



RANI
RESORTS

SAILFISH SEASON

- BAZARUTO ISLAND
MOZAMBIQUE

For a number of personal reasons this year I only got to the Bazaruto Archipelago, for what is normally the peak of the Sailfish season, in mid April... three weeks later than usual. It actually turned out to be good timing as with water surface temperatures in the high 's 26 degrees Celsius, a toad higher than normal, sailfish had not yet arrived in good numbers.

Instead, our first charter decided to do ultra light tackle drop shoot with a good diversity of species over the three days, culminating with a good +- 16kg GT on 12 pound line, that took an hour and twenty minutes to release late afternoon on our last day. We then had a few light tackle and fly fishing charters over the next week. We had a really nice one in particular with Steve Worswick and his two sons from Zimbabwe. After unsuccessfully looking for sailies in the morning we decided to fly fish at the pinnacle at Ill trees and had great action, except that between releases we also lost a lot of good fish.

First we had a number of unstoppable kingies bust us on the reef, then we started getting some nice kawakawa but the cuda kept chopping them up, after which we hooked into the cuda but the sharks appeared on the scene and just made a meal of it.



Besides the fishing the day had numerous highlights with sightings of a manta ray, helping a whale shark that was stuck at the end of the northern sand spit, seeing a rare leopard shark in two meters of water on the way back and shortly after a dugong on the surface.

Whale Shark sightings were pretty much the common place for this season.

On this same day IBO lost a 200 pound Black Marlin that took a light tackle sailfish bait. With such great looking electric blue water in the high 26 degrees Celsius and loads of skipjack (who seem to have forgotten to look at the calendar and where still around in June with water temperatures in the 22 to 23c) and yellow fin schools it's no wonder there were still a few Marlin around and in the next week a couple of small fish between 80 and 120 pounds were released and a few more lost on light tackle. The next charter was with regulars Richard and Billy Brake from Cape Town.

We had a serious SE blowing the first day and things were rather quiet up north. The second day I decided to go down south to the Canyon and we finally found the sailfish amongst a lot of skipjacks, bonnies and dorado. In the morning we raised 8 sailfish, for 6 strikes, 5 hookups and 3 releases.

They had a great Marlin fishing trip in December releasing two 600 pound class fish, plus a 80 pound rat in two days. So with such great looking water we decided to gamble and do some Marlin fishing from noon and we set a spread of Kona lures and worked deeper. We did not find any Marlin but certainly had a great afternoon catching a 16 and a 18 kg wahoo, a decent size yellowfin tuna, amongst a few other smaller ones.

The next day we were obviously back at the canyon, this time in flat calm seas and again we found good action raising 8 sailies in the morning for 6 strikes, 4 hookups and 3 releases. Once again we pulled Marlin lures in the afternoon but this time to no avail. The next week we mostly fished half days but the sailfish were pretty consistent, mainly down south at the canyon, and during this time we were raising anything from three to eight fish, and released between 2 to 4 sailfish every morning.

On the 26th we took the IB staff out for a fishing day and we had great fun. After a slow start at V mile I decided to pull in and run all the way to the Canyon. Within 15 minutes we had a quadruple strike and a triple hookup. Joana's fish come unbuttoned but both Brandon and Mike both released a fish each.



It got so fast we run out of halfbeak's and had to resort to the Williamso's plastic Ballyhoo, both, the fish and Angelique found them irresistible!!!

We set lines and not 15 minutes later we get two fish up and hook them both. Unluckily Joana's one (hooked on a Halco) throws hooks, but Jade brings her for a release. It was quiet as we made our way back to 11 mile, only catching a handful of game fish.

...celebrating on the way back!!!

We then had a couple of successful game fish charters with the visiting "Old Mutual" group and parted on a 200 pound Marlin on the 30th. Dorado were unseasonably present in good numbers. The first of May as become a special date for us as for four consecutive years we have broken our day release sailfish record at IB. Mark Neves has been there for three of those times and he as virtually booked that day for life!!! This year the sailies were late and it did not turn to be so action packed but we still had a great morning. Within the first hour Clive releases his first ever fish, a good size king mackerel and straight after a nice sailfish. As we the second bait out a fish comes up and Mark releases a good 40 kg sailfish. We raise another three fish, missing two fish and make an early return.

Next charter with Luis and Freddie Nunes was quiet windy and we only fished a few hours in the morning with a good number of king mackerel



and a sailfish for Freddie on the first day. The next morning we raise a few, but they were unresponsive so we made an early way home with a couple of dorado and cuda.

