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# November Coral Spawning ??

By Heff

Now this maybe a touch controversial but we are here to question the big hype built up by the media and certain parties about the coral spawning in November. There were reports way further south of a spawn at Sudbury and Moore reefs but not much locally from we can gather.

I have with good authority from four different sources with a combined experience in excess of 80yrs with marine biology backgrounds and coral spawning experiences in our very own waters that this was not the case. Not even close, because it didn't happen in our region. At best there may have been some small isolated incidents along the coast but only very minor, if at all.

Now I reached out to 'Sharky' Shane Down, legend local fisherman but also importantly a Dive Skipper with the Great Barrier Reef's biggest company in the region and probably Australia. He categorically said there was no coral spawn in November on our local reefs to even warrant such a hype. He and his experienced counterparts are certain the spawn will happen around the 15th or 16th December. The main reason being is that the sea temperatures, being slightly lower than normal, haven't been conducive to a mass spawn which we normally expect by now.

From what is being spoken the December spawn will be a big one.

Now in saying this, 'Sharky' usually goes for a dive on his lunch break and came across a spawn in November which didn't come from a coral but a weird creature that inhabits within the coral, more specifically Boulder Coral. The amazing thing is, this happened in the middle of the day. Now we generally associate all spawning activity at night on the reef when it comes to aquatic life including reef fin fish and coral itself. He said he has seen the odd boulder coral, mushroom coral, giant clam and sea cucumber spawn during the day but it is extremely rare.

On this particular day on his lunch break he captured on film a Christmas Tree Worm both in the male and female version spawning. They are found world wide in a variety of colours but on our reef they commonly found embedded entirely in heads of massive corals such as the 'boulder'. **Continued Page 14 ....**



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# Exceed Sportfishing

By Jake Wyatt

The past several weeks the sun has been shining, the seas are flat calm and the fish have been going off. All year this is what we have been waiting for, finally.

This was a short month for us on Exceed as we spent 2 weeks down south visiting our families in Sydney and Adelaide. So when we did hit the water we sure made the most of it.

We have been focusing more on surface action, jigging and plastics and have had some cracking results. The bludger trevally have been thick and at times we've had 4 way hook ups on the deck. This can get very tricky guiding and instructing the anglers where to go. These fish have a mind of their own going in different directions and pull damn hard on the lighter jigging gear. Along with these trevally there have been some cracking cobia absolutely smashing the plastics right of the surface. You don't associate these fish with this sort of behaviour normally but they were awesome to watch doing this. It is all so visual watching a big dark shape coming out of nowhere and honing in on a lure. Awesome sized large mouth nannygai were even having a good go at the jigs although the 'Tax Man' got quite a few before we could get them to the surface. They rarely touch the trevally but definitely love anything that is red in colour. We lost plenty of good fish to the sharks.

The surface bait across the reefs has been thick making it easy to spot while chasing GT's. They seemed to be hungry and were smashing the lures on most days although they seemed clumsy and missed multiple bites on the moons. I've noticed they do this

sometimes and they tend to slap at the lure out of territorial behaviour instead of feeding behaviour. The ones we did land were in that typical Port Douglas size of around 10-15 kg. Not monsters but still very impressive and good fun on the 50lb popper set ups. The GT is a highly sort after fish for many that come up here and are wrapped when a plan comes together.

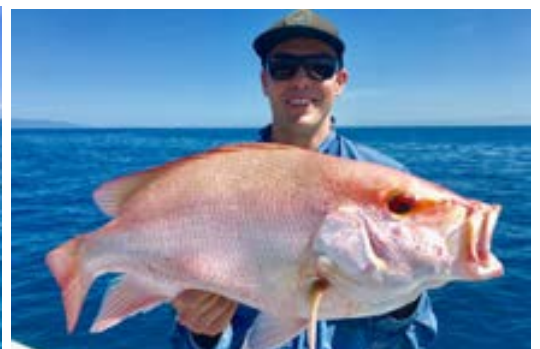
Christmas parties were in full swing recently with some local legends coming out one particular day and enjoying themselves for sure. We managed to find them a good bag of 'nanny's' for them to take home for fish tacos that evening.

