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# On the Daintree

## By Jamie Beitzel

The monsoonal trough hanging south of us over most of the past month has been great for getting out of the Daintree, and close in around Cape Kimberley the waters have been sheltered from the N' westerlies. I got to the main reefs twice



on fly and popper, casting charters and had fantastic results with a couple of returning Kiwi clients. We caught coral trout, red bass, stripeys and cod species while targeting Gt's. With a high tide in the middle of the day, drifting over the top of the reef saw us fishing areas I normally

wouldn't have gone to. It was a different scenario going to the reef without bait on board, but the end results from different sports fishing tactics was a refreshing change. For this type of fishing a large spinning outfit capable of holding 50-80lb braid is essential, and in some cases you need to do the drag up with a spanner, particularly where red bass are concerned. Inshore, the main species have been some nice sized fingermark, queenfish, and a few different trevally's mostly being golden. This time of year I also catch cale cale or black crested trevally which are a coastal and unique species that are very distinguishable by their large white gill rakers. I have caught quite a few of these on fly usually when chasing long tail tuna. These trevally are usually found after the tuna have busted up a bait ball on the surface, scavenging the leftovers so they respond to burley well.



On the Daintree, the saltwater has persisted up the first few reaches of the estuary, with the bait now easier to find. Mangrove jack, fingermark, some good javelin, giant and golden trevally, occasional barra and the ever present estuary cod have been the dominant species. If the river floods - which it will - try lure fishing at low tide around creeks and drains for barra and possibly tarpon. This is also a good time to fish the beaches along our coast. If there isn't a strong south easterly you can troll along the beaches by boat. I did this last floods, and had good



results with large shallow diving barra lures. Threadfin salmon are one of a few fish that love lurking in the warm murky waters along the coast after a flood.

If you are concerned about the gill netting in our waters, consider becoming a member of the Mossman Boat & Fishing Club. This is a great way to lobby DPI&F as a group rather than as an individual; as a large, united voice will have more political clout. A meeting with DPI & F will be held on March 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the clubhouse, Newell Beach. You don't need to be member to attend, for more info or would like to join the club contact Brian Roberts on 40983283.

Best of fishing luck over March, and have a happy Easter (and a dry one if you are camping on that long weekend). See you on the Daintree in March.



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