

## Praslin-Seychelles Fishing Newsletter - Edition 05/2013

Hello all!

The Southeast came early this year and as May is off-season with Martin going to Europe, Christian taking his annual 'leave' etc. there were few charter trips to report on. Still that handful of outings produced some good results and I also used the somewhat calmer days for some experiments (with mixed results ...).

Right on May 1st I grabbed a spinning rod and a few small Poppers. After 5 hours of working the structures between Praslin and La Digue the result was: nil! Well, except once something brownish following my lure that had size and shape of a suitcase. Also other lures like Shads and at some point even a trolled Halco did not help my case. That was a bit disappointing, especially with a view to the fact that most of the spots had plenty of bait. Learned from Robin later that for a while on his dives there he had hardly seen any larger fish. Pierre mentioned rumours that people still spearfish there even as this is illegal these days.

Anyways, upon return I received a phone call: if I could come to the jetty with my cam. Charly had had a good catch at the Drop. So I rushed and found a nice Black Marlin of about 150kg or so plus 2 Sailsfish and a big Barracuda. Excellent!



See more in this month's (short) video by clicking the link:

<http://youtu.be/zO75M8N6xhU>

Unfortunately it was getting dark already so the images did not come perfect. On Charly I will have to keep an eye. He does not get many fishing charters which I find sad as he has a lot of experience and seems to return pretty much always with some kind of Billfish.

Also Carlos working for Bedier & Sons had a charter that same day, ending up with another Sail, a Barracuda and some big Bonitos.

On the 4th it was very calm so I went to try some rocks just north of Praslin with my little Poppers. More action this time: on only the third cast the little thing was taken, the fish took line going right down - gone! Looked like a GT of maybe 10 to 15kg and that 30lb Braid simply cuts as soon as it touches the rocks. So after re-rigging I closed the reel drag to its full 11kg (according to Shimano) in an attempt to give the next one not an inch. Right on the next cast I got another attack but the fish did not hook up. Maybe better that way as this one seemed substantially bigger and I doubt the tackle would have withstood that thing. About another half hour later I was somewhat rewarded. A Bluefin Trevally of app. 6kg was just right for my setup, could only circle under the boat and was landed after a while. Finally! Before releasing it I took some pictures with my little GoPro cam but when

moving the boat I switched it off to save on battery. The thing somehow froze, I had to take the battery out, that file was erased and so I have no image of my first proper fish on Popper. This is why I can only provide a pic of me holding on to that first one just seconds before it went lost. Sucks.



At least things seemed somewhat on track. Next thing back home was to modify the tackle, putting 80lb braid on that reel and attaching it to a 7.5ft stiff 20lb trolling rod. Still far from perfect but definitely more powerful and also allowing for larger lures.

Before trying that out it was a for a bit of trolling two days later, so on the 6th, with Carlos & Ted. We decided for the area around Sisters once more as the day before 'Lady Caroline' (the new boat of hotel l'Archipel) only bagged a Yellowfin Tuna and some Bonitos in the North.

The Southeast had already picked up and with some rain conditions were anything but pleasant. Also the fish did not come easy for the handful of boats fishing that day. Mervin was on the northern spots and ended up with a Wahoo. Bertrand was fed up with trolling after a while and switched to Bottom Fishing. That turned out to be a good idea producing 12 Yellowspotted Trevallies and a number of Snappers. In 'our' area JD of 'One Love' had some Dorados and Wahoos before his guests got seasick and he had to return early. Christian had the same plus a Yellowfin Tuna.

We also had to work hard to first get a Dorado, then a small Wahoo and a little later another Dorado. These all came not far off the FAD but venturing further out produced nothing more. On the way back, maybe half a mile of Sisters the boys had already dozed off and I skipped rather bored when two lines went same time. Three dumbfounded faces turning to two Sailfish dancing behind the boat - jackpot! Was a bit of a mess in the beginning. Carlos' came easy though as it had inhaled the Ilander charged with a stripbait deep hooking itself in the gills. Mine had taken a Halco and gave me a hell of a fight (actually the toughest I ever encountered). That fish went deep all the time and if I had not seen it before I would never thought it was a Sail. 4 times the lads had the leader and every time they had to let go because that beast went straight down again, darting around under the boat. The problem was that the back treble was sitting in its eye and the forward one further back on the fish's head. So all my pulling just created downforce for it without using its energy. Eventually we were able to gaff it.



I was a bit unhappy though that we had to take both Sails as I prefer to release them. Also the GoPro had switched off a little while before. As we were about to stop fishing and with all that rain and spray I had not recharged it. Thus instead of the dancing pair I only can provide some images of the fish in the boat captured with the normal cam. Check the video for that if you like.

On the 8th, in conditions anything but suitable, I tried popping in the La Digue Channel and off Round Island once more. Again the result was meager ending up with nothing but a single Garfish. Guess these spots I can write off for the time being.

That afternoon I visited Pierre up in Anse Boudin. Some point his grandson came with a Yellowfin Tuna and some Bonitos which Pierre's brother had caught sailing over from Mahe. On top they had released a Sailfish. Also I learned that JD a few days before had boated a decent 29kg Wahoo.

Then the Southeast really started to set in, stopping all activities but the little Bottom Fishing within the protection of the peninsula between Anse Matelot and Anse La Blague. That produced the usual assortment of different Snappers & Groupers as well as some cut offs.



The 17th happened to be very calm so I went for the rocks in the north once more with the upgraded popping tackle. No activity this time though. Neither there nor on another structure about a mile south nor on a further out bank. There I trolled a Halco and small surface lure for a while to get to know the area. That produced two small Barracuda and the tiniest Rainbow Runner I've ever seen.