Closer to home our half day inshore charters have also been pretty consistent with really good size moses perch, some cracking spanish flags, good sized 'nanny's' and a few stand out bar cheek trout. Early morning charters have produced the better fish.

This is the time of the year that all us fishos get excited by. It may hot out there but the seas are mostly calm, the fish are biting well and you can always cool down with a refreshing ale after a session.

With Christmas on the way, now is the time to book in your charter to the Great Barrier Reef. We can also arrange gift vouchers for family members or come up with a specific trip to suit the needs of each individual group. Our booking will be solid over the festive period so book ahead to avoid disappointment.

Thanks for all the local support this year and have a great festive month ahead. We will catch you on the flip side in the New Year. ■



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# The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

Firstly on behalf of the Dragon Lady crew we'd like to wish everyone a safe and happy festive period and would like to extend our gratitude to all our loyal patrons throughout the year. Every year our 'regulars' list grows and grows so I guess we must be doing something right.

The past month or so has definitely seen the tourist numbers drop off around the place but we've still been more than happy with the amount of charters we have achieved for this time of year. I have noticed we've been much busier than other reef charters which indicates again we are doing something right.

One thing I do know we are doing right and that is catching good numbers of fish and there's been some thumping models around which can happen at this time of year. Normally by this time of year you can find yourself scratching around to make up okay numbers of fish but not this time around. I believe it is directly related to the sea temperature which has been a bit lower this year and it seems that the fish are liking it a lot. When the water temperature is right up the fish can get finicky and bite times have a smaller window. Also this late in the year the currents haven't played too much havoc and the wind directions have been manageable to date. As for the general weather it has been magnificent on the water, although in recent times it has been notably hotter under the collar but we're not complaining.

Recent weeks have seen us nail some of the best fish for the year including big red emperor to 10kg, nannygai to 8kg, bar cheek trout to 5-6kg and trevally to 6-8kg. The spangled emperor also have been solid in numbers and size mostly around 4-5kg. To be expected there is always a mixed bag of fruit with sweetlip, stripies and some good sized moses perch thrown in. The mackerel have been a lot quieter on the float



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with only a dozen or so boated over a few weeks.

We had the reef closures at the end of November but this year they didn't seem to effect the fishing. Sometimes their spawning can make the fishing a bit spasmodic but with both sets of closures this year (Oct/Nov) it didn't seem to overly impact. Once again I think the lower sea temperature has kept things on a more even keel.

Looking ahead our next main run of business starts a week prior to Christmas. We've already completed a string of Christmas parties which are very popular nowadays especially with the 'tradies'. They'd much prefer a day out fishing with a few drinks as opposed to some fancy dinner party or something similar. You'd be surprised how many bus loads of businesses travel up the road from Cairns for a day of fishing with us. Getting back on track once the school holidays get going so do we. That week between Christmas and New Year and the next couple following are quite busy for us. If you are potentially thinking of joining us during that time get in now is my advice. Fingers crossed we don't experience a shot of bad weather followed up by crap media reports which cost us dearly this time last year.

Just a reminder we will be doing Christmas vouchers right up to the last minute on Xmas Eve which no doubt many would appreciate to have in their Santa stocking. Best to call us if you leave it this late.

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# Currents and Tides in the Tropics

By Heff

The Pacific Ocean is the origin of waters around Australia with a direct link to the east and an indirect link to west.

Ocean water from the Pacific Ocean flows through the Indonesian Archipelago, a region subject to high solar heating and rainfall runoff, creating lower density water.

At around latitude 15 degrees south the currents split in two: southward to form the East Australian Current, and northward to form the Hiri Current which contributes to a clockwise gyre in the Gulf of Papua. This is the main influence on our GBR region.

