

Praslin-Seychelles Fishing Newsletter - Edition 10/2012

Hello all!

Firstly let me apologize for the day's delay of this edition. Had its reasons, though: the La Digue Tournament that of course should be covered was only last weekend. Then Precy asked me if I would come and video on the 31st - the day normally dedicated to the newsletter - as he had a first charter for his recently relaunched boat 'Rainbow'. Also this month's video gave me a bit of a headache as the material stems from different sources and occasions. So it is a bit of a collage. And on top of all that the upload was a real pain in the a...rm: Some containership dropped its anchor on the Tanzanian end of our fibre optic cable and til repair is done we will be reduced to some really slow emergency connection.

Right to the start of October we finally reached the transition period and the Southeast wind that had been steadily blowing for months finally ceased. Instead we got it coming from all directions. Sometimes harder, sometimes slow, and on some days none at all. Blue skies on one day, grey and lots of rain the next. Not unwelcome though after the long drought. Unless you wanted to go fishing on such day ...

In general fishing was possible much more often these days. But with the weather being so inconsistent also the catches were somewhat the same with all the sudden changes of air pressure. This effect could also be seen in the big La Digue Tournament at the end of the month. But let's look at the events in some good order:

On the 1st Christian had a really small charter of just 2 hours with guests from China ending up with a few Dorados, 2 Yellowfin Tunas and a handful of Bonitos. Mervin had a charter, too, that day. His clients unfortunately got seasick and they had to return after just an hour. In this short time though they had bagged a Yellowfin Tuna and a Sailfish already. So this I call efficiency.

Also Faizal roamed the Eastern Drop that day and made the most of it by catching a very nice 177kg Marlin. Unfortunately the fish was not in the state for a release and had to be taken. See it here:



As my fishing buddy Robin was in Zimbabwe until mid of the month I was out of the trolling activities for that time. Still kept myself busy installing some new features on my little boat: Outriggers, a few more rod holders, VHF ... Still I had time to fish the bay and 'round the corner' with spinning tackle. Was not too productive, though. maybe it was the outgoing tide on both occasions. Next to the usual Garfish I got no more than a few small Snappers, 2 Green Job and a few knocks. Had only one better fish on, but it went into some coral and got lost.

The same day Greg had a much more entertaining half Day charter with a Wahoo, 7 Yellowfin Tunas and on top of that they lost a Sailfish.

On the 11th he was out there again. This time again bagging a Wahoo and some Tunas. The biggest one was about 28kg with is really a good size so far in on the middle of our plateau. Must all in all have been a good day as Carlos informed me of them achieving a similar catch. Also they saw three Sailfish and a Marlin which unfortunately all were not hungry enough to take a lure.

The 13th then was another special day for Pierre, Andre & Greg (or rather the whole Corsaire team) as their new boat 'Princess Praslin' went into the water. She is really a beautiful little ship. Very different in shape to the sporty outboard cats you see here usually. And due to the inboard diesels she should fish really fine. Am sure she will find her demand for charters and I wish them lots of success with her. See more than this foto in the video.



In the following days nothing was going on due to the weather and only on the 17th things picked up again. Christian was success doing some Bottom Fishing for the so much sought after Empereor Snappers and bagged a Yellowfin Tuna trolling to the spots. My neighbours from Mauritius also were around again and came back from a trip with Tuna, Wahoo and some Empereors. And Martin topped a day with a Sail of 38kg. What a nice fish!

Also the following days the boats out there got plenty Dorados, Tunas and Wahoos. Just no Billfish I heard of.

On the 21st it was finally some trolling for me again, too. Was rather a testing of all the new installations and to find out if it is possible to troll 6 lines from my small boat without fuzz. All worked out fine and as planned. Just the fish did not want to participate. Eventually we had to refuel and strolled along with one knot or so while the juice gurgled through the pipe from the can into the tank we got a strike on the port outrigger. Just turned my head and saw Malcolm, who came first time and also wanted to fish the tournament with us, grabbing the rod. All under control, so I turned back to my refueling job. 'Marlin, Marlin' the two suddenly shouted and I just saw the fish coming out of the water nearly to full extend. Was not even a so small one. Somewhere in the area of 100 to 130kg I would say. Unfortunately the show came to a sudden end that moment as it shook off the the small Sailfish lure with its two tiny hooks. Was not too sad though. At least we got a first Marlin strike from my own boat. And that on the only fifth outing without ever having targeted such. I am sure there are more to come. Some time later we eventually caught a small Dorado. So at least the nimbus of so far never returning without a reasonable fish stayed alive (Bonitos I do not count for). The short moment of excitement is also in the video.