One of the Barracudas had been bleeding so in a bit of Bottom Fishing it was exchanged for 2 Groupers and a small Yellowspotted Trevally.



The next 5 days were not fishable but for the 22nd a drop in the wind was forecast. So I decided to try popping around Sister Islands. Upon arrival I had to realize that it was anything but calm. In fact only in the channel and at the northern tip it was possible to fish. At that latter place just off the steep cliff I was pleased with some action. First a Shark followed my popper but turned away eventually a few meters from the boat. I was not unhappy at all because that beast was bigger than me. Would have ended up in a pretty long release if I had gotten that far. Most probably it would have simply cut the mono leader, though. The pursuit was captured by the GoPro nicely, so I put in the video clip. Am not sure how much one will be able to see after the upload. A few casts later a really nice Bluefin Trevally came darting out of the depth, got the lure and was gone next moment. It had only hooked up on one shank of the back treble and just pulled it straight. Cool was to see it coming through the polarized

glasses. Unfortunately the cam was not able to get that but at least I can provide a pic of the impact. Needless to say that I would have preferred to present the fish ...



For the next day the wind was forecast to rather weakly blow from the North. Seemed a perfect opportunity to try a few rocks about 2 miles south of Praslin. The whole thing became quite an adventure as the wind was stronger than expected. The surface turbulence meeting the old swell from the south created sort of a huge whirlpool around the structures with odd currents and big waves crashing over the rocks. Not knowing the area and possible pinnacles under the surface I did not dare to get really close. The bigger northern rock produced nothing but on the other about a 1/4 mile further out I got a strike and miss. Could not see the fish, thus no idea of its size but the swirl it left behind was the biggest one so far. Another hour or so spent at Roche Bouquet and Round Island brought no activity at all. On the way home I witnessed something odd: a school size Yellowfin Tuna threw a small fish up in the air 5 or 6 times like a cat does with a mouse. Stopped and casted but no interest, it just passed under the boat.

A few hundred meters further entering Cote d'Or bay birds were fishing. Also I spotted two tailfins that looked like Tuna. While slowing down the boat to cast a small spoon at them on light tackle I saw a shadow about 15m away: big as a man, but bulkier and black as the devil's grandmother. Grabbed the popping rod and casted at it. Next thing I felt a knock that nearly pulled me of my feet. Thought 'this will be interesting' and it was over: again it had just gotten one shank of a treble hook and pulled it straight. No clue what this was but would give quite something to know. By the way, of those Tuna I did not get one - just many knocks of smaller Garfish, adding to my frustration.

3 days later I figured that those 'Tuna' were something completely different while fishing Bottom in the area. Saw plenty of those tailfins, again cast all sorts of lures without any effect. Suddenly these fish were all around me, dozens of them. All Milkfish, and fairly big. As these are not predators but feed on algae I will need a plan to catch one some point as they are said to be excellent fighters. On that little trip I also learned by using wire trace that the culprits for my frequent cut offs are not Sharks as suspected, but small Pickhandle Barracudas. Interesting: the Groupers do not mind the wire at all. While bustling about a Queenfish came to stay with the boat, always checking when I brought up my rig. But it would not take a bite. Finally I free-lined just a piece of bait and it did not take longer than a few seconds to get it on.



That day the Southeast had already returned at full strength. The two days before had been somewhat alright for trolling. But Friday I nursed my sore arms and shoulders from the two days of popping and Saturday was reserved for football. Local team Cote d'Or played an African Champions League game against a club from Madagascar. Pretty much everyone was there, so also nearly all the skippers. Perfect opportunity to get the latest news. Edwin had caught an nice 21kg Yellowfin Tuna. Christian went to the Drop with friends once more for an overnight trip. Did not go too well to say the least. Trolling was very calm and as his echosounder packed up also their jigging and fishing bottom was hampered. Mervin caught 2 Groupers of more than 20kg and 2 Doggies around 25kg jigging out there. He said that the pelagic fish are inside as on the troll he got little out there, finding Dorados and Wahoos on the way back. On top they lost a small Marlin (app. 60kg) off Marianne Island.

Mervin said the big black thing I lost on the Popper could well have been a Marlin as he saw some there over time. Am not sure as I think I should have recognized such. But one never knows. Have also seen a Whale Shark there 2 years ago. At times all sorts of stuff seems to appear in that area.

Only ones fishing that day seem to have been Andre & family. Good decision as they bagged plenty Dorados, Tunas, really big Bonitos and a Sailfish on top.



Ever since the wind has not dropped again and is blowing steadily at 15 to 20kn - complete shutdown. I reckon that for the months to come there will be only a few opportunities to go trolling in rather rough conditions. These should offer a good fishing for the Sailies, though. Especially when considering how many are yet around even as the peak time is still to come. Pity on the other side as there will probably be no chance to pursue the popping as

this really infected me. Hard work in the blazing sun and most of the time nothing happens. But if it does the adrenaline kick makes it really seductive. Well, at least the first tryouts unveiled a few spots that seem worth of digging deeper. Just will have to wait now til October/November when the seas will be calm again. So enough time to exchange all these treble hooks for stronger singles ..

No more from Praslin for this month. This edition became more of a personal try & error diary than the usual newsletter. Hope you don't mind and find it still better than getting no news at all.

No detailed news from Mahe this time either as I could not get hold of Faizal. As they were dealing with the same weather and touristic situation I guess it was comparably calm also. Heard through other channels that around Mahe also plenty Sailfish are abundant. If anything really special had happened for sure we would have heard about it.

Last but not least: enclosed you find the *Bisbee's Marlin Magazine* report on Seychelles' fishing already mentioned in the last edition. Hope you will enjoy it as much as I did.

Tight Lines and best regards from Praslin,

Daniel