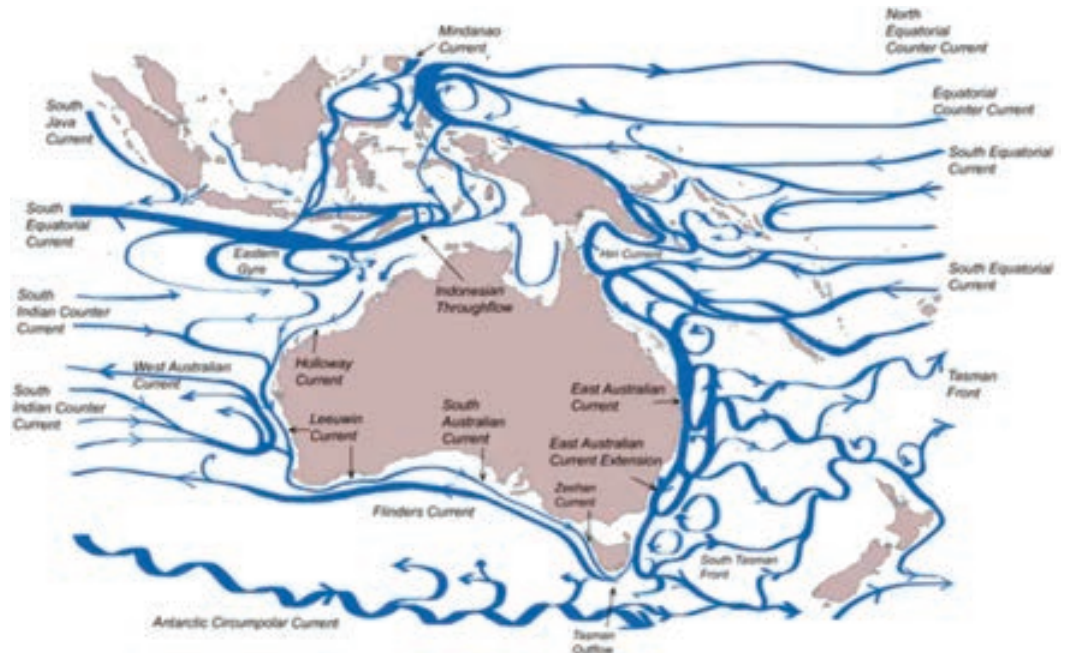
The South Equatorial Current flows westwards through the Coral Sea as a number of narrow current jets controlled by the complex plateaux, seamounts and ridge topography of this ocean basin, with the most significant of these jets occurring immediately north and south of the Queensland Plateau. On approaching the western boundary of the Coral Sea, these multiple jets are steered by the Australian continental shelf to form the southward flowing East Australian Current and the northward flowing Hiri Current. The Hiri Current flows along the shelf edge of the northern GBR into the Gulf of Papua where it forms a semi-closed cyclonic eddy. Both these boundary currents are known to

impact low frequency currents on the GBR shelf. In the central GBR, upwelling due to fluctuations in geostrophic currents or northeast monsoon winds transports cool water along the bottom of the central GBR shelf to the seaward edge of the GBR lagoon. This cool water does not create a surface signature. However, the cool water may reach the surface via upwelling due to internal or barotropic shelf edge tides, island wakes, topographically induced eddies or bottom Ekman pumping which in simple terms means as the wind blows it casts a friction force on the ocean surface that drags the upper 10-100m of the water column with it.

Now this may seem as 'mumbo jumbo' to the 'Layman' so with some simple explanation with the assistance of Steve Adamson from the Dragon Lady Charter we have attempted to make sense of all this when it comes to fishing our local waters, which can have a bearing on where you fish and the productivity you hope for.

First and foremost tide vs current is different. Tides go up and down; currents move left and right.

Tides do create water movement in the oceans, near the shore, and in bays and estuaries along the coast.



