

Watamu Banks still producing good fishing

Marlin, sail, giant trevally, Wahoo, kingfish, yellowfin – name them, and they are there! Yesterday, Wednesday, two boats came in to the Hemingways weigh platform sharing all of these, tho' naturally the billfish were tagged and released, as were the giant trevally.

Alexander Tseitlin, visiting Kenya from Russia, hooked into a black marlin on B's Nest estimated at 230 kgs which took a Rappala lure, and when it was battled to the boat after a long fight, he elected to release it with the tag duly affixed in the shoulder. Release is a new ethic for most Russian fishermen – natural perhaps, for who would want to release salmon and caviare? A very good fish, well done Alexander!

Ol Jogi then arrived in, with regular angler Phil Revett and Gordon Abrams, having tagged a sail and two giant trevally, plus two Wahoo, two kingfish, four yellowfin tuna and bags of baitfish. They had seen three marlin coming up to the live baits, reported skipper Rob Hellier, but not one of them hungry – with all these other fish around there, probably all the marlin were replete!

Capt Jack Jackson on B's Nest had a good run last week, with a marlin for Rodolfo Zedelon on Sunday and another with Alex Duffar on the rod on Tuesday, followed by the big fish in the story above, so the marlin still seem plentiful but perhaps harder to catch, while October is usually the best month for Wahoo, especially in muggy or sultry weather. Yellowfin too should be plentiful, with their accompanying sharks, although not all anglers are too keen to tackle these aggressive creatures, most of which fortunately are released these days.

Up at Malindi sailfish are being raised near Ngomeni, and there are plenty of yellowfin up there too. Neptune found four sail yesterday, with plenty of tuna, while Clueless also had four sail. With the Malindi International Festival only two weeks ahead, this is good news for most anglers who come to try their skills against the sailfish's wiles, although some skippers will be out to land that huge marlin at Watamu which can turn the competition on it's head.

The recent course for boat captains at Hemingways was conducted by Dick Pratt, Senior Competitions officer for SADSAA, the South African Deep Sea Angling Association, and was organised by a number of charter boat owners to improve standards of safety and seamanship amongst fishing boat captains here. Fifteen attended, of which thirteen passed the certificate, and it is intended that these courses should be run annually with efforts made to ensure that eventually all those who take boats offshore should attain certification.

A recent study by a university professor and his team of statisticians in South Africa showed that the recreational angling business there contributed more to the economy than rugby and cricket combined!

It also showed that a gamefish caught by recreational anglers generated up to seventy times more in income than the same fish caught commercially. This finding is similar to

that of studies in the Caribbean and South America, where some countries have now banned large scale commercial operations to preserve the recreational industry. Interestingly, the report suggests that this aspect has either been completely ignored or was never understood or researched by the government. A pointer for Kenya perhaps?