

BREAKSEA SPIT

An Amazing Fishing Adventure

Words & Pics by Damon Olsen

Presenting a special report on one of the most exciting fishing areas in Australia - the incredible shoal waters of the Breaksea Spit, north of Fraser Island. Here, the water drops from surface-breaking sand bars to 200-300m in half a mile. It's wild, rough and unpredictable - and that's what draws F&B Fishing Editor Damon Olsen back there, time after time.

It all started with an email from Ben informing me that he needed to take holidays sometime soon and that we had to go fishing somewhere in some type of boat. The next day I received a call from Craig telling me that he was sick of work and also wanted to go fishing - preferably somewhere with lots of big fish and great weather. I told Craig the big fish weren't a problem, but he had to find a politician to organise the weather!

After a few weeks' organisation of calendars and schedules, we pinned down a weekend in June, around which we planned to have 6 days fishing up at Fraser Island aboard our 7.2m Kevalcat 'Reelsport'. After recently fitting a pair of new Steyr diesel engines, we were keen to take advantage of the increased range of the boat and stay up the top of the island for a few days.

The crew for this trip consisted of fellow F&B tackle columnist, Aaron Concord, along with Craig McCulloch and Ben Thrower.

We loaded up my 4WD with more gear than I ever thought possible and headed out of Brisbane on a Wednesday afternoon bound for the Urangan boat harbor at Hervey Bay. Ben and Aaron were lucky to find a seat in the car amongst all the

'essential' equipment Aaron had packed. Craig had wisely left early to go and get ice and bait in Hervey Bay, avoiding the car trip from hell, and was asleep in the boat by the time the rest of us arrived.

Aaron had decided that he needed to bring the entire product range stocked by Springwood Marine, and managed to load enough gear on board to get the boat sitting about 8 inches lower than usual. Well, it wasn't all Aaron's fault, but we needed someone to blame!

Thursday morning dawned to reveal about 5 knots of easterly blowing across the bay as we rounded Rooney's Point - perfect. The bait grounds around the top of the island yielded a huge supply of livies, and after crossing the 4 mile gutter across the Breaksea Spit we decided the weather was good enough for a spot of heavy tackle marlin fishing. We all wanted to get connected to one of Fraser's famous big blues.

The 7 mile trip east from the bar was uneventful until we reached the 100 metre line to find perfect blue water and a temperature gauge reading 24.8 degrees, just right for a blue or two. The 24kg stand up rods were retrieved from the floating tackle store and lines were soon dispatched overboard with a variety of expensive plastic set to adorn the wash behind the Kevlcat.

We all settled in for what we hoped would be a fairly brief wait for our first shot for the day. After trolling past schools of feeding striped tuna in 250m we were sure the billfish wouldn't be far off. I headed north along the edge of the shelf after reaching the 100m line, and we had found most of the feeding tuna near the 200-400 metre drop-off. One of the main features east of Fraser is the dramatic drop-off which goes nearly straight down from 200m to 400m. And it is no surprise that this is where many billfish are caught. The striped and blue marlin seem to congregate on this deeper drop-off, whereas the black marlin have a tendency to swim along the more reefy 100m drop-off.

We continued heading north along the deeper drop-off and hadn't seen any tuna or oil slicks for about an hour when it finally happened. The Topgun Aussie Super Plunger behind the daisy chain/bird teaser on the short flat was nailed by a big blue. We all heard the

Facing Page: Damon displays the 9.9kg snapper taken east of the Breaksea Spit on a livie. It would have been a shame to let the sharks have this one. (Observe colour co-ordinated fashion statement - nice dax, Damon, an impressive commitment to finer fish fashion photography! - PW)