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Tides are characterised by water moving up and down over a long period of time and highly influenced by the moon. When used in association with water, the term "current" describes the motion of the water. Combining the two as you move offshore a new beast is created.

For a simple example fishing along the coastline and our rivers and estuaries we have two movements of water in and out, basically high and low tide moving in a an easterly and westerly direction. It makes fishing an easier equation as to where to fish. Just to elaborate, say you are fishing a deep water structure or a pressure point, fish the point where the tide is first hitting, that's where bait and fish will hold. Incoming tides will generally mean the eastern side or western side on the outgoing. However bends, twists and turns in the system and water run off from the mountains can alter this, but hopefully you get the gist of what we are saying.

Moving forward as you start to move offshore the ocean currents take effect. Between the mainland to the outer reef these tend to be a major player and even more so outside of the shelf. If you look at the map our currents run from north to south up here and will have more impact at certain times of the year. Depending on when the ocean currents decide to switch form north or south you can generally assume our cooler months see the current running north and the warmer months running south. There's no definitve time

when this will happen. This is also heavily related to wind direction as explained before, particularly on the reef itself and between the mainland, as we don't have too much water deeper more than 60m at the most. So wind trades are a major influence. Continuous south to south east winds are conducive to a north running current which is roughly from April to Oct/Nov. When the winds change to even a slight change from the east and more northerly then it tends to run in a southerly direction which can occur from October onwards to roughly March/April. Each year has variations depending on overall ocean water temperatures in the Pacific Ocean. Now I will say here that currents particularly closer to land can read differently. If you find yourself say fishing in winter and the tide is running from the north it is highly likely you are fishing in some form of an 'edie' which is influenced by a reef or land formation. I've experienced this plenty along the coast where your fishing lines can run down in the water in the opposite direction or on a different angle. Tides can also play a part depending on the strength of them.

As you move further offshore the shipping channel in open water, which is mostly the deepest body of water inside the reef is heavily influenced by the current and the tide has a lesser role, again depending on the moon phase. It tends to be quite predictable but also a real hassle when it is strong. **Continued Next Page ...**



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Less wind is important to curb it's influence but it depends on where you are situated. Trying to drop a line down on a target in a raging current is close to impossible. According to Steve when fishing inside the reef, positioning the anchor further away from the target spot is critical and using weights up to 8oz to get the bait down is mandatory to combat the current. However it is a very difficult proposition for even the best in the business. Some days it works, others no chance in hell because the current is roaring. This often happens during the cooler months when the wind and current are working together in tandem running in a northerly direction. In the warmer months when the current is running southerly and the wind is pushing from the opposite direction positioning the boat on top of a target may take a couple of experimental drops to ascertain the ideal place to drop the anchor.

Now when you fish amongst the reef itself it becomes a bit different. The currents are still trying to run either north or south as a rule of thumb and can vary on the shape of the reef. It may take a few twists and turns along the way. Openings and more exposed water will see the currents at a stronger rate generally. Using the reef itself to hide or shield yourself away from a main strong current is not a bad option if it is raging. Again different stages of the year will see the currents at different strengths.


One of the most difficult times of the year to fish can occur in the warmer months when the current is not so strong and the winds are variable and not doing much. Because there is no one factor totally influencing the water, the boat can sometimes swing off the chain in all directions. We've seen days at completely different sections of the reef in summer, where the boat has swung a total of 360 degrees throughout the day. At one stop the boat may hang at 90 degrees, the next at 145 degrees, the next at 270 degrees and so on. These days are by far the hardest and the fish don't seem to like it much either.

This is not a hard fast rule but as a guide gained through years and years of experience, knowing exactly where to fish at certain times of the year, Steve reckons fishing on the southern side of your mark 70% of the time will work, especially during the cooler months. When it comes to fish captures the rate escalates because the

predictability of the water is fairly consistent and the water temperature is ideal for most reef species. A lot of days are just brilliant to fish especially when the wind is down.

