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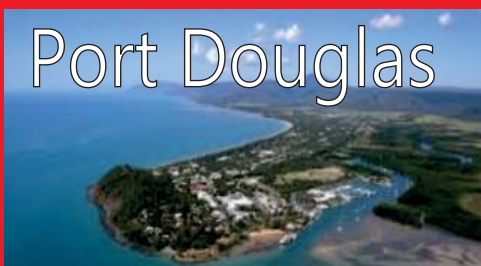




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# Fishing Port Douglas

with Heff



The wet season tail end continues to roll on with an expectation that it will all end soon. The wind and rain has been a factor creating certain challenges at times in regards to fishing endeavours in tropical FNQ.

Sea surface temperatures continued to cool, dropping by a further 0.4–0.6°C this week across the Marine Park.

Ex-Tropical Cyclone Maila weakened and was downgraded to a tropical low on 11 April. The system crossed the Cape York Peninsula on 15 April, bringing moderate to heavy rainfall in some areas.

Encouragingly, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has now reduced the Coral Reef Watch Bleaching Alert Status to no stress conditions across the entire Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, following further drops in sea surface temperatures - reflecting heat stress easing across the Marine Park.

Since Ex-Tropical Cyclone Narelle, reports from the Eye on the Reef network have identified coral damage on some outer reefs in the Northern region. In response, the Reef Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service will carry out targeted Reef Health Impact Surveys in the Far Northern region in the coming weeks, weather permitting.

## Temperature

Despite the recent cooling, sea surface temperatures remain 0.4–0.5°C above the long-term April average. The Far Northern and Northern regions are still experiencing the effects of accumulated marine heat exposure from the summer period which did attract the interest of a couple of cyclones way in the north near the tip of

Cape York. These cyclones did effect weather conditions moderately as far as the Douglas Shire.

## Rainfall

Weekly rainfall totals were below average across most of the Marine Park catchments over the past week. Mainly pesty showers in the Port Douglas / Daintree region.

## Reef health

Over the past few weeks, 42 Reef Health Impact Surveys were conducted across seven reefs in the Marine Park.

In the Northern region, six reefs were surveyed, with coral bleaching ranging from low (1–10%) to very high (61–90%). These bleaching patterns in the Northern region are likely linked to heat stress and flood plume impacts that accumulated over the summer. Coral damage was also recorded on four of the six Northern reefs surveyed, ranging from low to severe, likely caused by storm impacts from Ex-Tropical Cyclone Narelle. Two reefs in the Northern region also recorded moderate levels of coral disease.

Limited surveys in the Far Northern region mean the full extent of coral bleaching is still emerging, but elevated levels are expected given its prolonged exposure to above-average sea surface temperatures.

In the Southern region, one reef was surveyed and no bleaching was recorded.

Additional Eye on the Reef observations from across the Marine Park reported bleaching on 16 of 32 reefs surveyed across the Marine Park but nothing major to raise an eyebrow.

**Fishing Reports Next Page ....**



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### Local Fishing News

As briefly mentioned on the previous page we have been dealing with an extended wet season with not so nice wind conditions for offshore adventures plus a steady influx of rain, and now annoying showers. Short term forecasts are not so flash but we should see more palatable days for all forms of fishing coming soon.

### River Fishing

This has been a very popular option in the last few weeks fishing in the calm waters inshore. That's the beauty of fishing up here as there's always somewhere to wet a line.

The Daintree River is always the best barometer to gauge what is on the chew. Well we can say that the lower reaches have been very eventful for some really handsome sized javelin fish particularly across the shallower flats. They may not be at the top of the bucket list of some, but trust me they are an awesome fish to catch as they punch hard and are 5 star fish on the dinner plate. They are partial to the best fresh dead baits you can get your hands on such as California squid, mullet strips and quality peeled prawns. Due to a lot of fresh water coming off the catchment area and often big tides as well, the water quality can be average. This basic method can produce some great results down toward the river mouth.

Capturing live bait has been difficult so to catch a barra soft plastics and small body lures are currently the go. They are downstream from the ferry crossing but the action is currently turning upstream. The water temperature is still prime for them to be active and as the rain subsides they are in their element. Even though they are not necessarily your monster models, there's nothing better than flicking a few lures around and nailing some of these prized species. To know where the hot spots are you need to give us a call.

Back down Port Douglas way the Dickson Inlet has not let the side down in regards to catching mangrove jack. My mate Jake from Exceed registered multiple days catching 20 plus jack's in a half day trip with some in the mid 40cm range. That's great fishing when it's howling 20-25 knots offshore. Also if you want the bream are getting bigger and fatter and on light line they are a heap of fun. Quality pilchards and squid have been a preferred choice.

For mud crab fans the next 8 weeks is the time to be laying out some pots. This is their time to shine as temperatures will continue to fall.

### Reef Fishing

This has been a point of topic mainly due to strong winds offshore. Getting access to the outer reef has been for big boys pants and bigger boats for the most. On memory the best weather day in the last few weeks has been 12 knots momentarily. The majority of days have pushed past the 18 knot range cancelling the smaller boat brigade on many occasions.

For those fortunate to get in a handful of days there's a few mackerel about with coral trout and nannygai there but hard to target efficiently. This time of year can be hit or miss when fishing the reef and all weather dependent. I've seen some years when it goes ballistic but unfortunately 2026 hasn't been our kindest friend for a couple of months, all due to weather.

However, always being the optimist I'm a big believer that the month of May is a trigger point for big nannygai and also thumping golden trevally. Coral trout will get keener and spanish mackerel will be a bigger factor as well. We all pray for more sunshine and calm seas and if this occurs - LOOK OUT!!

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