The month of November flew by very quickly for me with a lot of charters completed both offshore and in the river itself. The weather settled very nicely thus allowing quite a bit of coastal fishing if the client chose to do so.

It's lovely at this time of the year along the coast and a gentle sea breeze kept things at a very comfortable level. As to be expected at the moment it's not necessarily quantity but the quality of fish are typically in the very large bracket. 10kg large mouth nannygai, 6kg bar cheek coral trout, 6kg small mouth nannygai and golden trevally to 7kg provided the classic moments. In between this various other trevally and cod kept the reels turning over. When you're catching big fish you don't require big numbers to have the clients leaving with a big smile on their face.

The river itself provided plenty of good angling itself but starting to slow down just a tad. Live bait is a bit more difficult to find as the days are really starting to ramp up in temperature. I'm always adapting my methods as the system changes and still getting my return of good fingermark, golden trevally, javelin fish and mangrove

jack. There's been a few barra around but as they are out of season I tend not to fish certain spots, The one's I do come across are incidental catches and the fish are always released in good health.

I can sense the season is in it's transitional period with the winds turning variable with a bit of northerly direction at times. It will bring a bit of rain and see the storms come from the west in the evening. Just have your wits about you if you are contemplating an offshore trip at night. This is where the small boat brigade can get itself in serious strife if a big cell develops coming from off the mountains. For me I looking for a bit of time off at the start of December to rejuvenate my batteries before the Christmas and New Year rush. There's always boat maintenance to do and living on acreage across the river in the rainforest there's always something to do around the home.

I'd like to thank all the return clients over the year and I'm positive I've created a lot of new one's with the first timers which have vowed to do another trip next time they visit our wonderful region.



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# Akula Sportfishing



## with Jason Knack

November started off uncharacteristically breezy much to the disgust of many anglers and operators, myself included. We also endured the second, and last demersal reef fish closure which prevented us from operating for the year. Then we had the Spanish Mackerel closure in force to December 1st, which has provided a few additional limitations to the month, however the closures are a good thing for sustainability in the bigger picture. So it was somewhat an interrupted month.

Water temperature offshore from Port Douglas is creeping above 28 degrees forcing anglers into deeper water as fish chase cooler waters. However there has still been some outstanding results in water shallower than 30 metres if you are prepared to put in the work and be prepared to chase a lot of ground. Fishing all depths our best catches saw some cracking red emperor, nannygai, coral trout and long nose emperor as well. We haven't really experienced too many northerly winds as of yet which is great, as they do tend to shut fish down when they blow, but invariably they will become more frequent as summer progresses.

Tip of the month is for the top water enthusiasts with terminal knots to poppers and stick baits. Now this is my opinion only, so don't get animated if you don't subscribe to this idea, however I have seen failures of loop knots tied directly to the lure tow point whereby they chafe up especially throwing artificials 150 grams or heavier. A great solution is to add a split ring (I like size #7) to the tow point of the lure and then tie a trusty uni knot to the split ring. This allows full freedom of action from the lure and you have peace of mind you have a secure connection

## Great Barrier Reef Port Douglas



# AKULA

## SPORTFISHING

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after many, many casts. All the best of luck on the water, and be safe over the upcoming Christmas period. We expect conditions to stay relatively the same contending with a bit more northerly at times. Bookings are getting heavy for the festive season so please book ahead and even better give us a call.



# Saltaire Charters



## with Craig Newbold

Welcome to our monthly report which proved to be a super busy month for us. The weather behaved kindly for our vessels and we found ourselves as an operation fulfilling all our requirements.

Firstly we ran in the first week or so, stock standard daily charters with a run of heavy tackle charters. We saw our fair share of marlin including some bigger models over 700lb which was a good indication that it was going to be a solid month ahead.

This was leading into the 4 day Port Douglas Marlin Challenge tournament which gave us great confidence. With an enthusiastic band of local boys we took out the Escapade mothership as a base and fished each day from the Saltaire boat. The weather was picture post card and the guys did okay with some hard luck stories. They caught 1 out of 5 hookups which if converted would have placed them up near the eventual leaders of the competition. But that's marlin fishing and the main thing is the clients had a great time competing against the best in the business. The overall tournament was a huge success and something every angler should aspire to be part of with 2023 producing 35 tagged marlin.

Directly following this we had the Andrew

Ettinghausen and the ET film crew with us for over a week. Firstly we spent a few nights fishing the Tinaroo Dam for monster barramundi on our Barra B vessel. Led by our young skipper Ryan Gwynn the lads secured 4 barra over a metre all on lures at night time. This was a very positive start to our involvement.

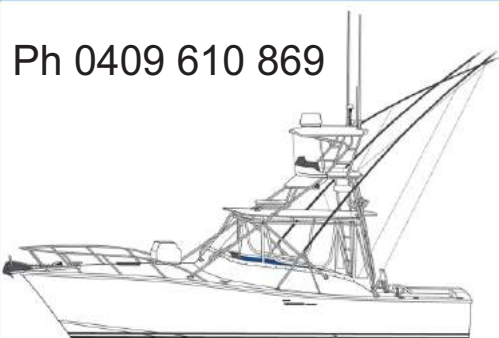
Then it was straight back to Port Douglas for 5 days utilising the Escapade mothership, Saltaire game boat and Et's own 7m vessel doing a variety of fishing on the Great Barrier Reef and the continental shelf. Once again the weather was post card and they got some awesome footage for the TV series. We'll keep you posted when it is due to air on TV. Highlights included a lot of top water fishing, brilliant reef fishing during the day and after dark. With limited time allocated we were not able to catch a marlin for the crew.

For us things wind down a bit in December and get a lot busier around Christmas. It has been a high note for us in recent times and I'd like to thank our dedicated team in every aspect for the many memorable times for all involved.

See you in 2024 and take care.



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