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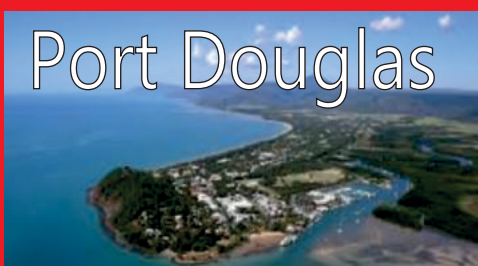
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# Fishing Port Douglas News

with Heff



Hi to all who are reading this month's edition. Well here are some fresh to frightening facts which will put this year's May period into one of the too hard baskets. The offshore boating conditions have been nothing short of disastrous.

**The average daily strength of wind on the outer reef in May was 20 knots with consistent gusts of wind up to 30 knots.**

There was barely a day which fell below 18 knots.

In boating terms the sea has built up that much energy it would take several days of super calm weather to flatten it out. For example the best wind day in May was approximately 17 knots and was still extremely rough because of this energy in the ocean swell.

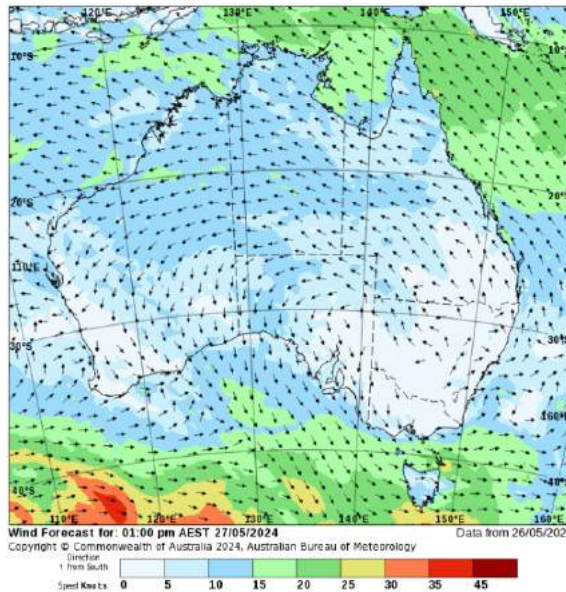
From memory the last two months have seen back to back, to back high pressure systems roll across southern Australia consistently at around 1030hp. What this does is drive strong winds up the eastern seaboard. This further equates into anything between 20-30 knots as a general rule.

To put it into further context there has been a cancellation rate of around 80% for coastal or offshore fishing trips during May. River and estuary charters have remained consistent in the calm waters

but the offshore work has taken an absolute hammering.

I've been involved in the industry for 28 years and this 6 month run of trade has been the worst by far when you consider the Cyclone Jasper aftermath over Christmas & January, a very soft Easter due to adverse weather and the worst May in my time.

In saying this our team has been doing well considering the very limited opportunities forwarded to them in recent times as you'll read further. Give us a run at some good weather and the fish will be very hungry, particularly offshore.



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# Fishing On the Daintree

## with Jamie Beitzel



Welcome to my monthly report from the Daintree River.

For the first time in a long time the May period was just a tad quieter for me in regards to charter work. Even though bookings were healthy that bit of extra time I had on my hands was very appreciative to attend to some more family time, boat maintenance and general living.

The change of the seasons became very evident during the latter stages of May with day and night time temperatures falling back into a winter pattern. Luckily for me I'm not affected by the notorious south easterly winds which have been peppering the offshore scene for the best part of two months now. It does stir the water up to a certain degree in the river but it is still very workable.

On the fishing front the barras are slowly dropping off the excellent run experienced over several months. It's mainly due to lowering water temperatures and their window of opportunity at the moment is more so on the bottom of the tide. I will still catch them moving forward but timing will be vital.

The beauty of the Daintree River is that it is ever evolving and a few other species are starting to become more dominant. The grunter or javelin fish are quite prevalent and getting more commonly up to and exceeding the 50cm mark. These are top quality fish for this variety and fresh on the plate they don't get much better.

For some sporting value there are a lot more river trevally in the

system and always in good numbers. On light gear they fight tremendously well and are ideal for intermediate or beginner anglers which I do deal with a lot. Another fish becoming more common is the golden trevally packing a bit more size and punch and they are a very good table eating fish.

I'm starting to see some signs of the big 1m queenfish turn up and they will get into more of a groove in the next few weeks. When they are around they are a whole heap of fun and one of the best sporting experiences you can have on the end of a line.

