

LINEBURNER

VOLUME 304 PRICELESS

FISHING TROPICAL FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

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Best Charter Reports
& Some More*

AUG 26



As to be expected the winter pattern changed during the last few weeks. There was still a touch of wind to contend with but we started to see patches of picture postcard conditions. This has been favourable for both offshore and inshore endeavours. Tourist numbers have been consistent which has been a very pleasing aspect of running a seaside village town.

River

There's been a positive shift in this department. Quality 1m queenfish have been thriving cruising the deeper channels on a rising tide. Floating live bait or small popper casting has proven to be their downfall.

Javelin fish or commonly called grunter, have been active on the flats and appear to be ready to drop eggs any day. They are brightly finned in yellow and positively silver on their flanks. Also a top quality table fish to take home. There's also been quite a few just size jewfish working the flats which is a fantastic addition. Cooked fresh they are a worthy and healthy eating delight.

Amongst the snags with the temperature quickly changing estuary cod, mangrove jack and fingermark are gathering momentum. Cod and jacks will happily eat a pilchard whilst fingermark can't resist a live sardine.

We anticipate the barra are ready to return in better form. Fish the run off creeks which have copped a bit of warmth on the ground during the low tide. The water temperature is so more favourable in the shallower waters. Soft plastic lures 4 inch and live mullet or sardines are the go for the next few weeks.

Reef

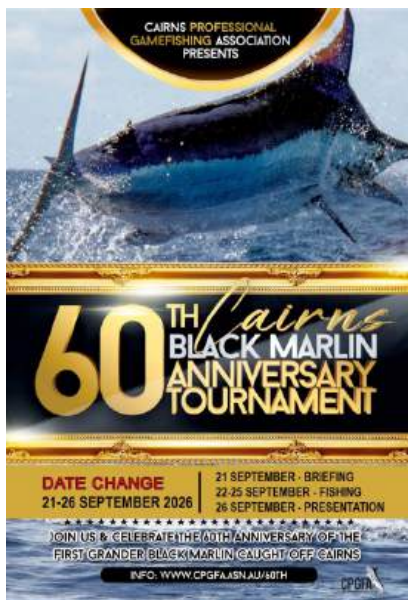
This is a pretty simple equation, plenty of coral trout ranging in 20 - 25m of water. Still a bit deeper in the 30m range large mouth nannygai have enjoyed a really positive period ranging between 6-8kg and are a highly sorted table fish. Obviously the calmer weather is more conducive to catching these specimens. Also mixed in amongst these schools have been some red emperor, spangled emperor and trevally to value add.

Again looking forward the weather looks prime in 5 days time to really take advantage of the majority of species on the chew.

Light Game

This definitely a program worth pursuing. There seems to be plenty of bait out there from a good wet season. We've experienced consistent numbers of spanish and spotted mackerel to 7kg, small black marlin to 50lb and sailfish as an extra bonus. Mack and longtail tuna are also keeping the trolling lines ticking over. The coming weeks will only see further improvement and it's not too long before it's close to the heavy tackle season.

Typically the 200lb black marlin will move to the edge of the shelf in anticipation of the bigger females arriving from the Coral Sea. Last year this started to happen mid September and the genuine feel is a similar scenario will unfold. The 60th Anniversary of the Cairns Game fishing scene is sold out with a record number of participants entering in the third week of September for a 4 day tournament which has booked out the Cairns Convention Centre for presentations. I'm lucky enough to be part of the experience.



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Recently the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) released its annual long-term monitoring results for the 2025–26 year which showed coral cover across all regions of the Marine Park increased slightly or remained at similar levels to the previous year, indicating limited impacts from 2024–25's widespread coral bleaching event, and the regional coral bleaching event recorded earlier in 2026.

Sea surface temperatures have cooled across the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park over the past month and are now close to historical averages across all regions.

A strong El Niño event and a developing positive Indian Ocean Dipole are forecast leading into summer. These climate patterns are generally associated with warmer and drier conditions across eastern and northern Australia. However, local weather systems and conditions can vary across the Marine Park, so the impacts on individual reefs may differ.

Temperature

Sea surface temperatures declined by 0.3–0.6°C across the Marine Park during July. Currently temperatures are between 0–0.3°C above the long-term average across the Marine Park.

Forecasts indicate temperatures are likely to remain close to average into spring.

El Niño is now established and is strengthening. Current climate models indicate the event is likely to peak in late spring or summer.

The Indian Ocean Dipole is currently neutral but models suggest a positive phase developing through spring.

Rainfall

Rainfall during July was slightly above average across the Northern and Far Northern regions, while

the Central and Southern regions received below-average rainfall.

Rainfall in the Far Northern catchment is expected to remain above average, which may increase the potential for flood plumes if significant rainfall occurs.

Rainfall across other Marine Park catchments is not expected to exceed median levels during August.

Reef health

Between 1 and 31 July 2026, 274 Reef Health Impact Surveys were conducted across 30 reefs in the Marine Park.

In the Northern region, 21 reefs were surveyed of which four reefs recorded low (1–10%) coral bleaching prevalence, and 13 recorded low to moderate coral damage.

In the Central region, three reefs were surveyed with one recording low (1–10%) coral bleaching prevalence and low coral damage.

In the Southern region, six reefs were surveyed, five recorded low (1–10%) coral bleaching prevalence and all six recorded low coral damage.

No Reef Health Impact Surveys were conducted in the Far Northern region during July.

Coral disease was recorded on 16 of the 30 reefs surveyed during the month.

Additional Eye on the Reef monitoring programs reported the presence of coral bleaching on 11 of 32 reefs surveyed during the month.

So reading between the lines the Great Barrier Reef is in good shape from a local point of view and we can verify it is in pretty good shape and the fishing can back this up. This indicates a vibrant and happy ecosystem.

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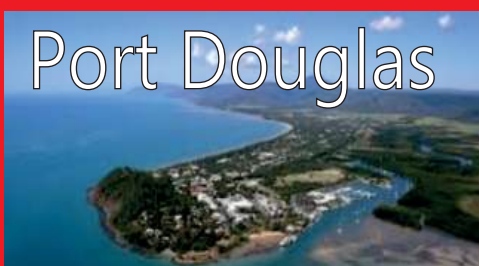
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