

FISHING

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It's raining barra



Home base: The new 17m gameboat *Kekoa* on mothership duty anchored on a Cape York peninsula river.



Heading back: Kelly Fallon releasing her 105cm barra.



Big beauty: Eddie Shi, a regular marlin angler, with a 117cm barra caught on the Ducie River.



Double header: Barrie Mackay and Mick Lankester with barras.



Helping out: Sometime gameboat skipper Dean Beech lifts a barra into the boat for a client.



Jumbo specimen: Gavin New and a 103cm Archer River barra.

THE big wet earlier this year has meant a barramundi bonanza for fishing guides and their clients along the western side of Cape York Peninsula.

While the recent cold snap has slowed the barra bite in rivers such as the Archer and Wenlock, one Weipa-based guide has recorded some fantastic catches.

Luke Fallon said over a five-day charter in April and May his clients were catching more than 600 barra, with some giants among them.

Fallon is one of several guides who operates barra charters in between the light

and heavy tackle billfish season, which normally starts off Townsville in September.

This year Fallon used a new 17m gameboat *Kekoa* out of Weipa to act as a mothership for two custom-built barra tenders.

One of his deckies is wife Kelly, daughter of well-known gameboat skipper Jim Dalling. The pair married in February last year.

They spent 12 weeks aboard *Kekoa* fishing the Gulf of Carpentaria before the boat was taken back to Cairns to prepare for the marlin season.

Fallon said he fished pri-

marily in the Ducie and Wenlock rivers to the north of Weipa at Marpoon and the Archer River to the south at Aurukun.

"We had several weeks where we released well in excess of 500 barramundi to 117cm," Fallon said.

He said it had been an excellent barra season and his clients had caught and mostly released 300 to 600 barra on each of his five-day charters.

"We head up and down the west coast of the peninsula looking for barra in rivers like the Jackson, Love, Archer and Wenlock."



Catchy end to holiday

CURTIS Hay, a 12-year-old from Mt Low, a northern beach suburb of Townsville, had a good finish to the recent school holidays when he caught a 80cm long goldspot cod (below) and some doggie mackerel (above) during a trip with dad Barry to shoals in Halifax Bay off Townsville.



Caught a great fish?

Send a photo to hbligh@aapt.net.au. The best pictures could appear in next week's *The Sunday Mail*.

TODAY'S TIDES

Port Douglas: High 10.06am (2.01m) and 10.45pm (2.6m). Low 4.28am (0.93m) and 4.11pm (0.54m).

Cairns: High 10.10am (2.12m) and 10.52pm (2.73m). Low 4.27am (1m) and 4.16pm (0.61m).

Mourilyan Harbour: High 10.03am (2.16m) and 10.44pm (2.76m). Low 4.29am (1.08m) and 4pm (0.68m).

Lucinda (offshore): High 10.04am (2.42m) and 10.47pm (3.09m). Low 4.42am (1.13m) and 4.01pm (0.7m).

Townsville: High 10.04am (2.51m) and 10.42pm (3.225m). Low 4.54am (1.1m) and 3.52pm (0.73m).

Shute Harbour: High 11.58am (2.59m). Low 6.09am (0.75m) and 5.35pm (0.58m).

Mackay Outer Harbour: High 12.11pm (4.51m). Low 6.24am (0.86m) and 6.11pm (0.85m).

Karumba: High 9.13am (3.36m). Low 10.55pm (0.49m).

Next new moon July 31. Next full moon August 14.

SURF & BEACH

The swell is 1m southeasterly with bigger sets along the open beaches and about 0.75m in the bays on the northern side of headlands. It's a bit bigger on the Tweed and Byron coasts. The wind is forecast to be light to moderate south to southwesterly this morning, becoming southeasterly during the day. The water temperature is 19-20C and tides will be low about 3.30am and 3pm and high about 9.30am. Surfers should look for waves on points and beach breaks early on the making tide, the beach breaks around the top of the tide and then on the points again from before lunch through the afternoon as the wind swings southeasterly and the tide falls off. Rips and sweeps will be working along open stretches of beach and they will be enhanced on the afternoon ebb tide. The best and safest beaches for a swim will be Noosa, Mooloolaba, Burleigh, Kirra, Greenmount and Rainbow Bay.

BOATING

Seas in offshore waters will be choppy on a 1.5m to 2m southeasterly swell. Close inshore and on the coastal bars, the swell is 1m with bigger sets. Bars are workable with usual caution required when crossing one. On Moreton Bay, seas will be choppy in the open northern and eastern parts and the best boating conditions will be in the western bay with Pumicestone Passage, the southern bay from Macleay Island to the northern parts of Southport Broadwater and rivers and creeks.

COASTAL WEATHER

A high-pressure system east of Tasmania extends a firm ridge along the Queensland coast but will move eastwards across the Tasman Sea and weaken during the next couple of days. An upper trough which triggered light rain and showers over southeast Queensland yesterday will also move off the coast today and showers will decrease this afternoon. Today's forecast for offshore waters from Double Island Point to Point Danger and Moreton Bay is for morning showers decreasing with 10 to 15 knot southeasterly winds, reaching 15 to 20 knots at times in offshore waters. Early this morning, there will be lighter south to southwesterly winds close inshore and in the western parts of Moreton Bay.