

# GUTTER TALK

Fishing is rarely better anywhere in OZ than what the experts find in Hervey Bay, but for the layman, it is not quite that simple. Here, where size does matter, and so does colour - but nothing is more critical to success than local knowledge. Scott Shepherd and fishing mate Laraby, delve into a lifetime of experience unlocking the secrets of the famed Gutters of Hervey Bay, and share this know-how with F&B readers.

Story by Scott Shepherd. Photographs by Scott and Laraby

**G**reen Zones, Yellow Zones, go slow zones and size limits have been introduced to rain mass confusion on many fishermen and charter operators in the last few years. No one is safe from these 21st century rules as they seem to apply to most waterways between here and Timbuktu!!

Well, I know a place that seems to have escaped most of these. It's deep, blue, open and about the only law introduced that you might have trouble with nowadays, is the ever increasing, and ever smaller, Bag Limit.

Hervey Bay – located just south of the Tropic of Capricorn on the Queensland coast is very well known for its major attractions, namely the world heritage listed Fraser Island and the home of Whale watching tours. It has many other claims as well – like the home of diver whiting, school, spotty and

*The light on Breaksea Spit has been renewed, but readers are reminded this is potentially one of the most dangerous boating areas on the east coast and no place for the inexperienced. Out here, there is no where to hide . .*



spanish mackerel and Vick Hislop's Shark Show.

But there is one thing that it should be known for that only the local charter operators and a few of us die hard fishermen have known about, and that it's also the home of Big Reds and Big Trout. The list of fish species that inhabit these waters is almost endless but for quality table fish in the white flesh variety, you just can't go past those two species.

Hervey Bay itself is huge. If you plonk yourself smack-bang in the middle of it, you can barely see land in any direction – except for Hummock Hill in Bundaberg. Ahhh, Bundaberg – the home of Bert Hinkler, sugar cane, Sea Jays and Polar Bears. As far as Hervey Bay is concerned, this deservedly famous city, situated on the mighty Burnett River, is the North Western corner.

Looking like a funnel on the navigation charts,

Check this pair of beauties . . the red emperor on top is big even for Hervey Bay; ditto the coral trout below.

