

LINEBURNER

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FISHING TROPICAL FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

DEC 21

Features
Ladies Ribbons tournament
Shark Depredation Issue
Reef Fishing Experiences
Daintree River Results

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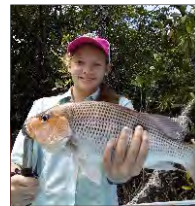
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Contact Us if you'd like to
Contribute - Most Welcome

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Front Cover:
Patty Collete hooked up to a big Marlin during the Ladies Ribbons Tournament in Cairns - estimated 300lb



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PORT DOUGLAS COAST GUARD

VMR 410 Channel 16, 72, 81

The End of an Iconic Era ?

By Heff



Very recently the original 34ft Dragon Lady boat left the water for an extended rest and bit of a restoration project. This vessel has been synonymous since the year 2000 for providing the best reef fishing experiences in the region. Since the purchase of the newly acquired 48ft from the Dragon Lady operation the 34ft boat slowly became less used. Owner Steve Adamson felt it was time to put her up on a hard stand and give her a make over birthday for all her hard work over the years. Still with a Grandfather survey clause she could well make a return in a charter capacity but not in the short term.

The 34ft vessel was made by Cairns Custom Craft in 1988, made of aluminium as all their boats are crafted from. There were three of the same design made with the other two are believed to be in Cairns and the other Hinchinbrook. Classic vessels in their time and still highly seaworthy till this day. Cairns Custom Craft have manufactured all styles of boats from 4m barra punts to 60ft reef boats over the years. The 34ft Dragon vessel with a capacity to carry 8 pax, provided the Port Douglas patrons and visitors with adventure filled days from reef fishing, to snorkelling, to light tackle fishing, to popper fishing and also big time game fishing. It quickly built a formidable reputation as the best boat in the region in the very early years, something which has stood the test of time still to this day with the newer vessel. The catch cry 'Over the Test of Time we Catch More Fish!' has never waned.

My personal experiences fishing with Steve over the years on this boat are unforgettable. From the numerous days of catching so many reef fish we had to drive away from them, to filming the Line Burner Foxtel series on her and

then the unforgettable day we literally car crashed into a 1200lb black marlin which we hooked up to and eventually proceeded to jump on the front deck of the boat. This boat saw a lot over time and still carries a few scars from the epic encounters.

On retrieving her from the water she went up on the slipway on the first day. Then the following day a massive crane from Kelly's Crane Hire rocked up capable of loading 110 tonne. Dragon Lady approximately weighed around 5 tonne carrying limited fuel or water at the time. It was then placed on a big Mack truck with a 45ft trailer and strapped down.

However the first step was to cut the aluminium flybridge off with a heavy duty angle grinder and displaced with the aid of the crane. Reason, transport regulations first for height and also one particular off main road power line just before entering the yard of placement.

Then the lifting of the boat and securing it to the truck proceeded for the slipway. Meticulous to the very centimetre is the best way to describe this highly specialised task. It took around 90 minutes and very intense to say the least.

Then she was transported out to a disclosed location just out of Port Douglas where was secured on a hard stand to rest her weary bones. This was maybe a 60 minute job to complete the task.

Steve plans to take around 12 months to bring her back to its former glory in between running a very busy charter schedule. He's looking forward to the task. ■



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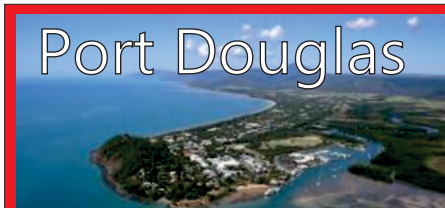
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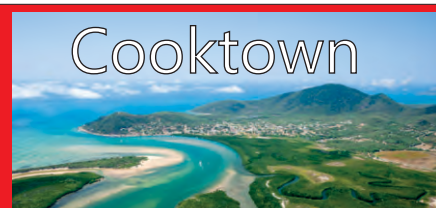
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QLD Fisheries Advisory Board - Shark Depredation Issue