Two days later I learned from Carlos that the day before on the way back from an uneventful day at the Drop they caught a Marlin that size in that area. Was it the same one?

Also that Sunday Christian went up to the Northern Drop for his own pleasure and possibly to check the area with a view to the upcoming tournament. Must have been a slow day, though. He said Bottom Fishing was not too good, and also the trolling produced nothing else but a single Wahoo. But while jigging he got a strike at some 40m depth and seconds later out of the corner of his eye saw a Sailfish jumping - with his jig in its mouth! That fish wrapped itself in the leader and came to the boat tail forward and drowned so they had to take it. Odd things happen when fishing!

Next I got info on a massive GT caught by a Southafrican resident on popper. Congratulations to this fantastic fish. And also to the decision to release it. So the weight is unknown. But make your guess on behalf of the pic.



The following days nobody seemed to have gone out. Partly due to the not so nice and rainy weather, partly due to preparations for the tournament. my initial plan had been to fast troll to the North East Drop during the dark hours and there use the sonar to find some structures that I had roughly located on a sea chart. Unfortunately my Sounder/GPS combo collapsed the day before so that plan went down the river. Sh...ame! And I had rigged some fast trolling lures especially for that. Had eve tried them out for the right speed here in the bay right in front of my place. And one was taken right away by a small GT of about 3kg. Where are these every time I grab my spinning

gear?



On the day before the tournament (the Friday) Andre and Greg each had a Half day charter ending up with tons of Bonitos and 11 Yellowfin Tunas altogether. All that in very severe weather as an unexpected and unannounced storm front pushed through that morning. In the afternoon I briefly went over to La Digue for registration and captain's meeting, then back home to Praslin and at 01:00am the alarm kicked be out of bed. loading and fueling. Mishap with that, though: When pushing a fuel can into its hatch the lid jumped of and liters of fuel spilled into my face and eyes. Burned like hell and I thought that's been it with fishing, hospital instead. But after an extensive rinse I could finally see again. So off we went into the dark night towards La Digue, getting into tiny La Passe harbour just at ten to three. All other 33(!) boats were ready to go, engines running and moving back and forth like nervous race horses. Music, lights and seemingly hundreds of people at that odd time who did not want to miss out on the spectacle of the boats leaving. And it seemed to me everyone gazed and visibly thought 'What the heck is that coming from sea now?' But when we were recognized there was quite a ballyhoo, laughter and some funny comments on the little nutshell so deep in the water due to the 330 liters of fuel: 'Where you guys wanna fish? Indonesia?' I liked best. It really was a fantastic and exciting atmosphere. Sharp on time at 03:00am the signal was given and everyone put foot. We were among the first to get out but quickly gave way for the bigger boats blasting off not to be run over and to avoid their huge waves.

The story of our own fishing is quickly told. Robin & I (Malcolm cancelled) started trolling in the dark with two hardbaits and two surface lures over the known spots east of the Sisters. Nothing happened until just before dawn when all four lines went same time. It turned out to be just four Pickhandle Barracudas between 3 and 1.5kg that had also bugged up two of the lures. Also the water looked somewhat milky so we did not drop the lines there again but cruised East through an unbelievable mass of feeding Bonitos until about 4 miles before the Drop. There we started trolling again doing a big half circle to and beyond the drop and back to it. Result after nearly 4 hours: nothing at all! Except Bonitos of course which we at some point tried to put off by larger lures but that were still ripping the strip baits apart. Terrible! And as far as we could see the other boats out there did not do any better. We realised that there was nothing to earn for us in that area and decided to travel back, starting to fish again where we initially stopped at night. That eventually brought us a normal size Wahoo and a small Tuna that gave me hell in the beginning as it was foulhooked. But that was all and on time we made it back to La Digue. With a view to our very meager catch we briefly discussed to skip the weigh-in. That to avoid the lengthy and difficult manouvering in the tiny port stuffed with boats (some impressions of that also in the video) and also the humiliation. But of course we went through it.



