

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Arnhemland Barramundi Nature Lodge Guide, Shaun Taylor, describes the sensational fishing at the Lodge in 2011.

After a fantastic 2011 wet season in the north, the predictions of great fishing have proved correct, with the barra biting in record numbers at the Lodge, and the condition of the fish being outstanding. Fat, fit and healthy barras have been keeping guests very busy.

We have been using a variety of techniques on the fish, and guests have been very interested in learning new fishing methods such as weedless soft plastic fishing, and jigging with bibless softies. Of course, it isn't just the barra on offer in the pristine Arnhemland river systems available to us at the Barra Lodge, with threadfin and blue salmon, mangrove jack, golden snapper (fingermark), black jewfish, saratoga, and even the odd archer fish and sooty grunter.

The often overlooked bluewater scene has been amazingly good as well. I would recommend to any guest at the Lodge to take the opportunity to sample the offshore fishing. The species available reads like a who's who of tropical sportfish: longtail tuna, Spanish mackerel, broad-barred macs, queenfish, GTs, golden trevally, cobia and giant herring to name a few. Some amazing popper sessions on queenies and longtail tuna have been highlights, with triple hook-ups being common. The visual aspect of this style of fishing is a memory sure to stay with guests, as they watch these high-speed, predatory sportfish hunt down their popper and smash it beside the boat...

AMAZING STUFF!

Then of course there are the bottom dwellers, and I have put many clients onto great sessions with soft plastics and jigs catching golden snapper, bluebone, tricky snapper, coral trout and various other delicious reef species which our talented Chef Marc cooks to perfection.

I love guiding at the Lodge. Every month we operated this year, as guides we've had several 100-plus barra boat days, and that sort of incredible and consistent fishing just doesn't happen anywhere else in Australia.



In a day to remember, Sean Hanley (left with 122cm barra) and John Madill (109cm barra) caught four barra over a metre out of a catch of 77 boated for the day!



Ben Douglas with a Lodge favourite: the Spanish mackerel.



Louise Cruse caught two big metreyes in two days!



John Butschies and Top Guide Jason Bettles with a massive GT.



Shaun Taylor delights in putting clients on to terrific fish on soft plastics.

March 2011: 15 anglers/3 days/500+ barra/ 500+ bluewater fish

April 2011: 3 anglers/5 hours/230 barra (new Lodge record for one boat/one day)

May 2011: 12 anglers/3 days/378 barra (heaps in the 80s & 90s)/100s of mixed bluewater species

June 2011: 15 anglers/3 days/5 boats/ 500+ barra/100s of lure-caught pelagics

July 2011: 2 anglers/3 days/1 boat/ 364 barra (including 196 in a day)/ 28 bluewater species

Aug 2011 (mid-year break but reopened last week of Aug): mixed groups/5 days/600+ barra/100s of bluewater reefies & speedsters

Sept 2011: 12 anglers/4 days/4 boats/ 734 barra

Oct 2011: 14 anglers/4 days/1,112 barra including 4 over a metre (122cm, 116cm, 109cm, 106cm)

Oct 2011: 11 metre-plus barra caught in two weeks

Nov 2011: 8 anglers/5 days/480 barra (including metre-plus)/eaten out of the boat on the bluewater

Dec 2011: 3 anglers/1 day/1 boat/412 barra (Lodge record broken again)

Dec 2011: Annual Fly Week/39 species/massive golden snapper/157 barra



Lodge Chef Marc Besnard about to prepare a banquet of fresh mud crabs.



ARNHEMLAND BARRAMUNDI NATURE LODGE

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Winner of three NT Brolga Awards For Tourism Excellence



Supplier of the Lodge's OceanMaster boats and E-TEC outboards