

MEDIA RELEASE

TOURISM PORT DOUGLAS DAINTREE CASTS SUSTAINABILITY NET

Port Douglas, 20th April, 2023 – Building on its credibility as one of Australia’s most recognised global eco-certified destinations, Port Douglas and Daintree is widening its net and tackling sustainable fishing both on the land and out at sea.

Tara Bennett, chief executive officer for Tourism Port Douglas Daintree, said industry was committed to striking the balance between commercial fisheries, the aquaculture sector, agritourism and charter fishing.

“We have shining lights who continue to set the bar high as exemplary role models to truly define what ‘Douglas’ our region is all about, and the list of businesses wanting to get on board continues to grow,” she said.

Established to unite the region’s operators in introducing and maintaining sustainable charter fishing practices, the Port Douglas & Daintree Sustainable Charter Fishing Group is one such example as it continues to gain momentum with 13 members now on its books.

The group is chaired by Nick Milford, owner/operator of East Coast Angling, which is the first charter fishing company to receive Eco Certification in Queensland. The group’s members all adhere to a code of conduct for charter fishing operation.

“Sustainable fishing tourism is still an emerging activity, and we are excited and humbled by the local fishing charter industry’s enthusiasm to continue to build on our efforts as a showcase region in best practice sustainability,” Ms Bennett added.

“We are already doing the good work, across all industries from local government to tourism and community, this next step will allow us to elevate our story and share with the world the importance of considering a sustainable destination when choosing where to holiday.”

For Group chair Nick Milford, undertaking the Eco Certification program with Ecotourism Australia was an easy choice.

“We want to lead by example and ensure there are plenty more fish in the sea...for the next generation,” he said.

Milford founded East Coast Angling in 2017. The company operates three boats out of Port Douglas, including the 80ft ‘mothership’ MV Savannah.

His impetus for completing certification are memories of fishing with his father in South Africa when he was a boy.

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“Dad used to say ‘I can remember when I was a kid there was fish everywhere’ when we went to his favourite spots.

“One of the things I wanted to do when I chose fishing as a career was reverse that trend – I wanted to improve the number of fish and quality of the fish stock and eco-certification as well as chairing the Port Douglas Sustainable Charter Fishing Group is all part of the plan,” he added.

Another business that shares the same ethos is Hook-A-Barra, a saltwater barramundi farm established 18 years ago.

For owner, Mark Hober, seeking eco-certification of his 49-hectare farm, which is positioned beside the Daintree River, was an easy decision.

“We are committed to safeguarding the future of barramundi farming and our mission has always been ‘better fish for a better world’.

“Rearing our Barramundi in free range conditions and replicating their natural environment in tightly monitored environmental conditions, ensures our fish not only feeds into our local supply chains from hotels to restaurants, but goes one step further by creating a high-quality nature-based experience for visitors.”

The region’s push to be recognised as a sustainable fishing destination is also supported by Douglas Shire Council, which is developing a recreational fishing trail in region with signage to inform locals and visitors of boat facilities, fish species, best practice information and fish care tips.

In 2019, Port Douglas and Daintree become the world’s first destination to be awarded an eco-certification and the first in Australia to receive the Ecotourism Australia’s ECO Destination Certification.

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High Res Images and Video: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/e59ysulvx67z8vo/AABMOS91izHGRwFlos_MXNcea?dl=0

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