By Heff

As you read I'm currently involved in the next round of meetings for the QLD Advisory Board regarding legislation, updates, concerns and recommendations. My role is to represent the Charter Industry in QLD and one topic that caught my eye is the update on shark depredation and research. Over the years as a charter fleet in Port Douglas we have noticed a significant increase of shark depredation for a long time and it's getting worse. For example on some days you may get two nannygai or coral trout to the boat, losing eight others to sharks in the process. Not all days, but these days are increasing more and more in the tropics. Warmer periods of the year are definitely an issue, but we are seeing more consistent shark activity even in the cooler months now. The end game here is to conserve our fish stocks and losing so many to shark depredation has caught the eye of the government.

While there is limited data on shark depredation in Queensland overall, the majority of initial research has been conducted in SE QLD. At Fishing Port Douglas in association with the Dragon Lady Charter, we are currently in the process of obtaining a grant to collect more data with the assistance of Southern Cross University Honours student Jaeden Vardon's project quantified depredation rates in the line fishery off Mooloolaba. It will involve us using swabs from depredated fish and we are hoping to obtain a shark deterrant device we can use to lower down when fishing any of our locations. We will commit to this exercise in the hope we can lower the rate of shark depredation, which not only harms our fishing capability and reputation, but declines our fish stocks. Down south the bull shark is the main culprit but up here in the tropics it is mainly the whaler variety. We need to be able to provide important data (including swabbing sharked fish) and solutions or recommendations to this issue.



The Fisheries require a lot of facts before there's any change in regards to higher depredation rates. They are trying to establish whether it may reflect a greater abundance of sharks or it could reflect behavioural changes in the sharks. For example, behavioural associations may form in areas of high fishing pressure as sharks associate the regular presence of fishing vessels with the availability of hooked fish and /or discarded catch. Camera technology to record depredation events on collaborating charter fishing vessels, combined with genetic techniques to identify the species responsible for depredation events has already begun and we are keen on Dragon Lady to be part of the program. Chartering for over 200 days a year certainly makes us a major player.


There's also a custom built mobile phone app being developed by the researchers for collaborating charter and commercial line fishers to record data for the project. There's quite a few other issues on the agenda this current meeting including a big focus on the Nannygai species and I'll report on these as well in the next edition. This particular shark topic did however catch my interest as we will hopefully be able to provide a lot of the answers required and be part of the solution for the Great Barrier Reef charter industry.

Pictured below our Reef Sharks are that frisky on our fish they have taken to their own - supplied by Saltaire Charters ■




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The Dragon's Den

By Steve Adamson

At the time of writing this report we are about mid December so that we get in before the Christmas break. So I can only report on a couple of weeks of activity from our point of view.

Shared charters have been a real effort to get together with a severe lack of tourists in town which I'm sure every local business has felt the pinch. That looks like picking up after the 17th December and running into January. Even though the Premier opened the borders a few days earlier than this, it has been too little too late to see any benefit from this announcement. Basically people had already planned well prior if they were coming up this way. Hopefully this change in commitment is sustained from our state government going ahead as any hiccups over the holiday period will decimate this town for proper if it goes down this track. This next month or so will be the acid test for many.

We've been kept busy enough for the moment mainly through private charters from local businesses - staff Christmas parties. The weather has been kind enough and quite comfortable and they definitely enjoyed their day with us. I can't say so much for the fishing as its has become harder by the day. This can happen at this time of year when the northerly current initiates its first run down the coast. The fish can go off the bite and they take some time to adjust as well. In saying this we sounded up a lot of good schools of fish but they weren't being suicidal. Further more a social group of people on the boat with a few drinks under their belt aren't necessarily concentrating as hard as they probably should. To snag a good bag of fish you have to be switched on at the moment.

Still we caught moderate numbers of fish which were a mixed bag of fruit in regards to species. There were a few beauties amongst them though. No particular fish became dominant and it was a smattering of coral trout, nannygai, sweetlip, trevally and a few spanish mackerel on the float. We travelled



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far and wide but we couldn't find a significant bite in any one particular spot and at various stages of the tide. That's summer time fishing but the important factor is people still enjoyed themselves and took a feed home.