However as the currents shift from in the opposing direction he says he finds himself fishing 30% on the northern side of a target and this is mostly occurs during summer. These are the days where you have to be creative with your choices and choosing where to go and where to position the boat on anchor. These days are by far the most challenging as a charter. Clients expect to catch loads of fish without really knowing the what is going on behind the scenes. It's not always possible to 'kill the pig' but normally you can scrounge up enough fish to keep them happy.

Without going into every possibility there are many different scenarios when it comes to fishing on the reef in relation to tides and currents. Hopefully we've given some idea about how to tackle it, but everyday can be different and time spent on the water is invaluable learning the ins and outs of the ocean. At the end of the day it has some predictability but not always depending on conditions, locations and time of the year. The fish themselves also depend on currents and tides thus being one of the hardest living animals to get a full read on. Luckily the summer thus far has been a lot better as the northern run to south with the current hasn't been as strong plus the water temperature has been a lot less which the reef fish prefer. ■

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# Reef May Receive a Blackout

By Heff

A few months ago there was a big underwater volcanic eruption near Tonga creating a large raft of pumice floating in the Pacific Ocean. As described in the previous article we are now receiving northern currents from the Pacific and the mass of pumice is expected to arrive soon along our coast.

Following the eruption within a week the raft was twice the size of New York's Manhattan. Cruising yachties who have stumbled across the raft describe it as running into a gravel road. They described a rubble slick made up of rocks from marble to basketball size such that water underneath the mass was not visible. There is also a strong smell of sulphur.

According to experts quite commonly submarine volcanic eruptions produce pumice at the surface. It'll pour out the pumice from the active vent for hours, maybe even days in extreme circumstances. They often can be seen from the satellites to be covering several square kilometres, to tens of square kilometres. In this case the raft is approximately 150km squared kilometres.

If it reaches our local coast and reefs it will be like a massive blanket over the ocean, shutting out any sunlight into the water and keeping sea temperatures down as it goes

along. The speculation is that it could also help solve a host of problems at The Great Barrier Reef.

According to the Queensland University of Technology, the raft should hit Australian shores within a month or two of the New Year bringing with it billions of marine animals who attach themselves along the way. Based on past pumice raft events studied over the last 20 years, it's going to bring new healthy corals and other reef dwellers to the Great Barrier Reef.

Now when it comes to local activities such as reef cruises, diving, snorkelling and of course fishing, there is likely to be implications. We are basically looking at a raft the equivalent of 30,000 rugby fields on our doorstep. Pumice as far as the eye can see could blanket out large sections of the coast and reef for who knows how long depending on the speed of the current. At the moment it is trickling at a rate of about 1-2 knots so if it arrives it will likely hang around for quite some time causing a few headaches. ■



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## Breathing in the Saltaire

By Damian Collete

We're just coming off the back end of a really busy marlin season but we still have a couple of weeks to go now heading off to Papua New Guinea by boat taking a client up there fishing. Then we get back to complete a couple of charters just prior to Christmas. To be honest my head is spinning but I'm really enjoying kept super busy. Come a month or so we'll all have time to kick back and relax.

Our marlin season has ticked along nicely with a lot of daily charters and some extended work. It took a bit for the fish to get going this year but that changed around mid October and remained fairly consistent from that point on still going right into December. I believe the currents from the north were a bit slower this year getting here and once they did the bigger marlin started turning up. We didn't catch a monster this year, probably the best at around 750lb but we certainly put a dent into the smaller ones around the 250 - 350lb mark. To be honest they are just the ideal fish especially on the daily charters. They are easy to manage and they are not too much hard work for the clients which are often inexperienced when it comes to this style of fishing. They tend to put on an awesome display on the surface which makes it really exciting for the clients to see. At the end of the day no matter the size, a billfish is a billfish and not many can say they have caught one.

We did some reef fishing and diving days in recent times and they were a nice break.

