

September Newsletter courtesy of David Slater

Weather and seasons dictate gamefish action

The last week has seen a slight warm-up in the weather, with calmer winds and gentler seas. This is normal for mid-September, and is usually followed by a decrease in marlin activity as these fish migrate, generally reckoned to be in a southerly direction. We would then expect a lull in catches till the monsoon starts to swing into the north-east in late November or December. A week ago the marlin were still around, with Angus Walker-Munro from Kilifi out on Alleycat coming in with two black flags, one caught by wife Pam, her very first, having been trying for some time. Another trip on the same boat a week later, fishing with Peter Welham, yielded a shark and two giant trevally, but no marlin.

Certainly fewer black marlin have been seen in the Watamu/Malindi area recently, Tarka tagging one black at the beginning of the period and another last Monday, while Neptune released another this Wednesday estimated at 100 kgs. This seems to be the tally for the week, but Tarka also found a striped marlin on the Banks, although we do not see many of these at this time of year – but fish are unpredictable creatures. Still, with a tally of well, over a hundred marlin already in the Watamu/Malindi area this season, this is one of the best starts to a season ever, a good omen. Sailfish can be found all year, Alleycat tagged one at the beginning of the week and B's Nest found another last Tuesday, but it could be another few weeks before these beautiful fish start to show in greater numbers, generally in the Malindi area.

The Malindi Festival will be fished over the weekend of October 18th/19th, with the light line Churchill Cup on the previous day. This is the coast's oldest tournament, and this year will be the fiftieth anniversary – a good reason for all anglers to forgather for the big social occasion which the club will no doubt be celebrating. The top boats, consistently in the frame year after year, get booked up early so get cracking on this now.

Big kingfish and Wahoo are being caught now, plenty of these over the 25kg mark coming in, with Unreel having one of each at 25kgs as well as a shark, and some yellowfin of 20kgs and over can be found as well as the usual smaller school tuna. Since the run of mantis shrimps three years ago, there has not been a consistent run of these bigger tuna, so perhaps they might show this month and next which is their normal time.

It was good to read of a humpback whale, which had been found wrapped in a net near Diani, being freed by divers who were able to cut it free and allow it to swim away alive. The plethora of nets, indiscriminately strewn all over the ocean, catches many marine mammals including endangered turtles. There appears to be no control or regulation for these nets in Kenyan waters. Nets, trawlers, long liners and

purse seiners all kill everything they catch, mammals as well as fish. When there is nothing left, they move elsewhere. Is this sustainable?