



Portfolio / Writing Sample

Blog article: Fishing in Port Moresby

Awaiting publication on Osprey Fishing PNG

What we've learned about fishing so far

Fishing in Port Moresby is...challenging. Tricky conditions with winds and swell, many uncharted reefs to watch out for and a considerable problem with overfishing in the close areas. Local knowledge is the best way to learn where to go as there is very little online content of use apart from tour operators advertising their own businesses.

We bought the Osprey just in time for the windy season, so haven't been able to get out as much as we can, and we still have a lot to learn, but after nearly 6 months on the water, we have still managed to garner a bit local knowledge that we want to share. Hopefully we can save a few of you the frustration we have had...

What species to target

Our main lesson is that fishing off Port Moresby is all about pelagic species (although one would think there should be great bottom fishing for mixed reef species, the sad reality is due to the unsustainable methods and overfishing done by the locals there simply are not that many reef fish to catch. Whereas, pelagic species such as tuna and mackerel are able to avoid this pressure by constantly moving through areas. We have also noticed that locals don't seem to target pelagic species as much as the bottom species. The majority of local subsistence fisherman simply cannot afford the right tackle to successfully target pelagic species. Instead they mainly use handlines and bottom bounce the reefs day in day out until they have caught all the fish before moving to the next reef. We have also observed nets being used at the edge of reefs and across inlets to catch everything that goes in or out.

Weather

The PNG windy season is hard work for offshore fishing. For 6 months, the wind averages between 14-25 knots on most days, making it rather unpleasant on a smaller vessel. The wind is pretty steadily South to South East, so it blows right into the harbour, making a journey out pretty ordinary in a small craft. And then on the way back in, you battle the current and the swell – swells above 2 metres are not uncommon during the windy season. Game fishing basically comes to a halt off Port Moresby, although some who have larger boats still go out. Despite that, we have managed to sneak in a few sessions both in the



harbour and out in the channel when conditions are right. If trying to get out at this time of year, you are best to try to get out early in the morning before the wind gets up – after 10-11am, you can rely on it being too strong most days to have much fun.

Or you can make it down the rivers! We have yet to explore this, but have plans to do so soon. We will update. But apparently, for 6 months of the year, this is the go. Get a trailer, 4wd car and get up to Galley Reach. Never alone though... always in a convoy! Safety first due to carjacking and local criminal elements.

Then the other half of the year is the wet season. Rainy, grey, miserable looking. But surprisingly warm, with the water returning to 28 degrees on average, and being on a boat providing a nice relief from the sweltering mugginess of Moresby. This is when the swell is beautifully flat and calm and the big fish come back. You can get out pretty much any time of the day (or night) in this season, after work sessions are definitely doable although you need to keep a close watch on any approaching storms as conditions can change rapidly.