We did really well on the nannygai on the reef trips fishing deep catching good sized fish to 7kg.

In exciting news for our business we've recently acquired another game boat, a classy 47ft Riviera which is in mint condition inside and out, named Allure. It is perfect now for our overnight and extended charter work with the ability to accommodate 5 in luxury comfort. A master bedroom, 2 x twin rooms, 2 bathrooms and a spacious galley and saloon make for a great stay. Upstairs on the flybridge is another dining area with a bar fridge ideal for sunset canapes and drinks. It has a spacious cockpit set up for game and reef fishing adventures. There's also a tuna tower where I spend a lot of my time fishing and it's like being in your own bubble up there. The ability to see what is happening on the ocean surface is a whole new ball game.

With our original 35ft Saltaire game boat and now with Allure at our disposal, it opens up a range of new possibilities for our business including more mothership work down the track. With two world class vessels to work with we have one of the best outfits now based in Port Douglas/ Cairns with the ability to travel out of Lizard Island, Cooktown or wherever one desires on the Great Barrier Reef.

For more information call our manager Heff of Fishing Port Douglas on 0409610869 to enquire about a tailor made trip.

Hope you all have a great festive season. ■




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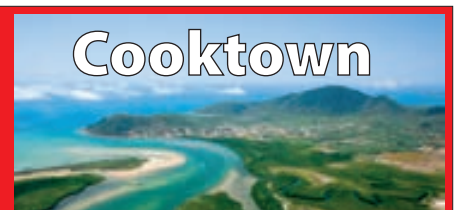


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# Reel Cooking

with Mick Hart



## Different Take on Prawns this Christmas



Christmas in the tropics is always associated with a variety of seafood, including prawns. Here's a simple dish to try just to add a bit of spice to your prawn experience this Christmas

### Ingredients

2kg uncooked prawns (your preference), peeled and deveined (local prawn boat Santiago has the best if you can get your hands on them - Good Luck!)

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1-1/2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

### Method

In a bowl or shallow dish, combine the eight ingredients. Add prawns; toss to coat. Refrigerate 2 hours.

Drain prawns, keep marinade for last minute adding on heat.

Cook the prawns on a BBQ hot plate on a medium heat (not the grill) for 3-4 minutes on each side. Put a drizzle of left over marinade on the prawns for about 30 seconds before taking the prawns off the plate.



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# Sooty Grunter Sessions

By Dylan Case - Nautical Marine



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The sooty grunter is an interesting species. In Queensland, "sooties" are originally native to gulf of Carpentaria drainages, but have made their way into certain east coast systems through stocking and habitat modification or water course crossover. In the east draining rivers of Far North Queensland, you will find sooties in the Barron, Russell/Mulgrave, Johnstone and Tully river catchments. Other populations are dotted down the coast as far south as the Mary River. This unusual distribution leads to some interesting patterns. Due to habitat variability and limited gene transfer between separate populations, 'sooties' can be quite different between these systems. A stark example of variation between separate populations of sooty grunter can be seen when comparing the stereotypical "gulf sooty" to populations in the dams and rivers of the Mackay region. This southern population is the result of stocking efforts in dams such as Peter Faust, Eungella, Kinchant etc. and differ greatly from fish taken in gulf drainages. These southern fish are hulking beasts, common over 50cm and a couple kilograms, compared to the gulf type 'sooties' which rarely top 45cm. A combination of habitat and genetic make-up/expression is the driver of this. While our northern populations may not have the size of these southern monsters, we are usually not short on numbers and there are plenty of

awesome sessions to be had!

Typically, the drier season is a time I like to target 'gulf sooties', as lower water levels allows easy exploration through systems and fish tend to be very active regardless. Sooty grunter are usually very voracious predators, and will eat just about anything you throw at them. I find lure fishing to be far and away the most effective, as you can cover lots of ground and see lots of fish. In terms of lure selection, 'topwaters' are an old favourite, though larger soft plastics can be a great weapon, particularly when targeting bigger specimens.

