

LINEBURNER

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FISHING TROPICAL FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

FEB 26

*Local Fishing Reports
& Some More*



Local Fishing News

Let's get down to the crux of things for the updated wet season thus far in tropical FNQ. It is fairly accurate to say that since late December there has been barely a day when it hasn't rained in the Port Douglas region. This may sound daunting but it is not the case as most of the rain has occurred at night and any day time wet has been mostly coastal showers. Put it this way, there's been no localised flooding and it has been a productive wet season for the tropics and fisheries. The days are hot and sticky with humidity but the boating conditions have remained some of the best I've seen in my 30yrs up here for this time of year. Yes, there appears to be more showers to continue in the near future but nothing untoward.

River Fishing

The barometer up this way is the Daintree River which has the largest rain catchment area by a long stretch and it is healthy and the fishing has been good. The best action has been towards the lower section with a combination of salt mixing with fresh water. Fingermark, barra and mangrove jack are mixing it up amongst the snags in the deeper sections. In the main channel with structure fingermark are sitting, waiting and eager to take on a live bait without much hesitation. The flats have been really handy for javelin fish and they'll take fresh dead bait such as prawns, sardines or mullet. They'll also have a crack at a smaller live sardine. There's been also some reasonable sized golden trevally happy to get up in the shallower water. The more neapish tides at the moment seem to be agreeing with the amount of fresh and salt water in the system.

There's also been a few mud crabs around dropping back into the river from the mangroves as the fresh rain falls force them to go this way. Coastal beaches are also seeing a rain of bait, prawns and jelly prawns which has seen trevally, barra, tarpon and blue salmon showing up in pursuit.

Reef Fishing

This has been an interesting topic as this time of year can be a bit tricky. The common thread to success has been in between the moon phases with a bit of run in the tide, can't be not enough or too much. This has applied to coastal reefs and outer reef systems. Coastal reefs have seen a bit of green water around but this nice mix of salt can send them into a feeding mode for coral trout and nannygai. Wonky holes, which is a completely different game have seen this occur for the big, big nannygai and also cod. This is typical for this time of year when the ancient underwater river systems from the mountains start pumping water out to the ocean from down below. It is a fascinating event but very specialised fishing.

The best results I've seen on the outer reef have come from extended trips we've arranged a bit further north of Port Douglas. Undine Reef and heading east to the shelf have definitely accounted for a lot of nannygai, emperor species and coral trout. There is also a solid holding of spanish mackerel and tuna species such as longtail and mack tuna to fill in your time trolling lures on the surface in between prime bottom fishing spots.



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Sea surface temperatures have increased slightly across the Far North, North and Central regions over the past week or so, with little change in the southern region. Temperatures are tracking slightly above the long-term average with the Northern region (Cooktown – Innisfail) experiencing above-average conditions.

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast a tropical low (23U) to form in the Coral Sea. There is a low chance (5–10%) it will develop into a tropical cyclone by the weekend. The system is expected to remain offshore and may bring localised rainfall to Marine Park catchments in the coming week.

The breeding season continues across the Reef, with turtle hatchlings emerging from nests and making their way to the sea from late January through April, especially at dawn and dusk. Seabirds are also nesting and feeding across island and reef habitats, and many fish species are spawning and laying eggs during the warm summer months, taking advantage of the productive wet season conditions.

Temperature

Sea surface temperatures are currently around 0.4–0.5°C above the long-term average in the Far Northern, Central and Southern regions. The Northern region is averaging around 1°C above the long-term monthly average.

While there has been some accumulation of heat stress, particularly in northern Reef waters, this remains below the level where we would expect to see significant coral bleaching

impacts.

Rainfall

From 2–8 February, rainfall was lower than expected in the Marine Park catchments, with average rainfall occurring in the Wet Tropics and Mackay–Whitsundays. Heavy rainfall is currently forecast in areas which may be affected by the Tropical Low 23U. I'll expand on this a bit further next page with a more localised report.

Reef health

America's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) coral bleaching alert level for the Northern region has moved from bleaching watch to bleaching warning, meaning coral bleaching is possible, following the recent temperature increases. Monitoring is ongoing across the Marine Park.

During the past week, 86 Reef Health Impact Surveys were completed across 10 reefs in the Northern, Central and Southern regions.

Low to medium levels of coral bleaching (1–30%) were recorded on four reefs in the Northern region and one reef in the central region. Most surveyed reefs showed no to low levels of bleaching.

Additional observations from Eye on the Reef monitoring programs reported coral bleaching on 11 of the 26 reefs surveyed. Impacts remain localised and are being closely monitored.

Fishing Reports Next Page



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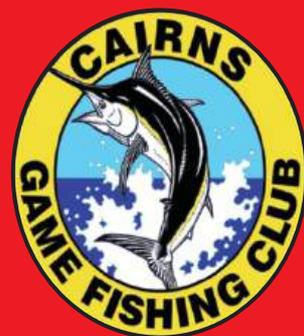
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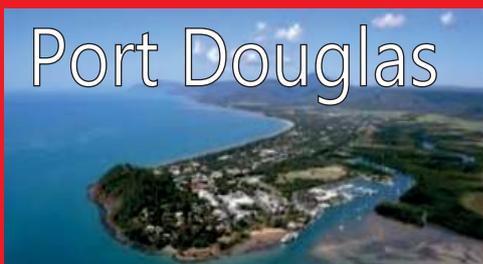


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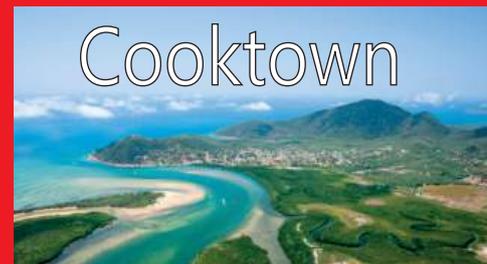


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