We had no groups for the next week but still did a few half days with some sailfish releases and a good number of dorado along with the usual cuda. Next up was Ivan Klerck and his wife who started with a big bang down south in the canyon on his first half day, raising 6 fish, for 4 strikes & three hookup's and releases. The next morning was slower with a single sailfish release out of three plus a few good game fish. But the next couple of days made up for it with a total of six sailfish releases. On the 20th we again headed down south with Jim Brown and Geoff Dollars for a half day and we managed to raise 7 sailfish, producing 5 strikes with three hookup's for 3 releases. Our next group was with good friends Dr. Mike, Carl, Anton Jankowitz and Stuart Gray. Unfortunately we were limited to fishing 5 mile down to lighthouse the first day as the SE was pumping really strong. Nevertheless we managed to release two out of two sailfish. The next day we only managed a couple of hours as the wind was now much stronger.

The weather finally subsided for their last fishing day and we run all the way to 25 mile. After a slow morning there we moved south and jigged in various places between 60 and 120 meters deep, but only managed a couple of fish and Carl had a real fighter come off. Just after noon we decide to try for sailfish out of lighthouse and I had only set four

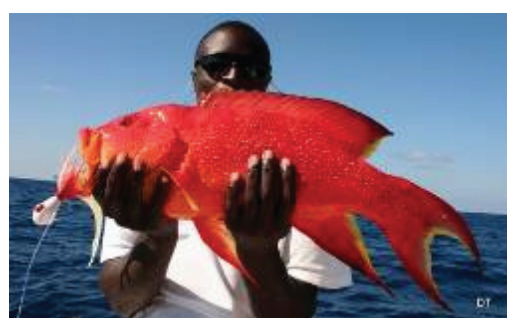
baits out when the same number of sailfish appear behind the spread. From then on, between sailfish and game fish we had an amazing fast afternoon ending up raising 9 sailfish, with 6 strikes, five hookup's and three releases.

This was supposed to have been my last charter but good friends Glanville and Ian du Plessis, along with Gideon Nateler phoned and wanted to come early June. I took a week off in Tofo and was back on the 2nd to start fishing the next day. For the first time in three months, it had blown from the north the whole week and with the water a tad off color the fishing proved to be a bit on the slower side. On our second day we went exploring down San Sebastian and got some 2 big wahoo, along with some kingfish, cuda and other species on the jig.

On the way back we still managed to raise four sailfish simultaneously with Gideon releasing his first ever billfish.

Alex with a jigged rock cod... and not Glanville's biggest fish on the jig!!!

Straight after Gary Loader and his three sons, Andrew, Ross and Rory arrived for our last season charter. What a great bunch of guys who unfortunately had a slow time on the water.





The first day we did a morning at lighthouse, coming unbuttoned on a sailfish early and catching an extra 8 game fish. On our second day we went to San Sebastian and got some big wahoo. On the way back just as we approached the northern section of the Canyon amongst a school of frigate bonnies we hook up to a 250 lbs + Marlin on a TLD 25 with 30 pound line. After surviving the first run and clearing lines we thought we were in control and started chasing the fish, when the line mysteriously parted. After two weeks of flat calm seas, eventually a cold front moved in and we did not fish the next two days.

Finally on Friday the 12th the wind subsided and we had a flat day down south at San Sebastian. We raised a good number of sailies but the fish were very shy and unresponsive. We also live baited a bonnie on the reef and released a nice size marble rock cod. The guys were flying out Saturday but we still went out for a couple of hours in the morning. We actually left the lodge in the dark and in flat calm seas Andrew hooked up and released a nice saily at sunrise.

Just a perfect way to finish the season...

It was the first time, in the nine years I have fished here, that we had electric blue water straight through the season. I mean we were having 30 meter plus visibility on our reef dives...it was utterly insane. In that sense alone it was great, thought a

casual moderate wind from the opposite direction, just enough so that it did not spoil the water color, would have been good to stir things a little. With the sailfish, although the south creates the right conditions to congregate and hold the fish, it's when it blows from northerly quarters that the fish seem to feed better. Thought the sailfish were not as consistent or in big pods like in previous years, they were the most aggressive we have experienced here and at almost 45%, our hookup ration was by far the best we have ever had. Up until late April and before the northerly brought in greener water, our average was 2.8 sailfish releases per fishing day, so even though action was not as fast as usual the numbers were still pretty good.

Ahead it's Madeira for the big blue Girls until I get back to Bazaruto in September for my favorite time of the year...and if the upcoming Marlin Season is half as good as last year we are in for a hell of a good time!!!

Hope to see you then.

All the best, tight lines & healthy releases,

Duarte

