

Hello all!

First thing is to settle my `dues` and thus look back to the final days of March.

Christian provided me with the foto of his crazy Drop Off catch as of the 25th that I consider a `must see`: Sailfish, Tuna, Wahoo, Dorado ... and virtually a mountain of Bottom Fish:



From Martin I got the picture of his 150kg + Marlin caught on the 29th:



And I had promised to inform on the 'Annual Rotary Fishing Tournament'. Had particularly flown to Mahe on the 31st for the Weigh-In - and was very much surprised that the whole thing presented itself very differently to what I had expected. The tournament is already held for 30 years (!) and is for charity. So all catch is bought by a processing company and the money benefits social projects here in Seychelles. Thus the main goal is a maximum total catch. And that catch left me quite stunned I admit. Trolling was not in the center, but as I figured mainly conducted on the travel to the Bottom spots at the Southern Drop. Produced some nice fish though, among them 2 Sailfish. But the main issue was clearly Bottom Fishing. Not necessarily with rod&reel, but with the local traditional handlines: A few hooks with deadbait, a heavy sinker at the end, and then down to 150-200m. Also it seemed that on any boat there could fish as many people as they wanted. But for that there is the category of 'best average catch'. Of course all this does not fully comply with any IGFA sportsfishing tournament rules, but as said it is the traditional way to fish here, and it is all about producing the highest yield for charity with not even the last little bone being wasted. For me it was a real eye opener of how rich these waters here really are. Just check the YouTube video by clicking the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FY7wYBFidf8&feature=plcp>

Especially the Jigging nuts amongst you will probably get a bit nervous. All these Amberjacks, Snappers and Groupers can surely be caught on artificial lures if approached in the right way. I will definitely bring some Giant Jigheads and large Shads from my next trip abroad.

Briefly to the results and numbers:

1. Best Trolling Catch: 110.85kg (Team Dalon)
2. Best Bottom Catch: 992.55kg (Team Island Star)
3. Best Overall Catch: 1,058.75kg (Team Island Star)
4. Best Average Per Angler Catch: 145.35kg (Team Marlin)

Also there were prices for the largest specimen of 10 pelagic and 17 bottom species. A small selection:

Sailfish: 32.10kg
 Dogtooth Tuna: 29.05
 Empereor Snapper: 9.75kg
 Bordomar (Scarlet Snapper): 11.95kg
 Vieilles Platte (Areolate Grouper): 16.75kg
 Vara Vara (Bohar Snapper): 12.80kg
 Etelis (Longtail Snapper): 23.30kg
 Saumon (Amberjack): 27.60kg

And altogether the 7 participating boats landed a hefty 3,197kg of fish!

But now finally to the events of April. Pierre had some booking for Half Days from his small boat Bilimbi. And he delighted me very much by asking if I would like to crew as he knows how much I love that. So on the 3rd we went with a guest from South Africa but it was not the best of all days. After some time and a few Bonitos we got a Wahoo that could have been quite a bit bigger. The guest then wanted to do some Popping but those promising rocks around Anse Lazio did not produce a single hit. And also trolling home provided us with nothing more than a rather juvenile Barracuda. Quite disappointing with a view to the seemingly perfect conditions. But it was obviously one of 'those days' that we all know but never fancy as the two other boats we had met out there also did not do any better. Strange how and why the bite changes as under pretty much same conditions Martin the day before lost a Marlin and a Sail in the same area.

Two days later then our next trip. Unfortunately the promising slight breeze had completely collapsed and so we were circling on a perfect mirror. Needless to say that was not a day for a record catch. We scrambled together a handful of Bonitos which was difficult enough as even these seemed to enjoy an as lazy day as all the birds. Luckily some point we hooked up with an obviously suicidal Yellowfin Tuna of about 10kg to avoid total humiliation. Later that evening I sat together with Martin at his Beach Villas (his hotel in Grand Anse) when his boat Venture returned with 3 German guests. They also had a few Bonitos and one good fish to save the day. That was a really nice Barracuda of around 18kg. On a bit of Bottom Fishing they got among some more stuff a blackish Grouper that I had never encountered before. See the fotos:





Another two days after that I went out with Pierre again. Still the wind had not come back, and thus the experience was quite similar. Surprisingly similar actually as right at the end we again got a Yellowfin Tuna. Most probably the now lonely and also depressed brother of the one we took that few days before. Nice for me though: had tried pretty all of Pierre's lures and finally taken one of my 'special' ones from my private box. Rather to demonstrate ongoing motivation than with full believe. But that 'Travestie Star' (a purple Halco) delivered as it had done quite a few times before on slow days. Believe now that this is maybe not coincidence and will try to get some more of these. Also funny how our mind works: a single Tuna on a (half) day would mostly be considered a rather not so great result. But as it came right at the end when we all had pretty much surrendered everyone was happy.

