

Praslin-Seychelles Fishing Newsletter - Edition 12/2012

Hello all!

It is New Years Eve, the wind is howling, big waves crash onto the cliffs beneath my cottage, and I am sitting here fulfilling my chronicler's plights to get this year's final edition out to you in time. Wanted to have this finished during the day so I could party a little bit tonight - as all of you will hopefully do! But sometimes things go the other way: The weather forecast had been bad for New Years for a couple of days already. But as the 2 other boat owners here in 'my' corner left their boats and the wind was blowing somewhat seawards so did I. That was not wise as last night the wind got ever stronger and shifted to a more northerly direction blowing straight into here. Also the forecast went from bad to worse - a cyclon is moving through south of us. Hardly slept, watched my little 'Angel' rocking like a rodeo bull, and just hoped that my mooring would not collapse. In the morning I saw that one of the other boats had already gone down. And just when taking the foto below I saw the other's mooring rope break. Sounded alarm, and with Robin's help we were able to grab it just a meter from the rocks and pull it away. Quite a task dragging a 9m boat in that surf and wind. It was obvious that my boat could not stay and taking it to Baie St. Anne in this conditions also was not really fun. Eventually we safely made it, but now I have to catch up.



Anyways, this will be a rather short edition as during the first half of last month there were nearly no activities. Simply due to the fact that this time traditionally is off season and it only starts to fill up again before the holidays. The skippers know that and subsequently most of them take time off or look after their boats. Same thing for myself as my father was here and he is not into fishing at all (I believe something must be wrong with him).

On the 2nd Christian had a small charter of about 3h fishing within some island hopping. Besides Bonitos they caught a quite decent Sailfish of some 30+kg. Two days later it was pretty much the same. Just that the Saili came off and they were somewhat compensated by a Wahoo.

After that I did not get aware of anything on the fishing side until the 13th. That day I grabbed two rods to quickly get two Bonitos for that night's starter with invited guests. Needless to say that under such 'pressure' the fish were letting me down. Nothing at all on the usually dead safe spot just off Curieuse. Buggered off after a while to check in the La Digue Channel as second best option. Had just dropped the tiny squid skirts again and looked for birds as both lines went same time. These clearly were no Bonitos. Alone on the ever turning boat it was a nice bit of slapstick but eventually all two of these not even so small Yellowfin Tuna got to know the insides of my fishbox. Had not expected these so far in but had no complains: Carpaccio & reputation secured.



With my Old Man just gone something needed to be done about my withdrawal syndrome. So on the 16th once more Robin & I went, ending up with 2 Yellowfin Tunas and a quite nice Wahoo. One more we lost right at the boat and most probably another of those in play. Also accounting for a very hefty strike that did not result in a hookup this was not a too fantastic day but it served the purpose.



That same day Andre had a charter, also returning with Tunas & Wahoos.

That week people started to go out again. On the 18th Greg had 2 'Half Days'. The wind had dropped close to nothing and so the morning's trolling was somewhat slow. They only hooked a single Yellowfin Tuna and that one was munched away by a Marlin! Was told that the guests got that on video but unfortunately I have not received it yet. In the afternoon they caught a nice sized Trevally popping.

The following day Christian had a charter. At still no wind trolling was slow again with only one Wahoo. But as conditions for jigging were right they were rewarded by a number of Green Job and a decent Doggie. So flexibility paid off.

Then the wind came back and fishing results picked up right away. Charlie Kong had a booking and ended up with two Sails. On the 22nd Christian went to the Drop once more for an all jigging trip. Next to plenty Amberjacks,

Green Job and other stuff the fish of the day was for sure a 35kg Doggie. They had to troll some two hours northwards along the drop to get a proper angle for cruising home. In that time the briefly had a Marlin on and two Sails window shopping. And Martin went for some popping getting two GTs of 5-7kg.