This brings me to a recent trip we had to the upper Mitchell River, just over an hour from Port Douglas. After selecting a nice stretch of river on google earth, we hiked in with all the essentials and begun fishing. You can usually tell pretty fast if you are on the right track, as you should start catching fish quite quickly. This trip was no exception, and we started to rack up the numbers straight away. I was catching fish on a 4.5" conventionally rigged soft plastic, while my brother Riley was using a floating cicada imitation. While the surface cicada was getting more hook ups, these smaller lures are well and truly fair game for very small 'sooties', which can become annoying if they are thick. You should also keep in mind that hard bodied lures with trebles can quickly become casualties to the hard



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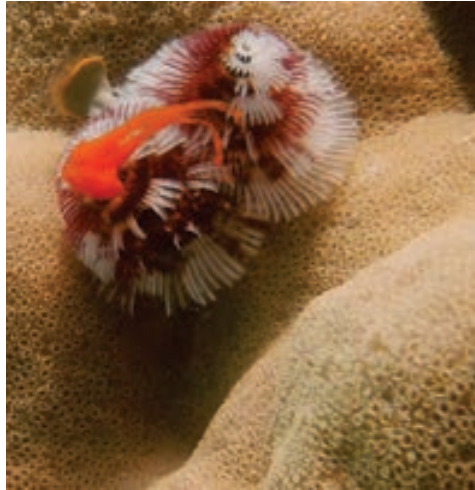
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mouths and strong jaws of these tough little fish.

Nevertheless, Riley persisted and ended up catching plenty, including the fish of the trip at a touch over 40cm. In a 4 or so hour session we landed around 80 fish between us, which is not out of the ordinary when sooty fishing. Interestingly, only the one fish broke the 40cm mark, which is again not uncommon for these gulf rivers. As a comparison with other populations, I had a session on 'sooties' with a mate down in a Mackay Creek last year where we only landed 4 fish. Of those 4 fish, 3 were over 50cm (the other was 48cm). Expect to encounter different fish and different challenges when fishing some of the other systems I mentioned earlier, such as the Tully or Barron River catchments. Each experience for 'sooties' varies greatly, especially when fishing separate populations in different habitats. This, along with their tenacity and aggression, makes them an awesome target species all year round.



**Coral Spawn cont ....**

They can secrete a calcareous tube around its body and this tube serves as the worm's home and protection. The usually settles onto an existing head of living coral before secreting its tube, thereby increasing its level of protection as coral tissue overgrows the calcareous tube. They typically expand to 6cm once they expose themselves from the coral. When the worm retreats into its tube, the opening is shut using an operculum, which is further protected by sharp, antler shaped spines. As sedentary inhabitants of coral reefs, Christmas tree worms feed primarily by filter feeding. They use their brightly colored radioles to filter microorganisms from the water, which are then deposited straight into the worm's digestive tract. They are an amazing feat of nature. Now 'Sharky' has been awesome to

forward a few pics of this phenomena and without going into the facts of the birds and the bees I'm sure you'll be able to ascertain which is the female and male variety. Just to give you a tip the orange secretions are the female and the white is the male !!

We are glad to give you something which did happen on the reef last month and quite appropriate for this time of year being the Christmas Tree - "Worm".



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# Fishing, Camping & Boating Gifts for Christmas

By Harry - Nautical Marine

Christmas gifts can be hard to choose, here at Nautical Marine Sales there are plenty of awesome gift ideas for everyone. We stock a range of great gift ideas with all the essentials for hobbies including camping, fishing, hunting and boating. Camping essentials we stock include a wide range of rechargeable and non-rechargeable Led Lenser lights. These awesome lights have many uses and all come with an amazing 7-year warranty.



