

Brave youngster battles huge marlin

Ten year old James Stamatis is a keen fisherman, up from South Africa on holiday with his family. Out from Watamu with skipper Rob Hellier in Unreel, fishing with his father, he found himself on the rod on one end of the line with the reel screaming – on the other, a huge black marlin, estimated at 250kgs, bounding away across the ocean! Several hours later, totally exhausted, he had help from Dad who took over the rod and as it was beginning to get dark in the evening, the monster fish appeared from the depths – tail wrapped, the heavy leader wound round the body but only the thin nylon line, severely abraded, round the tail. Only a few yards from the boat, the line broke and the monster fish sank into the depths!

Another trip was the obvious answer, and young Jamie caught a 59kg yellowfin tuna, a magnificent fish for any adult, so two fantastic stories, and what an experience. Better than school, that's for sure!

With calmer seas, clear blue water and nice sunny weather as September moves on, yellowfin tuna have moved in around the Mountains and the Canyon off Watamu, a good sign for great things to come, more especially as there are big tuna among the schoolies. These shoals average about six kgs, and are fun to catch especially when biting well and several lines race off simultaneously – Tarka came in with 41 yellowfin recently, but with three of these about 50 kgs each, is this the run of big yellowfin for which we have been waiting for the past three years?

Earlier in the week skipper Jack Jackson guided Ian Parker on B's Nest to release a black marlin, while catching four wahoo as well, and Ol Jogi tagged two sailfish for Mark and Tracey Wynn – skipper Pete Darnborough helping out here, no doubt an interesting change from driving his own boat Alleycat, which also released a marlin and on another day caught a 57kg yellowfin during the week.

Both these Hemingways' boats are Bertrams, and there is always much discussion amongst anglers and skippers about certain makes of boats raising fish; the name Bertram has been famous in America, where they are manufactured, and world wide, for over forty years. Other famous makes like Hatteras, Cabo, Blackfin, Striker and Aquabell are all represented in Kenya, while several of the best boats here are wood, built in Kenya, and they all catch fish!

Neptune, another Bertram, also tagged a marlin with Captain Angus Paul fishing out from Malindi, but all these boats are working much the same area, so with marlin still being raised regularly, the yellowfin starting to run and good wahoo and giant trevally being caught, prospects look good unless there is too much fishing pressure on a relatively small area.

At present there are not many charters going, tourists being few and far between, but when local anglers hear about the fishing they soon make time for a short holiday!