

For many people in the south east corner of Queensland 'in the know', the name Moreton Bay conjures up images of crystal clear water, white powdery sand and fishing as diverse as most reef areas can offer.

It is a shoal, mainly sheltered waterway embracing hundreds of sand islands in an area stretching from the Gold Coast in the south, up to Caloundra, almost 50 miles to the

north. Over the last three issues of F&B, Scott Shepherd, a keen fisherman, diver, trailerboat owner and life-long resident and family man from the northern suburbs of Brisbane, has taken readers on a tour through his beloved Bay. In this, the last feature in the series, Scott heads offshore, with a fantastic run-down on the complex reef structures offshore from Cape Moreton.

On surfacing from my dive on the *Marietta Dal*, a couple of miles north of Cape Moreton, I looked around to see only my boat in view, and thought it strange that we could be the only ones out here. After all, we're not the only divers in Brisbane, and surely not the only boat on the water today. Then it dawned on me. With so many wrecks, reefs and ledges to choose from, on a quiet day, it is unlikely that we would have been on

the same dive site as someone else.

It happens like that. Some days I have descended to a wreck with so many divers, that losing your dive buddy is a real possibility. The same can sometimes be said with some of the popular fishing spots. However, it doesn't happen as often, as there are really unlimited fishing areas to be enjoyed, as you will see.

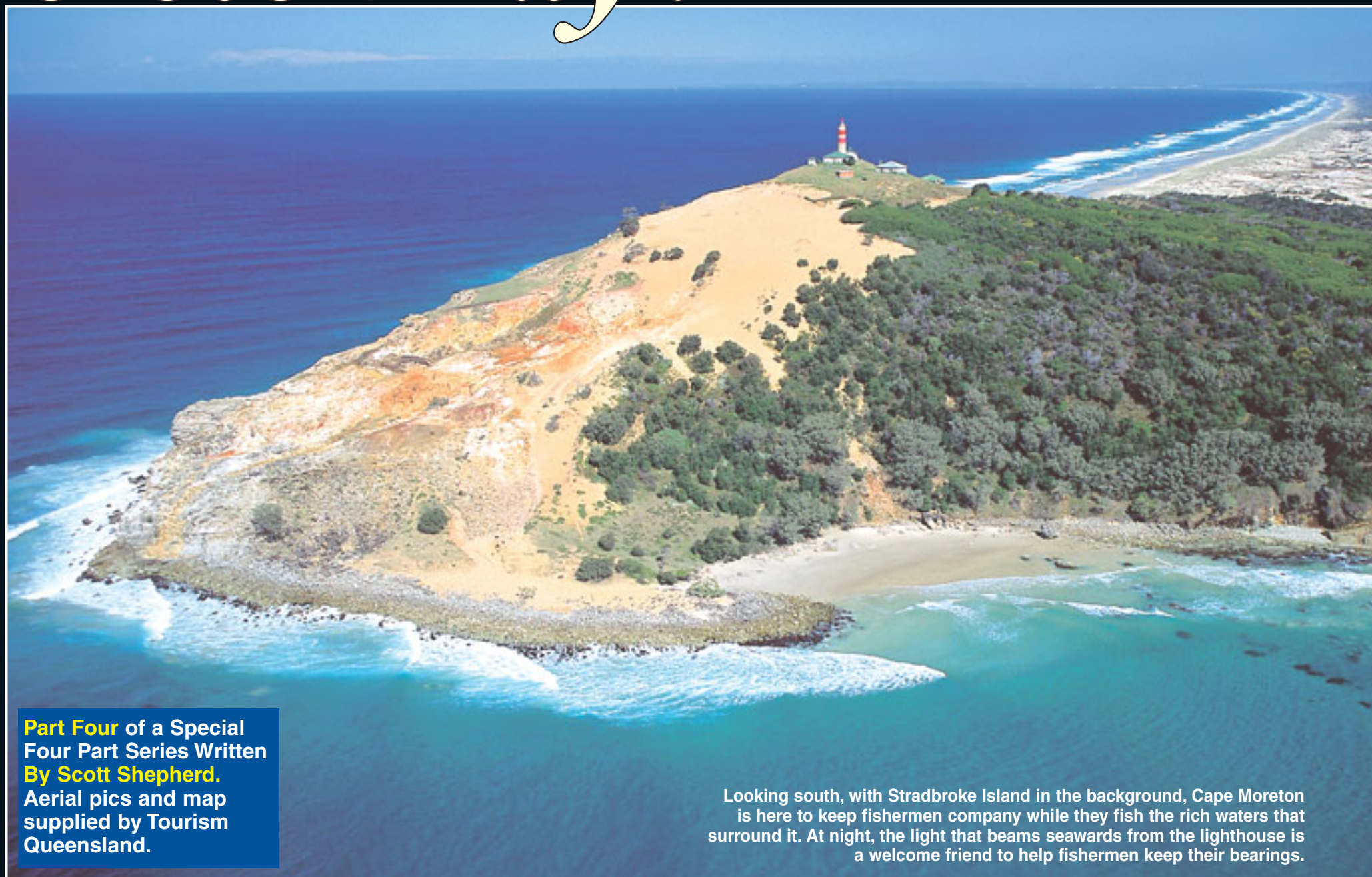
Fishing the Northern Section.

Way up on the northern fringes of the bay lies arguably the best kept fishing location. The Caloundra 12 mile as it is known, lies on the southern end of a patch of reef running for 13 miles from the Gneerings Reef off Mooloolaba. It covers an area of approximately 20

square miles and lies only 6 miles off Caloundra Heads. Depth here ranges from 35m to 45m, and the best part is that current does not affect this reef like other offshore reefs.

The home of undersize red emperor, as it is unofficially known, the Caloundra 12 Mile shelters more species of fish than most reefs on the east coast. Apart from cobia, yellowtail king, school, spotted and spanish mackerel, the bottom-bashing fishermen also get a feed. Red emperor, grass sweetlip, yellow sweetlip, squire and snapper, pearl perch, parrot, various other perch species, various cod species, mangrove jack and (very rarely) coral trout, all call this area home.

Magical Moreton Bay!



Part Four of a Special Four Part Series Written By **Scott Shepherd**. Aerial pics and map supplied by Tourism Queensland.

Looking south, with Stradbroke Island in the background, Cape Moreton is here to keep fishermen company while they fish the rich waters that surround it. At night, the light that beams seawards from the lighthouse is a welcome friend to help fishermen keep their bearings.