



IN 2010
DIRK
VISITS
DIRK
HARTOG
ISLAND

BIRTHDAY BOY



Birthday boy with his new toy and 2 prized species, Samson and Mulloway!



Rod and his personal best Snapper



Birthday boy with his new toy and a "stored" Spaniard



The birthday boy with his first ever Mulloway



Spanish mackerel courtesy of Dampier Reef



The bear with a Spangled emperor



Winners are grinners, the boys enjoying a happy hour beer

By Rob Torelli



T

he waters off Dirk Hartog Island, West Australia are fast becoming a very popular destination for my spearfishing charters. The reason is simple, plenty of quality pelagic and reef fish species that can be speared by your average spearfisherman in only ten meters of water!

March 2007 saw a small group of keen spearos join me for a weeks spearfishing at Dirk Hartog Island, on the rugged West Australian coastline. The two Australian clients were Rod Seddon and Andrew Cuttajar. It was Rods birthday present from a very generous and spearfishing friendly wife named Jo. Jo (a very keen line fisher) had booked the trip after Rod had purchased his new toy, a Riffe blue water speargun. He of course had to bring his mate along Andrew and together they went in search of some decent fish. Both guys are competent divers but being based in Melbourne their opportunities are very limited. They love their spearfishing but are new to blue water hunting and wanted to give it a try. The remaining three clients were from Italy and again were all quite good in the water and wanted some big fish action.

The first few days we did day trips from the homestead at Dirk Hartog Island. The main area we worked was the cliffs on the inside of Steep Point and area on the south western end of Dirk Hartog Island. This area produced a good variety of pelagic fish with good Samson fish and the odd sighting of Spanish mackerel. This same region produced Mulloway, Yellowtail kingfish, Bald chin grouper, Trevally and a number of nice Mangrove jacks. All the guys enjoyed freediving in amongst a magnificent cave full of Grey Nurse Sharks. One of the Italians Andrea, affectionately known as the Bear had speared a large Samson fish and had a tug of war and contest with two large Queensland Groupers. He was getting a fair introduction to this wild part of the coast. Andrew and Rod both christened their new Riffe guns with their biggest fish of their life, Samson fish over fifty pounds! Both guys had claimed all they wanted for the remainder of the trip was a good Spanish mackerel. Both divers then worked as a team utilising both flashers and chum to enhance their chances of some good Spanish. This region does after all boast the IBRSC world record Spanish mackerel at over 100 pounds!

The second half of the charter we treated ourselves to a live aboard leg of the trip. We chartered a magnificent 48-foot Cougar Cat that is ideally suited to shorter live aboard

trips. Our plan was to head north and fish around the top end of the Dirk Hartog Island and head up to Dorre Island for the night. This northern part of the island produced some amazing off shore bait balls. Rod and Andrea were the first to investigate the action and swam towards the birds. Visibility was patchy and down to 20 feet. What they saw on arrival was simply mind blowing, a small school of baitfish was being preyed upon by gorging tiger sharks, bronze whalers, cobia, various smaller tuna species and lots of yellow fin tuna. They retreated back to boat and we regrouped and made a return, this time with video camera rolling. The action was still quite amazing and it was decided that we would not shoot any fish with so many sharks and limited visibility. It was however one of the highlights of the trip.

Over the next few days we enjoyed some spectacular diving at various locations including Dampier Reef. I hadn't dived this reef in twenty years and was interested to see if it was as productive as my early investigations. I wasn't disappointed! This reef provided great opportunities for all the divers to land good Spanish mackerel, several specimens over fifty pounds. Some nice pink snapper were taken along with some coronation trout, tusk fish and several other fine eating fish. Rods birthday present was proving to be a good one with his new toy getting a serious work out.

The trip concluded with a day trip along the western side of Dirk Hartog Island in fantastic conditions. Here, a good variety of species were taken by all the boys. Rods birthday wish list was almost taken care of. He had landed both Spanish mackerel and samson fish over 50 pounds, snapper over ten pounds and a host of new species. The final day the birthday boy searched for a fish that has eluded him for over 15 years. After numerous trips to Port Stephens in search of mulloway he had eventually managed a reasonable mulloway of 30 pounds to "wrap" a fantastic birthday present.

The guys all agreed that it had been an awesome trip that exceeded their expectations. They had formed some good friendships and experienced some great encounters with manta rays, sea snakes, turtles, dolphins, sharks and plenty of pelagic reef fish. Both the Italians and "locals" have vowed to return in 2008.

Blue Water Hunting International has several seven-day packages to this region in late March 2008. We have also produced a trip DVD about this spearfishing safari to Dirk Hartog Island. Should you be interested in visiting this region or viewing this DVD contact us on enquiries@bwhi.com.au

Allesandro waiting for a predator to approach



Sandro with a tasty Mangrove Jack.



Sandro and his "PB" Spaniard.