When I had returned to my place that afternoon I saw the ever present mullet panicking as 5 or 6 really big GT were chasing them. The smaller ones were still well over 10kg and the leader of the pack must have been 20kg +. It was a real sheep! Grabbed the always ready spinning rod and served a shad. The big bugger chased it, I prepared to strike ... and felt nothing but a gentle, nearly tender knock! Away he turned and gone they were. Needless to say the next afternoon I stood watch. Equipped with the best mullet imitations of different kinds I have: A pre-rigged shad, a Savage gear Freestyler, a Popper ... all perfectly matching the mullet in colour and size. Also needless to say the bunch did not show up again. Felt like a teenager let down on a rendezvous. Only good thing was I had not wasted money on flowers ...

On the 10th it was a Half Day with Pierre & guests once more. Eventually a bit of wind had come up and the fishing was all different. Already when underway to the first spot we got a Yellowfin Tuna to be on the safe side. But on arrival I got really busy. Was actually glad it was only the small boat without outriggers and just 4 lines: the following two hours produced 2 Wahoos and 8 Dorados. Only thing missing was a Billfish. But these were obviously lurking at the Drop that day. Martin had two Sails early, and after losing a Marlin got another Sail right at the end. At least they got something from the Marlin as one of the guests had his camera ready at the right moment and took a perfect picture:



On the 12th it was all about the Tsunami alarm! Had received the news via an SMS from my Dad in Germany. As internet had been down for days I ran over to Pierre's who thought I try pulling his leg. But the news channels on TV were buzzing , and so became the whole place here. Police cars made announcements, shops closed in no time and also the evacuation of Victoria went underway as I was told. Luckily nothing happened eventually. Or nearly nothing: went to the casino bar that night to watch a decisive German soccer game. But the place was dark and closed! That never happened before, it is absolutely always open! Anyways, the game did not go my way as I learned later ...

The next day was fishing once more with Pierre. But the wind had gone again and Pierre thus opted for some Bottom Fishing. Usually the best thing to do under these conditions. Usually ... Even the reliable and productive spots had pretty much nothing for us. Again only very much to the end we found some activity. The day's catch eventually was not a lot, but I like the picture. Just imagine the Fugu and that small Shark with it (which we both released) and it was quite alright ;-)





Starting from the 14th I encountered a real drought of information. The wind had come back and fishing conditions were just perfect. But there was not a single trip among my little network. What a shame! Even more as the fishing was fairly good as I could derive from the little bits and pieces that I found. A couple of people did some smaller trips for personal joy: Lester got 2 Dogtooth Tuna, a few Wahoos and lots of Green Job while his guests on island excursion enjoyed their barbecue. My landlord's son went for a bit of Bottom Fishing in a really small boat and was delighted by a Full House of Empereor Snappers among other fish:



On the 18th Pierre's nephew went to the Southern Drop for some Bottom Fishing. That must have brought him sore muscles as he ended up with Amberjacks of up to 40ks and a fantastic Dogtooth Tuna weighing nearly 80kg!

A friend of Andre had a Sailfish off Mahe and Precy lost one off Praslin. He was alone on his boat and the mean beast crossed all lines only to wave him Goodbye on a jump. Precy said he then spent most of the day untangling ...

Only 5 days later I got fresh news. Pierre's grandson Greg was out with clients on the small boat for another Half Day. Besides some Yellowfin Tunas and Dorados they bagged a decent Wahoo of about 17kg that I saw in their freezer. Furthermore they had two Sails behind their lures. The traces showed they had been hitting them but were not willing to bite. But they are out there and that is the good thing about it. By the way, Greg had another Day and a similar catch the day after.

Then the 29th came and with it my long awaited fun trip to the Drop with Christian and his friend Francois. It was all for Marlin and thus we persistently kept trolling the XXL lures. Missed a Sail early and another later as we could figure from the trace. Also missed two more fish that we could not see. Just the Marlin did not come. With smaller lures it probably would have turned out a very successful day. Believe so as Martin's Venture fished the same area with some US Light Tackle Pros: besides a Dorado and Wahoo they tagged and released 3 Sailfish.

And finally some news from Mahe: Tony of Team Island star had not only provided me with the Tournament Score (Thax a lot for that, Tony!) but also had another great trip on the 27th: Sailfish, Doggie, Yellowfin, Amberjack ... here some pictures:



Obviously that fantastic boat also produces beyond competitions. So if you ever feel like fishing from a 60ft Viking, let me know.

Faizal said that also around Mahe there are plenty of Yellowfin Tuna and Sailfish in the wake of the Sardines. On the Southern Drop a few days ago a Blue and a Black Marlin were released. And as there was no piracy activity recorded some of the Outer Islands are open again. Livaboard Neptune Warrior in the area of Coetivy Island released 4 Blacks and 3 Blues while one they had to take. Also big Yellowfins in the range of 50 to 75kg came with those.

Really not much to complain for those who went fishing here recently. We will see what impact the change to the South East Monsoon due in May will have.

So long, Tight Lines and best regards from Praslin

Daniel