We recently had the Australian Maritime Safety Association visit for a scheduled visit which governs basically all charter boats now under the one banner. They picked up on a couple of minor jobs or amendments since their last visit but nothing major. The one aspect which did raise my eyebrow was our first aid kit which by the way is quite comprehensive as it stands. Things like bandages, band aids, saline solution, benadine, creams etc were considered out of date. Plus now they require panadol and indigestion tablets to be carried plus a few other bits and pieces. I was always under the impression that anything medicine related had to be administered by a qualified practitioner. Anyway there's been a few rule changes in this regard and I worked out it was a lot cheaper to go and buy a brand new first kit as opposed to buying the product individually. Roughly around \$400 depending where you can find all the required product demanded nowadays.

Heads up we have little wriggle room left over the festive period so call ASAP if you want to have a day out on the water. See you in the New Year and thanks to the many regular patrons and new faces we catered for in 2021. We highly value anyone that joins us for a fish on the Great Barrier Reef.

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Breathing in the Saltaire

By Damian Collete



This article I'm going to mainly concentrate on the 2021 Ladies Ribbon Tournament from out of Cairns which is traditionally run on the first Saturday of December. Each year as a family we make the effort to participate including my misses Patty and son Jake working the deck. We also invite a few friends each time which makes for a very social occasion. It has been part of our life every year for over 20yrs.

It is a tournament that boasts the largest women's fishing club in Australia. Based in Cairns, at the edge of the Great Barrier Reef, the greatest coral reef system in the world, they look forward to this every year and make a massive effort. The fishing club is run by a committee of volunteer members, established in 1983 on the core values, 'We live by today - Fun, Fishing and Friendship'! It is a ripper to be part of and the girls get right into it.

As their motto says theirs a heap of fun to be had beginning with the briefing on the Friday night at the Rattle 'n' Hum establishment on The Esplanade. Catch ups and making new friendships were naturally created in a fun filled environment.

Up early the next morning the boats get dressed up and so do the participants. It's a fancy dress competition for both aspects which is judged at a sail past at the marina before heading out to fish. The girls decided we'd be TEAM MARVEL based on the popular super hero franchise. The girls go

to great effort especially on some vessels dressing up the entire boat. It sets the tone for a top day with the hope of catching a fish or two. It's competitive but not the be and end all. This year saw 25 vessels participate.

We utilised the 60ft Shaka boat which I skipper and what a great call this was. The weather wasn't too kind on the day blowing a good 20 knots plus at times. Currents and winds were in opposition which made it that bit more lumpy. A 60ft vessel was a godsend and the smaller boats would have had a rough time of it.

Theirs a lot of different categories to win using 10kg line class but the big prize is the billfish section. Early into the start time we hooked up to a solid 120lb black marlin which came bounding out of the water and we were connected for several minutes before it jumped off. It would have been enough to take out the main prize being the first billfish caught for the day as the results finished up. We also hooked up to another marlin of much more significance but could not stop it on the line class. We landed some other pelagics to register a score but not enough to feature. At day's end it was back to the marina for more social drinks and a night of party. The presentation was held at the Pullman Casino on the Sunday night where all the ladies got properly dressed up to the max with an attendance of a couple of hundred people. A top class event with all the trimmings. Well done to all the girls involved and also to the boys, which for a weekend had to follow their lead. We'll be back in 2022 with our best effort again.

Looking ahead we are preparing our 35ft Saltaire Game Boat for a busy few weeks ahead having replaced a new turbo and an after cooler which luckily arrived in time having come from New Zealand. That was a close call considering the issues with general transport getting components into the country. Happy Christmas and a smashing 2022 from the team. ■



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On the Daintree Charters

By Jamie Beitzel - The Local Huckleberry Finn



Firstly a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all from the Daintree region. A special thanks to the many locals and return clients who joined me in 2021. There were a lot of new faces along the way and really nice people to boot - I'm sure they'll turn into repeat clients as well down the track.

