

Hello all!

As this is not only the first edition of 2013 but also the first anniversary of this little format I had intended to stuff it with many and spectacular catches. But somehow things would not really go that way. Somewhat due to weather issues but this time also because the fish were not willing to accept their part as usual.

The first few days of the new year we still had to deal with the effects of the cyclone that had moved through south of us and eventually hammered Reunion badly. By the 4th it calmed down quickly and things went into a promising start. Very much for the boats fishing out of Mahe as they were able to pick up a good handful of Marlin at the Drop Off in these days. But also here: Mervin got one at the Eastern Drop right away. And the day after Bedier's clients had a memorable day with a Marlin too, and 2 Sailfish as well as 2 big Yellowfin Tunas. Meanwhile Christian had a 'Half Day', thus being limited to stay close to the islands and ending up with a Wahoo. That was the first sign of what should become a trend.

Sunday the 6th was a all sunny and nearly flat calm day. Not too promising for our first outing of the year. We took Robin's nephew Graeme from England who was here for holidays and has not fished since his last visit to Seychelles some 12 years ago. As we also fished into the outgoing tide and the first 3 hours produced nothing but a few Bonitos I got already worried that this might become a first time blank. But some point we were able to pick up a Yellowfin Tuna and a little later another one. As we later found some Dorados and got three of those it was not such a bad day. And Graeme also had his successful go.



The next day Martin and Mervin each had a charter. And it went very similar for both: a Wahoo each on the troll was all, and they resorted to some bottom fishing. And another 2 days later, so on the 9th, martin had some sort of deja vu: again just one Wahoo trolling. Three nice Empereor Snappers among some other fish served as compensation, though. Another boat, 'Trinity' had to make do with just some Bonitos that day.

Thursday, the 10th Christian fished the Drop once more. With a Barracuda, a large Dorado and 4 Yellowfin Tunas it was much better out there again.





Even as Greg and his guest on another 'Half Day' inside were able to harvest 2 Tunas and a Dorado these first catches of the new year already were a clear indication that the trolling activity had moved towards the Drop Off and away from the islands.

More evidence? On the 13th Robin & I went again, this time joined by my holidaying German friend Jörg who (quite incredibly ...) has never fished in his life before. I doubt though that this experience really infected him. For a long 4 hours we did not get anything at all. Not even Bonitos! But eventually we got a doublestrike and landed a school size Yellowfin Tuna. The other fish produced a run of well 200m and then was off. Must have been either substantially bigger or just foulhooked which is what I suspect as we do not get the big Tuna so far inside too often. And somewhat later Jörg could test himself successfully on a quite presentable Dorado.





This was his very first fish but not the last one as also the Bonitos finally became willing to eat. And right at the end passing an underwater rock north of the Sisters again two lines went. Jörg managed to get his Dogtooth Tuna of about 5kg but the other one unfortunately came off close to the boat.



So this also was not a day for the history books. But it could have gone a lot worse. Two other boats ended up with nothing but Bonitos that day and the next one. On the 16th I saw the new boat 'Lady Caroline' from hotel l'Archipel returning and went over to take a photo of that trip's catch that also fitted the general picture.



Meanwhile fishing at the Drop continued to be much better. Christian recorded a large Barracuda, 2 feasty Yellowfin Tunas and a Sailfish. Charlie also got one of those out there, and so did Martin's crew on the smaller boat along with 2 Wahoos.

In the meantime there was some activity by the spin- and flyfishermen also. Lucas from Austria had contacted me through the forum and also received some information when we met here. He fished with Greg from the boat and also on his own from shore a few times. As he came out of all that with a tally of the obviously unavoidable Garfish, Tuna, Barracuda, Parrotfish, Green Job and different Trevallies he was happy. The special fish for him was eventually a really nice Yellowspotted Trevally that he caught from shore.



Greg had 2 flyfishing guidings. Both were successful with numerous Garfish, Snappers and other stuff. Among that was a nice Doublespotted Queenfish and a Trumpetfish.





The 3rd annual 'Marlin Slam Tournament' held from Mahe came up on the 19th. Was supposed to go with Martin and his crew for some filming but unfortunately a boat problem could not be fixed in time. Went anyways with friends Barbara & Jörg who flew home that day to show them a bit of Mahe and at least be there with the camera for the weigh in. Just click on the following link to watch the clip:

<http://youtu.be/UQuxO9zvdRg>

19 boats participated and for this tournament it is all and only about the heaviest Marlin. Altogether 3 of these have been caught. A Strikey of 63kg, a Blue of 88kg and a Black of 109kg. This fish subsequently secured the SR 250,000 prize money for the winning team 'Special K' - congratulations!



As many of the boats without a Marlin did not come to the scales I am not fully informed about the other catches. As I suppose that mostly large lures were trolled I would guess that not too many fish were caught. Still Sailfish, Dogtooth Tuna as well as some Dorados and Wahoos were seen.

In the evening I quickly returned to Praslin and the next day went out with Carlos & Ted once more. We decided to fish the northern area this time as there had been the most activity recently. Still on the way to the first spot a Wahoo attacked one of my favourite lures twice, taking it well apart but not hooking up - very annoying! A little later another one did 'better' and so at least the doom of blanking was off the table early.



That turned out to be very fortunate as for another long 6 hours or so nothing aside from a few Bonitos happened. Only just before we wanted to call it a day we got another strike on a crying neon pink lure that I never had much confidence in and was presented just out of despair. A Sailfish jumped and that way got rid of it despite the double hooks. That at least gave us a bit of adrenaline but obviously expectations for that day had been a lot higher. Still it was good we went as then the weather turned ugly. Within a few days we received 75% of the rainfall for the whole rainy season which statistically lasts from about mid December til mid February. Or to put it in other words: everything was flooded. Even my place twice ... Must have been some compensation for the unusually sunny and dry weeks we had before.

When not mopping I investigated a bit amongst the skippers here. It seems to be a quite common phenomenon that around new years the trolling activity moves out to the Drop for a while. The same was experienced around Mahe also. Some say it is due to climbing water temperatures, others point to the shift of the current towards the east. The latter actually has happened. If the water is really warmer now I don't know. Haven't been for a swim for quite a while.

In this kind of weather one would not even put the dogs out. Even lesser drag some pitiful tourists out at sea. On top of all that on the 25th TV broadcast a kind of preliminary cyclone warning. Some of the worst weather for years was to be expected I was told. Luckily they took it back the next day and most of the mess moved through somewhat south of us. Still Mahe suffered some bad flooding and landslides. But at least the wind stayed below 20kn except for some rain cells. For sure no conditions to go fishing. Only Martin gave it a try on the large and just repaired 'Venture' as his waiting clients had been pushing him. He said it was a day to forget: Just one Wahoo and a hell's ride through the slamming rain that forced him to wear some sort of goggles.

That cyclone now moves southeast and according to the animated wind chart plans to become huge. Really no need for something like that here. The share we had gave enough worries for the boats and all the rest of it. But for the last two days the conditions have been bettering and so there is hope we can fish again soon. Maybe with some cool catches as this one, the foto just came in time (Thx, Malcolm!):





Whatever is going to happen, I will let you know at the end of the month.

So long, Tight Lines and best regards from Praslin

Daniel