There we eventually found out that quite a number of renowned boats and teams had not done much better. One actually had eaten all their day's catch of on the way home - 4 Bonitos!

At this point I feel like making some sort of apology to my good old friend Ton Pierre. He had advised me beforehand that it would probably better to fish the plateau as most reasonable fish were recently hooked there while the Drop had been comparatively slow. But I was much too eager to finally fish the Drop first time on my own boat. Of course he was eventually right as after their Bottom Fishing in the dark they got nearly 20 Tuna, a handful of Wahoo and on top of that a nice Marlin of 80kg. That was a really fierce bugger by the way. Not only it took them two hours on 80lbs tackle to boat it. But the beast also at some point attacked the boat and with its bill broke a big piece of wood out the side of the boat! See it in the video.



At 7:00pm then we were finally back on Praslin and had everything cleaned up - after a hefty 18 hours! Even as our catch did not meet expectations at all it was still great fun. And my little 'Angel' (that is the name Christian had given her long ago in reference to his beloved wife and I kept it) had not let us down. Slept like a log and the next morning went back to La Digue with Robin for the prize giving. That was delayed quite a bit due to rain but this offered time enough to listen round how the others had done. It became clear that actually the Drop itself that day - be it North, East or more to the South - was relatively slow. The activity was either inside close to the islands or much further out. And this was where eventually most of the winning trolling specimen were caught.

Prices and points were awarded to the each two heaviest fish of the 10 eligible trolling and 11 bottom species. Also for best trolling and best bottom catch each by weight and for best total catch. But winner of the tournament was to become the team with most points from the different species.

Some point the ceremony started. While I was still taking some fotos I heard 'Barracuda no runner-up'! Briefly thought that must mean we ... No, impossible. Probably Pickhandles do not even count as Barracuda. And into

that thinking next I heard "Winner is – team Angel with 3.2kg!" Could not believe it at all, went somewhat embarrassed onto the stage (Robin refused to go) to collect the prize and tried to get away asap. But back down everyone congratulated cordially and with a lot of twinkles. Admit that I could not stop smirking the rest of the day but still feel somewhat twisted about the whole thing. Getting a price on first participation is nice, but getting it for such a little catch and a fish not much more than a Sardine felt somewhat odd. Especially with a view to other teams catching so much more than us and especially the guys from Corsaire with all their fish and the Marlin on top. But they had the bad luck that lots of their specimen were just not the largest of the day. And we on the opposite had the unbelievable luck, that no other boat had brought in a single stupid Barracuda. Guess we will have used up all our luck for the next ten years or so with that one.

The most species' prices as well as all(!) the overall awards eventually went to the team 'Island Star' fishing their really fantastic 60ft Viking. Well done!



To round things up you below find the full listing of award winning teams and the weights of the winning fish in all categories. Some really fine ones among those!

All in all this was a fantastic event. Big compliment to the guys of the Seychelles Sports Fishing Club for their perfect organisation! Am already looking forward to next year and plan to then also like most others spend all the weekend on La Digue. Lots of 'side' events, parties, the whole island is buzzing from Friday til Sunday and everyone is cool. Can just say: If you ever have the chance to be here that time and be part of it, then don't waste it!

As mentioned, on the 31st I went with my cams to cover Precy's very first charter after relaunching 'Rainbow'. Being a 30odd feet centerconsole she is now equipped with toilet, outriggers and some really fine tackle (Accurates!). Guests for some light tackle trolling were Victoria & James, a very likable British couple living in Dubai. Even as we missed out on any Billfish this time the five hours were packed with action as we got 6 Dorado, 3 Yellowfin Tunas and a decent Wahoo. Very convincing was also Wesley who did the crewing and is one of the best I have seen in Seychelles so far.



See a bit of that day also in the video. Here is the link to simply click on:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AD6l_L-CCAE

Late that night I learned that Pierre & Andre had been out for some jigging on the plateau. Went quite well with 16 Bludger Kingfish, 11 Pickhandle Barracudas and some Bonitos. The day before they even jigged some large Rainbow Runners. Very nice!



So this has become a long newsletter this time. Hope you don't mind. Now I have about one week more here and then I will bugger off to Brasil for the German Championships. Hope very much the fishing will be good there, too, and also here catches in that time will continue to be plenty. So that I will again have a lot to report to you next month.

So long, Tight Lines and best regards from Praslin

Daniel