

New Year News letter December 08

With the closure of 2008 behind us we look forward to a more positive 2009 locally and globally. While tourism has been poor this year due to various reasons, the fishing has been superb. Reports of up to 10 – 20 sailfish per boat have been phenomenal. It's just a pity that more anglers were not able to take advantage of some great fishing. Those that did, not only had fantastic fishing but will be back again for the next season.

The early part of December saw KIPAPA fishing out of Mtwapa Creek, with Eric Langton and family plus John Wheater and family onboard. Both families had driven down from Nairobi for a week's holiday. The "boys" drove from Diani (1.5 hrs away) to fish with us out of Mtwapa Creek and generally had a good day out with a couple of dorado; a bonito and one sailfish tagged by John Wheater on a 50 lb line weighing approximately 28 kg. On their return to Diani the dorado fillets hit the frying pan that evening and being one of the best fish to eat, was proclaimed an instant success by the fishermen and their families.

The following weekend of 14th December, the Mtwapa Creek friendly Open Boat Christmas Hamper competition was held at The Moorings restaurant on the creek. Nine boats entered with a few sailfish being caught; a marlin; dorado; yellow fin tuna; etc. The winning boat was KIPAPA fished by Sue & Howard Lawrence-Brown and Shirley Dall totalling 3 sailfish. Sue and Shirley won the ladies prizes and the boat the overall prize. The Open Boat Trophy went to FLYCATCHER fished by Robert Jessop and John Webb. A number of the junior angler prizes were given out which is always good to see and well supported by the younger generation of future fishermen.

With a slack in bookings, Sue and Howard took themselves off for a day in Tsavo East National Park. It is an easy run from Mombasa with the now revamped and re-tarred Mombasa/Nairobi road the trip to the Bachuma Gate entrance to Tsavo East National Park takes about 1.5 hours. Just short of 30 km from Voi a detour was made for a coffee stop at Ngutuni Lodge. A lovely little lodge 5 km from the main road driving through lush bush and green grass with sightings of elephants; giraffe; dik dik etc along the way to the lodge.

Once there, the coffee ordered, we settled in to take in the view of the water hole and the surrounding vista. It was so peaceful and cooler than the hot humid climes of Mombasa and the suggestion of "well let's get up and get going" went out the window and the journey continued no further. The lodge being situated next to the Tsavo East National Park boundary, allows the natural flow of animals to the water hole just a few metres away from the Lodge veranda.

A small group of elephants were at the water hole on arrival; wart hogs also enjoying a mud bath and an abundant bird population all voicing their opinions. We looked no further and decided to stay the night and finding a few essentials in the lodge gift shop we were sorted. After the coffee break set off to explore the Lodge's conservancy area (7000

hectres) and we were not disappointed. We saw thousands of elephants; many very young giraffe; buffalo; gerenuk; monitor lizard; oryx; Grant's gazelle; impala were a few of what this small game sanctuary had to offer. Apparently a pride of lions had come to drink at the water hole. The staff were all very helpful and cheerful. Nothing was too much of a bother.

Tony & Tracy Elliott together with family and friends arrived from England 23 December having booked a week's holiday to Mombasa. They were 9 in their party, some of whom had not been to Kenya before. Their holiday included 2 days fishing; some sight seeing and a 2 day safari to Ngutuni Lodge which would be the first wildlife safari for most of the group.

Tony, son Dane, Mitchell Orwell and Stan Moore fished the day before Christmas with a few hook ups with sailfish but only one was tagged and released by Dane on 50 lb line. Dane had fished with us before some years ago, but this was his first sailfish. Stan had a hook up with a sailfish on a 30 lb line which unfortunately did not go the distance. It did give him some aerial displays before releasing itself.

Christmas Day was a hot and humid day but with the opening of presents done in the morning we set about organizing a BBQ dinner under the stars for Tony and Tracy and their friends which totaled 11 people on Christmas night. It was Tracy's birthday so a double celebration.

The following day, 26th December, the ladies Elliott team consisted of Tracy, Jade and Sian Elliott and Sara Moore. They topped the men's fishing with a good score of fish – wahoo; torpedo fish and top marks went to Sara for a whaler shark weighing approximately 100 lb on 50lb line which was released. This was Sara's first deep sea fishing trip and one she won't forget.

The Kilifi Christmas Hamper Competition was held the following day, 27th December with an auction bid for the boats the night before. A great social occasion and a record number of 31 boats entered. Some of the boats started from Malindi and Mtwapa all meeting up at the finish at the Kilifi Boatyard, where snacks and drinks were flowing followed by the prize giving later in the afternoon. This comp was fished by Stuart Allison; Lee Allison; Rowland Minns and Patrick Fox on KIPAPA – all of whom have fished with us for many years and always good to see them on board. Lee Allison tagged a sailfish of a approximately 28 kg on a 50lb line; Patrick had a dorado of just over 5 kg and Rowland stole the day with his black marlin of 150 kg on a 30 lb line which took some fishing. Rowland released his marlin after nearly 2 hours of careful angling and Howard's boat manoeuvring. KIPAPA scored 5th overall with numerous sailfish being caught by the leading boats. The competition was won by SEAHORSE with 5 sails and other fish.

The following day saw everyone off the water and on land taking the Elliott party on safari in Lawrence-Brown two Land Rovers to Ngutuni Lodge for the night. Several game drives during the day and a night drive provided the guests with numerous animals to see and photo oportunites. Thousands of elephants were seen; giraffe with young; dik

dik; zebras; a monitor lizard; oryx; water buck; guerenuk; gazelle; kongoni antelope; black backed jackel and a variety of bird life that would get the ornithologists twittering with excitement.

The lodge itself is small and attractive in keeping with the sanctuary environment with 48 bedrooms split into two accommodation blocks on either side of a wide veranda, bar and dining area which look straight onto a water hole only a few metres from the veranda. A successful and awesome 2 days were spent with a return back to the beach hotel the next afternoon.

The next day saw Lode & Kris Van Houtte and son Matthew fishing on KIPAPA from our base in Mtwapa Creek. Loede and Matthew are keen fishermen and fished many times with us. With a very slow start to the day's fishing the afternoon showed some activity with a few sailfish coming up to look at the baits, then a pack attack of sail around 3 p.m. with both Matthew and Loede hooking up two sails both tagged and weighing approximately 25 kg each. Some good sized dorado were also added to the day's catch which were filleted, packed with ice ready for the Van Houtte evening's meal.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year and a happy, healthy & prosperous 2009.

Tight Lines from all of us to all of you.