Fingermark remain my go to fish and I can always manage to tap into their holding offices when required. I am so lucky to have an all year opportunity to target these wonderful fish for both fighting and eating capability.

Another activity which is proving worthwhile at the moment is putting in the crab pots. As a bonus for clients, we are tending to catch a couple of keepers in the nets when checked at the end of the their trip. It is by request only upon booking but I'm happy to do this whilst they are up and about.

Now is the time for some croc spotting as part of the trip as they are basking on the water's edge as the temperatures drop. We have some beauties on the Daintree to observe and for the next few months they tend not to venture far, so I can always generally find them. Add some wonderful bird life to view and you really have a full on Eco Tour as well as your fishing.



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# Akula Sportfishing

with Jason Knack



It is hard to put into words, but the month of May will go down in my memory as one to forget from a fishing point of view. Harrowing south easterly winds played havoc pretty much all month forcing cancellations, making alternative options and even the handful of trips completed offshore were extremely challenging. I'm not sure of the exact recordings but the palm trees never stopped bending from the fresh breeze and the beach water even didn't get close to resembling a blue colour at all. Actually a surf board from off the beach looked more appropriate.

As mentioned we did do a few trips offshore and we did quite well considering the conditions. You definitely needed seasoned sea legs to complete these charters. We caught some pretty impressive large mouth nannygai and cod but the log book saw slim pickings for most of the month. As I write the forecast next week looks far more promising and can't wait to get amongst it as I predict the fish will be in a hungry mood.

Quite a few clients did opt to change plans in accordance with the weather and we fished up the local estuary. Sometimes people are just happy to wet a line and enjoy their holiday time. Our best creek half day included half a dozen jacks and eight big, fat black bream. The best mangrove jack was an impressive 43cm and the bream were all 30-35cm. Downgrading line class and gear, these fish all performed admirably and providing quite a few

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smiles, which is what it is all about.

Other than this we assisted Fishing Port Douglas and AMSA with a few emergency air drop exercises but even this got to a critical point of being dangerous due to the sea conditions. Consequently most of these scheduled trips were also cancelled. No point turning a training drill into an actual rescue scenario.

I'm pretty sure next month we'll have a more comprehensive report for you with some great catches recorded.





# Saltaire Charters

## with Craig Newbold



Running a charter business is like reading a book. There's always the next chapter to keep reading on. The month of May chapter however was ugly reading from our point of view. Very little productive work was conducted due to the venomous weather conditions that were on the table.

Unbeknown to us at the time, a block of potential work was offered to our Saltaire vessel which we committed to relocating to Lizard Island Resort for over a month. Well that exercise was put to the sword due to shocking conditions. We were well aware the Port Douglas area was copping a battering during this time as well, but I can tell you that Lizard Island was probably a 10-20% worse predicament. We did a handful of half day charters doing various activities around the island such as diving, bit of fishing and snorkelling but it actually cost us money in the end. The only blessing was that we didn't lose much work out of Port Douglas which

was in basically shut down mode for offshore trips.

In saying this the Lizard Island Resort due to our commitment has reached out again and given us priority bookings for their guests for the next 10 weeks. If this goes to plan it will more than make up for our last endeavour. We are looking above upstairs for the weather god blessing this time around. We'll be up there from the start of June. In saying this we have back up plans in Port Douglas to cater for similar trips on a similar sized vessel.

Also back in Port Douglas land we now have a 7.5m custom sportfishing vessel available for charter. Suitable for catering for up to 5 pax we cover all aspects from reef, light tackle and popper fishing. There are a couple of options to choose from in regards to charter times so give us a call. From next month on we'll be able to supply a separate report on the fishing activity from this vessel.

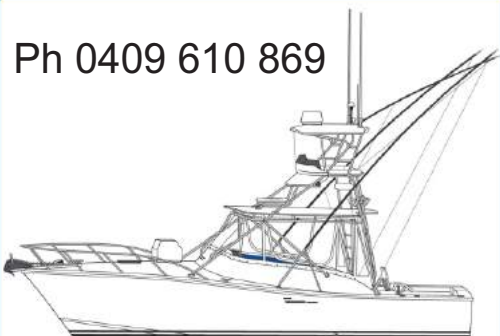
Other than this we conducted some AMSA Emergency Air Drop exercises but under very difficult conditions.

Our extended charter program with the Escapade Mothership vessel is ramping up for the back end of the year with only a few weeks left on the calendar. It can be associated with a variety of sportfishing vessels to tailor make your trip. It is the best value and priced live aboard trip you will find in Far Nth Qld.

We apologise for a shortened report this month but will hit back next month we promise with plenty of adventures to share.



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