

Hello all!

Even as this month's fishing was disrupted by the weather there are quite a few things to report. The first week of February boasted perfect conditions and was very productive. Christian had 4 Sails and a huge Yellowfin Tuna of 57kg in a day. And also the following trip produced some more of these exceeding 40kg, making his guests sweat.



Sailfish

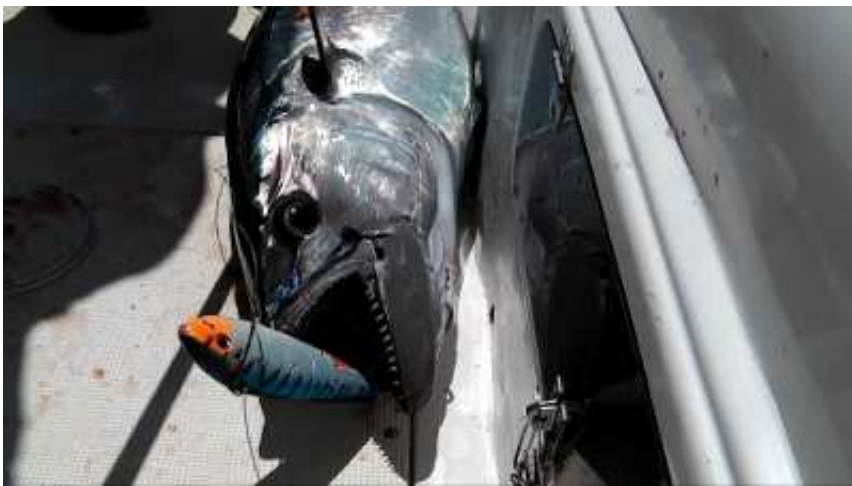
Even better went things for Martin on three successive trips. The first day they lost a Marlin after some playtime, but could make up for that with two Sails. On day two they had a Marlin of app. 100kg and the day after a larger one of app. 170kg. Also he knew of a Dogtooth Tuna of around 60kg that had been caught by another boat - all at the Drop Off. But also around the inner islands activity was on. My friend Pierre enjoyed a weekend with friends on a large sailing cat around Mahe. Of course they were pulling some lures and suddenly had a Marlin on that he estimated around 150kg. After a while, already quite close to the boat, the fish shook its head and got rid of the hook. Also, as I was told, a boat raised four Marlin around Sister Islands and managed to catch one of them.

This fantastic fishery unfortunately came to an abrupt end as the northwesterly wind picked up substantially and blew in times at more than 20 knots: no more trips. Not until the 13th the forecast looked better again. Maja and Fritz, a very nice couple from Switzerland, wanted to go out: a half day as a trial for Maja, succeeded by a barbecue and a visit to the tortoises' sanctuary at Curieuse. Luckily I was able to join the party to do some filming. The little clip - now in HQ resolution - can be seen on YouTube by clicking the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYt0N4hQ8CI&feature=youtu.be>

(Filmed in HQ quality, but reduced due to limited local upload capacity. Can't wait for the fiber optic cable ...).

So that morning we went out to sea with Christian. The wind had actually dropped, but unfortunately right to nearly dead calm. Thus conditions were difficult. Nevertheless we recorded an early strike and Fritz brought in a good Wahoo. After that for quite a while there was no action. Christian did not let himself down though, but kept searching through the water column applying different techniques. At some point I felt we were already pretty far out for a half day. Especially as he hinted me that Denis Island was visible faintly on the horizon. But he was eager to try another spot out there that to his words was always good for a Dogtooth. Just said that, a hardbait was taken and the reel drag sang our favourite song. Maja, who boasts plenty of experience and success fishing Baltic Sea, handed the rod over to Fritz after a little while: 'Just too much of a load!'. Fritz also had to battle hard until he had fought down a - surprise! - Dogtooth of 20kg.



Dogtooth Tuna with second (and last) breakfast

We had two more hefty strikes on that spot, but these fish did not hook up. Finally Maja also got her fish by landing a good sized bonito, and all were happy. So was I for the chance to peek over Christian's shoulder. Had already mentioned that his tournament record is great. No coincidence as became obvious. Not only that he and his mate Julian were totally professional and the tackle down to the tip of the hooks in perfect state. He was never giving in to the conditions and searched a wide area as well as the depths until he finally found active fish in the end. That impressed me as much as the two-foot diving teaser as such thing I had so far only seen in the catalogues.

The following days there were no trips as far as I got aware. On the 19th Pierre spontaneously reactivated Bigarade for a day's trip around the inner islands. Even as they did not find any Billfish the fishing was red hot. They returned with over 40 Yellowfin Tunas and Wahoos of which some exceeded 25kg. Also Precy had a trip that produced an enormous Wahoo - see the picture and consider Precy's son Mathieu being >1,90m tall!



Hefty Wahoo

Martin was at the Drop Off once more on the 22nd, catching a small Wahoo, a Dorado and a Sail.

After that the wind picked up again and no trips were possible until the 27th. I used the time to treat myself at the mentioned wading spot, well motivated by the arrival of my ordered lures. But fishing there was virtually impossible due to the wind and seaweed, so the results were not too convincing - to say the least. Some point though, I saw a shoal of fish moving in on some rock close to the beach. These had app. 1-2kg and I was able to get two of them on a Drop Shot with a tiny Low Action Shad. The species is still unknown, even as I thought it should be easy to find out as these fish had a very special characteristic: They were sporting a beard, consisting of 5 white, long spines just before either pectoral fin. But whoever I asked could not tell me a name. Guess I will have to ask IGFA. If anyone of you should happen to know about these I would be happy for your feedback.



What is this ...?

On the 27th I went out for an afternoon half day with Pierre on Bigarade. The guests were Hubert and his son from France, who had been fishing with us already in 2010. We did not find anything really big, but ended up with a Dorado, half a dozen Yellowfins and a load of Bonitos. A Wahoo struck fiercely, but missed the hook. So lots of action in these few hours.



Diner size Yellowfin Tuna

I thought that would have been it for this month. But today, on the 29th, in the afternoon just before `editorial deadline` I received a call from Christian being out at sea. If I could come to his place around 5:30pm with my camera? So I did and could take footage of a decent Black Marlin weighing in at 95kg. Also to be seen in the video clip.



Black Marlin caught on the banks

Then I rushed to meet Mervin, the skipper of "Vicinity" who I had met first time a few weeks ago. I had gotten aware that he had been out at the Drop Off that day. Learned that he had two Marlin strikes. The bigger one broke one of his outriggers. In the face of that, 10 Wahoos and a decent Yellowfin Tuna of 40-50kg were of course not much of a consolation. Mervin had been out a few times since our first meeting and caught quite a number of those good-sized Tuna.

So there was no lack of fish and action again this month. Hope that the skippers will successively become more proactive in informing me before they come in. This would allow me to be in place with my cams and offer you more pictures. We'll see ...

Last but not least I touched base with Faizal, the IGFA rep on Mahe. He said that the new FAD's (fish attracting devices) already seem to work quite well. The areas produced Wahoo and Dorado, and also the Sails were on. Marlin strikes came here and there and Tuna there were few. He felt that Praslin was better off in February. Am curious what the coming month has in the bag for us - I will let you know.

So long, Tight Lines and best regards from Praslin,

Daniel