The day after I did another trip; this time with Carlos & Ted who used to work for Pierre. We started at the more southern spots but did not get anything except a few Bonitos. So we set course north and in the middle of nowhere caught a nice Barracuda of around 12-13kg.



In the new area the first two spots produced nothing at all until we found some activity on the most northern place. Boated 4 Yellowfin Tuna there eventually and on the way back already had a knock by a nicely visible Sail. Not much reason to complain about the miss though as just before picking up the lines the Halco was taken once more. 'Ok, at least another tuna.' - but it turned out to be a Sail. As it did not manage to get rid of the of the Halco (as they usually do ...) we got it to the boat. The release was a bit tricky due to the two dangling treble hooks. But eventually all went well for everyone involved. Watch that bit as this month's rather short video if you like by just clicking the following link:

<http://youtu.be/IIX-2xaHs68>

Watching closely one can see that this was actually a doublestrike. Also the other Halco was attacked, but that fish came off right away. Would really like to know if that was another Sailfish.



That same day Christian went to the drop for jigging once more. That produced numerous Amberjacks and Doggies of up to 15kg. Here is a pic of that day's catch.



On the 26th he has another 'Half Day' and caught a Kingfish and a for so far inside quite decent Yellowfin Tuna. And also that day 'One Love' got 2 Sails. And Christian went to Mahe for another outing with his jigging fanatic guests. That also was very productive with again Amberjacks, Doggies, Groupers and more.

On the 28th Martin fished the drop finding a school of larger Yellowfin Tuna, picking up three up to 39kg. And the day after Mervin found that bunch again. He tallied 9 with the biggest one at 55kg!

But it still goes bigger here. I learned that 'Special K', winners of last month's tournament, caught a really nice

one out on African Banks. The fish was not weighed but estimated at 80-90kg! Well, take a look and make your own guess.



Since then as said the weather killed any ambitions to go fishing once more. No one with a bit of reason would even consider to go out in these conditions. Today everyone who had not done that before was just busy taking the boats to safety. This is why also the usual last minute fotos did not come in. Quite understandably, so let us close the book for 2012.

Looking back I think this was a really good fishing year. Fantastic that all species - also Sails & Marlin - were abundant all year round. And this even as the purse seiner's activities (unfortunately) have somewhat picked up again during recent months. But so far we have not seen any negative effects from that and I hope very much things will stay as they are.

Finally a brief glance at my personal statistics for transparency reasons. Not yet happy I am with my handful of tries with spinning tackle. But these were only very few serious attempts. Furthermore just at visible rocks due to lack of an echosounder for most of the time. With the new machine just arrived I hope for better results to come. Also only then jigging and different bottom techniques will make sense to try.

For trolling the outcome is as follows: All of the 8 trips produced at least one 'real' fish (that is anything else than Bonitos). The first two outings with just a tuna each I would consider testing. Pretty much this they actually were, as to see how the boat, rodholder setups and other installations etc. work.

Accordingly at 6 trips averaging just under 6 hours of fishing these were the catches:

Barracuda: 4
Dorado: 6
Garfish: 2
Yellowfin Tuna: 10
Green Job: 1
GT: 1
Rainbow Runner: 2
Sail: 2
Wahoo: 4
Bonitos: uncounted

So 32 proper fish caught in app. 35 hours. Add to that some fish lost in play and a number of missed strikes that clearly were not Bonitos. And not to forget the Marlin we had on briefly.

Compared to the professional skippers who grew up here and have fished these waters regularly for years of course there is lots of upward potential. But for a beginner experimenting on his first own little boat, without outriggers and proper navigation for most of the time, I think this not too bad. What I want to say is: I am damn

glad that I can fish these waters as they obviously allow even a greenhorn to consistently catch reasonable fish. And this is more than I found at any other destination of the quite many I have fished. So I hope for an at least as successful 2013. For me and for all of you - wherever you will drop your lines!

Happy New Year, Tight Lines and best regards from Praslin

Daniel