



NOTHING FISHY ABOUT THESE FACTS!



Mangrove jack
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1 'Barramundi' is an Aboriginal word from the Rockhampton area that means "large-scaled river fish".

2 Tagged Spanish mackerel have been reported to swim over 700 nautical miles – that's more than 1,296 kilometres!

3 Mangrove jack have canine teeth at the front of the mouth, which are perfect for grabbing on to and holding their prey.

4 Red emperor are not a true emperor and are not related to other emperor fish species. They are actually a member of the tropical snapper family (like the mangrove jack and fingermark).

5 Dusky flathead are part of the Platycephalidae family, which includes 40 different species of flathead! These amazing fish can change their body colour to match the river or creek bed where they are hiding.

The fish of the Gladstone Region

Gladstone's estuaries, coastal, and offshore waters are full of fish that are both fun to catch and great to eat. These fish species are split into two groups – offshore and intertidal - based on their habitat.

For example, the coastal area from The Narrows to Hummock Hill Island is made up of intertidal estuary zones where you could catch any of the following species:

- Barramundi
- Bream
- King threadfin salmon
- Blue threadfin (Blue salmon)
- Mullet
- Grunter
- Flathead
- Mangrove jack
- Black jewfish
- Gold spot cod.

But if you were seaward of Curtis Island and Facing Island you are more likely to hook an offshore species like a Spanish mackerel or red emperor. Offshore fish species are also divided into two groups: **pelagic** fish that live most of their lives at the top of the water column, and **demersal** fish that spend life on the bottom of the reef.

Examples of pelagic fish local to Gladstone include:

- Spanish mackerel
- Cobia
- Tuna.

Demersal fish species include:

- Red emperor
- Grass emperor
- Spangled emperor
- Coral trout
- Fingermark
- Cod.



Barramundi
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Spanish mackerel
© Graham Cumming / Dreamfish.com.au



Flathead
© Picture Partners / Dreamfish.com.au



Red emperor
© A & B Photos / Dreamfish.com.au

Fish

Fact Sheet



Risks to these species

Fish are sensitive to environmental change, and face similar challenges.

- Overfishing can hurt future populations of these species.
- Some fish (like barramundi) are very vulnerable to netting as they move in and out of small creeks and rivers. Fishing nets that are not looked after or discarded properly can catch and kill lots of barramundi by accident.
- Pollution from humans can kill fish or make them too sick to breed.

We cod do batter...

Top tips

- Handle fish that are going to be released gently to improve their chances of survival.
- Know your bag limits and stick to them!
- Report illegal fishing to the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol.
- Remember that all drains lead to the ocean – always dispose of your rubbish in a bin and never pour chemicals down a drain.

The famous five of the Gladstone region

Barramundi

- One female barramundi can produce up to 32 million eggs – more than 500 times the number of people who live in the Gladstone area!
- You can tell the age of a Barramundi by counting the rings on their ear bones (called otoliths). These are 'growth rings' like those of a tree.
- The eyes of the barramundi shine ruby-red in torchlight.
- It appears that barramundi prefer to spawn (or lay eggs) on the nights following full or new moons and when the water temperature is between 27°C and 33°C. The prime spawning season is October to January.

Spanish mackerel

- Spanish mackerel can live for more than 20 years!
- Large females can produce more than 1 million eggs each spawning season, as each female usually spawns a number of times each season, every few days.
- Spanish mackerel are ferocious predators and will eat smaller fish like anchovies, herring, and sardines.
- Male Spanish mackerel are smaller than females of the same age.

Dusky flathead

- In Queensland, you can only keep dusky flathead that are between 40cm and 75cm in length, otherwise they've got to go back!
- These amazing fish are masters of camouflage and can change their body colour to match the river or creek bed where they are hiding.
- Be careful of their dorsal spines. They can be covered in bacteria and will cause a LOT of pain if they stab you!

Mangrove jack

- These fish are ferocious fighters when hooked and can grow up to 120cm in length.
- Bag and size limits apply in Queensland. Any mangrove jack you catch that is smaller than 35cm has to be released, and you can only have 5 of these fish at one time.
- Mangrove jack love to dart out from snags to catch their prey. Try to catch one around submerged logs and rocks, bridge pylons, and jetties.
- Mangrove jack can be found in nearly all Queensland estuary, coastal, and reef waters – they're even found in reef waters as deep as 100 metres!

Red emperor

- The red emperor is an imposter! This fish actually belongs to the tropical snapper family, not with the other emperor species.
- Bag and size limits apply for the red emperor: minimum size 55 cm, bag limit of 5, and each red emperor counts towards the total bag limit of 20 'Coral Reef Fin Fish'.
- The best time and place to catch this fine-eating fish is on a reef and at night when they are most active.



Find out more

Queensland Fisheries
www.daff.qld.gov.au/fisheries



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