Nautical Marine Sales are a certified Garmin dealer and we have access to ALL marine products. We also have access to essential hunting equipment. Garmin marine products include, chartplotters, fishfinders, radars and more. Garmin make a range of cameras and wearables such as smartwatches and dive watches that are awesome gifts for any keen boatie. You can even steer your boat with the Garmin Quatix 5



series. For your hunting enthusiasts, Garmin make dog gear including tracking and training equipment as well as cameras and smartwatches. Keep in mind orders for Garmin close on the 11th of December. We can however back order and provide a gift voucher so you have something for Christmas Day to give.

In our fishing side of things, we stock a huge range of gear from high end fishing rods and reels, to collapsible travel rods, crab pots, awesome apparel with plenty of cool shirt designs and a massive range of lures and fishing tackle. Lures such as the Lucky Craft Pointers are great presents for your estuary species and for your reef species, we stock a



huge range of Nomad lures, to name a few.

For any keen boatie, our chandlery side of the store offers a great range of boating parts and essentials. From bilge pumps, to stainless fittings and everything in between. If it's not in the shop, just ask and one of the team will get it ordered.



If you are struggling to choose a present, we even do gift vouchers. We have all this and plenty more. Come in and see the team for great Christmas gift ideas for everyone. Merry Christmas from the Nautical Marine Team.

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# magical daintree

## Daintree to the Mighty Yangtze River with Bruce Belcher



.Again, all of us had a good tourist season on the Magical Daintree River, so my wife and I shouted ourselves to a short visit to China. I had a couple of bucket list places that I'd always wanted to see. One was the Great Wall and the other was Shanghai on the Yangtze River. We found an incredible deal for 9 days, including air fares and accommodation for \$700 - each, return! I suspect that the Chinese Government must have subsidised it to promote tourism.

We had to fly to Sydney, caught up with others and stayed overnight for our flight to Beijing. The worst part of travelling for me is the long flight. I've tried sleeping pills but they'd never work. So, I doubled the dose! I wouldn't say I slept all the way but it went quickly!

We were a group of 33 Aussies and we had never met before. We congregated at a place set aside by our tour guide who was to be with us for a few days.

On the first day we visited Tiananmen Square and noticed thousands of people queueing up, 6 deep, to kiss the face of the deceased Chairman Mao Zedong. Later, we spent some time wandering through the Forbidden City, which was the home of an emperor about 600 years ago. It was forbidden for anyone to visit unless you were resident eunuchs, virgins or servants.

On the second day we visited the Great Wall. Of the 33, I was one of 3 that made it to the top. The other two were 20 year old males. I carried my emphysema and bulging disc all the way! I wasn't going to give up! By the day's end I thought I'd be sore but instead, I consumed considerable amounts of beer, some red wine and several smokes! I hadn't felt better in years. I put my endurance down to the fact that I walk my dogs, on Wonga Beach, every second day for 40 minutes. That's the answer!



The days rolled by and usually by then homesickness sets in. There's nothing better for me than sitting on my veranda at night blissing out to the silence of the Magical Daintree.

We visited other places and saw several attractions, including a visit to the zoo where we saw the famous pandas. Although the Chinese are technical leaders, I thought they could improve the standards in the zoo. It was depressing.

The finale of our visit was to Shanghai, which is situated on the banks of the Yangtze River. We visited very modern skyscrapers with panoramic views of the city. It continues forever to the horizon.

On the last night we took a river boat tour with hundreds of tourists and enjoyed the spectacular light display on the buildings. It makes New York look like a playground! See you next month.

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# Local Bragging Board



Dragon Lady continued to punch out quality fish despite the potential challenges this time of year



Regular visitor to the region, Andrew Quan of Melbourne caught this cobia



With ideal seas Exceed Sportfishing has enjoyed a good run of Gt popper fishing



Saltire Charters finishing off a good season with a nice big Black Marlin

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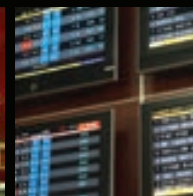
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