The last few weeks have been a lot quieter for me conducting maybe half a dozen charters, it's typical before the holiday rush. To be honest it hasn't bothered me too much because the river and coast have become a lot tougher to fish. It's also been super hot work with that sun beating profusely and a lot of the time very little wind to keep things that tad cooler. For us we are really hoping for a proper dose of rain, even to the extent of turning the river to brown to stir things up. We've had what I call very moderate drops of rain at times as it is, but this river needs a kick up the pants at the moment. Live bait is getting harder to find and the fish have become somewhat lethargic. A good shake up is what's required.

It hasn't been all doom and gloom and I work hard to ensure we are still seeing some reasonable action. Along the coast I've caught some ripping large mouth nannygai to 8kg and some gold spot cod up to 20kg. Even surprisingly I've caught some nice island trout around 55cm which I felt was a bonus. The weather was quite favourable and if the river wasn't producing I was more than happy to poke my nose out the front and hit a few of my

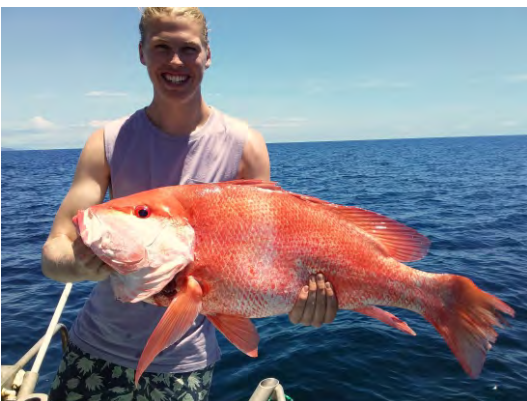
spots.

In the river itself I found myself above and below the ferry in search of some decent action. Upstream we caught a few river trevally and downstream it was a mixture of fingermark and grunter as the main species. However not one species was willing to put their hand up and man up properly.

That's why I'm egging on a decent sprinkle of rain because even earlier in the year I worked out some great tactics when the river literally ran orange after a heavy fall. I had a good run there of picking up 5 giant trevally in excess of 20kg plus some of the biggest grunter this river can produce up to 60cm. It's a bit of tricky one because the tourists don't want to be here if it's raining cats and dogs, but they'll benefit from it in fishing terms.

Looking ahead my calendar is looking extra busy around Christmas and into the best part of January. I'm not complaining as we need to make up some ground for the quieter months we had with the border closures. Also I need to recoup some coin having had to upgrade my entire power supply at home which was not a cheap exercise. The old system stood a great amount of time but it could no longer keep going. It's part of the pain or joy, depending on your view, for living off the grid across the Daintree River without mains power. To be honest it a lot more expensive than one may think.

Here's to a positive 2022 and I'll see you on the Daintree or nearby soon ■



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Reel Cooking with Mick Hart Christmas Prawn Cocktail



Ingredients

1 kg cooked prawns, peeled and de-veined
Semi-ripe mango, cut into wedges, to serve
1 bunch beans, cut into 10cm batons
1 cucumber, cut into 10cm batons
Lettuce leaves, for wrapping
Thai basil, coriander, roasted unsalted peanuts and shredded fresh coconut to serve

Chilli-prawn relish

60 ml (¼ cup) neutral oil, such as grapeseed oil
12 dried long red chillies, soaked in cold water overnight
4 shallots, diced
2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
1 tbsp dried shrimp, soaked in warm water for 10 minutes, then drained
30 gm palm sugar (or to taste)
3 tsp shrimp paste
2 tsp fish sauce (or to taste)
1 tbsp lime juice (or to taste)

Method

For relish, heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add chillies, shallot and garlic, and cook, stirring occasionally, until caramelised (10-15 minutes). Add remaining ingredients (except fish sauce and lime juice). Stir occasionally until colour deepens and mixture is caramelised (10-15 minutes). Season to taste with fish sauce and lime juice.

Layer bowls by placing a "stand" in the centre of a base bowl, ensuring it's very stable. Alternatively, place a smaller bowl with the beans, cucumber, lettuce and herbs in the centre of a larger bowl with mango and prawns arranged over ice. Serve with relish and remaining ingredients.



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