

# ***CORAL SEA EXPEDITIONS***

## ***FISHING & DIVING***

**CAIRNS | PORT DOUGLAS | LIZARD ISLAND**

The remote Coral Sea reefs bordering the Great Barrier Reef are famous for their incredible fishing and world renowned diving. These destinations are only accessible by well equipped long-range vessels and are weather dependent. The most consistent fair weather conditions are between September & January. Our Coral Sea expedition trips are based on a minimum 7 day itinerary & also typically include popular GBR locations.



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## OSPREY REEF



Osprey Reef is a submerged atoll in the Coral Sea, northeast of Queensland, Australia. It is part of the Northwestern Group of the Coral Sea Islands. Osprey Reef is roughly oval in shape and covers around 195 square kilometres. Itineraries depart from Lizard island or Port Douglas and require a 75NM steam from the northern Ribbon reefs to reach the destination. Due to the open water crossing, weather conditions need to be forecasted to below 15knots over the expedition period.

**DIVING:** Osprey Reef diving is best known for BIG FISH! Up to 40 metre visibility, expect to encounter pelagics, sharks, manta rays and experience sheer walls with both soft and hard corals. Osprey reef is arguably one of the best diving locations in the world.

**FISHING:** Osprey reef is now a protected green zone, however nearby Shark ridge & Vema reef are favourable for deep water jigging and trolling for dogtooth tuna, blue and black marlin and other trophy-sized pelagic species.

## BOUGAINVILLE REEF



Bougainville Reef is a small reef in the Northern Coral Sea surrounded by some amazing dive sites. Only four kilometres in diameter, and offering no shelter in rough weather, Bougainville Reef is usually only visited on a stop-off between other reefs in this remote area.

**DIVING:** Wall diving is the name of the game at Bougainville Reef, with walls plunging into one kilometre offering exciting diving. Decorating these walls are spectacular corals – giant soft corals, red whip corals, wide gorgonian fans and black coral trees. Cruising these walls are large pelagic fish like barracuda, trevally, tuna and mackerel, and often following them are grey reef sharks, whitetip reef sharks and silvertip sharks. Many caves, gutters and ledges are also found at Bougainville Reef. There is also a shipwreck to investigate at Bougainville Reef, with the broken up remains of the MV Antonia Tarabocchia scattered in depths from 6 metres to 18 metres.

**FISHING:** Three quarters of Bougainville reef is now protected, however trolling the outer edges for pelagic species such as blue marlin, tuna, barracuda and other pelagic species can prove successful. Casting for GT's in permitted areas is also a popular option.

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## HOLMES REEF



Holmes Reef is the closest Coral Sea Reef ex. Port Douglas and one of the only coral sea reefs permitted for both fishing and diving activities. Its is located approximately 140NM south-east of Port Douglas (roughly 250KM) The reef is split into two sections, known as East Holmes and West Holmes, and both have large lagoons with safe anchorages.

**DIVING:** Walls and pinnacles are the big attraction at Holmes Reef, with both featuring great corals and marine life. Good visibility, typically from 20 to 40 metres provide exposure to large soft corals and gorgonians, and patrolling the blue are pelagic fish, turtles, eagle rays and plenty of reef sharks. Large swim-throughs and caves make this location a spectacular dive for all.

**FISHING:** Now the most favourable of coral sea destinations for fishing due to being one of the only reefs with full permitted access, Holmes is ideal for popper fishing for GT's, bluefin trevally, and reef species as well as jigging for dogtooth tuna and ironjaw – if you can get them past the sharks! The Cairns Seamount is 20NM away so Holmes reef itineraries generally cover both locations offering you a variety of fishing styles and targeted species.

## CAIRNS SEAMOUNT



The Cairns Seamount is a popular fishing destination as it rises in depth from 1000M+ to 30M providing a haven for bait and marine life. This concentrated spot is ideal for fishing but not suitable for diving. September through until January is an ideal time to visit the sea mount, however weather conditions need to be 15knots or less. Holmes Reef is the closest anchorage point to the sea mount.

**DIVING:** The seamount is an open water location with the top of the mount reaching 30M making this location unsuitable for diving. Not only is the depth an issue, there is a large presence of oceanic sharks and other marine life.

**FISHING:** The Cairns seamount can be action packed and a lot of fun for anglers. Doing 'passes' trolling over the mount, you can expect to catch large sized wahoo, yellowfin tuna, dogtooth tuna, mahi mahi, blue & black marlin and other pelagic species.