

THE BOILING SEA

Text and Images by Rob Torelli



BIG EYE TUNA SAFARI

The author and his World Record Big Eye Tuna.

I have just returned from one of the most amazing and successful blue water freediving expeditions I could ever imagine. As a dedicated blue water freediver and spearfishing charter operator I am always on the look out for a new destination or a new frontier. Fortunately, I have just discovered the blue water spearfisherman's El Dorado.



Fighting fish whilst dodging whale sharks is the norm in the Boiling Sea.

Andre landing his Big Eye Tuna.



The boys landed a couple more fish but the larger fish were proving to be a bit more elusive.

Later that afternoon we decided to head back to the Great Barrier Reef some 40 miles closer to shore to our mother ship. That night we enjoyed a glorious feed of fresh Sashimi Big Eye Tuna on our calm anchorage.

The following morning we returned to the same general area on our game boat. This time we were targeting bigger fish. Our captain located the whale sharks in mirror calm conditions and had put us on a massive school of Big Eye Tuna. These fish were bigger with the average size being some 30 kg. Andre was first up again and displayed great patience and hunting skills to hand pick one of the bigger fish. Using the smaller 1.3 gun and reel combination, he waited for a good sized tuna and made a great penetrating shot.

Over the next 15 minutes Andre would fight the fish whilst dodging whale sharks and tuna. Andre later upsized to his Riffe Blue Water gun and made easy work of an amazing 39 kg Big Eye Tuna. The other divers followed suite and landed several nice Big Eye Tuna to 35-40 kg. Their fight with the bigger fish did attract the attention of a 3 meter Tiger shark that was again deterred by Jack. Fortunately, they subdued their catch promptly and the Tiger shark lost interest again. We continued to enjoy the massive schools of Tuna and whale sharks, trying both a little line fishing and photography.

Through out the course of the day we also encountered several marlin (both Black and Blue) and various Mahi Mahi. With all clients content and "over the moon" over there two awesome days diving they insisted that both Jack Monkiewicz (my cameraman) and I have a go at spearfishing for tuna. This is not something I would normally do on charter but given the unique opportunity I could not resist. Jack landed his first ever Mahi Mahi and a nice Big Eye Tuna whilst I documented the hunt on film. It was now my turn.

Andre hitching a ride on this curious whale shark.

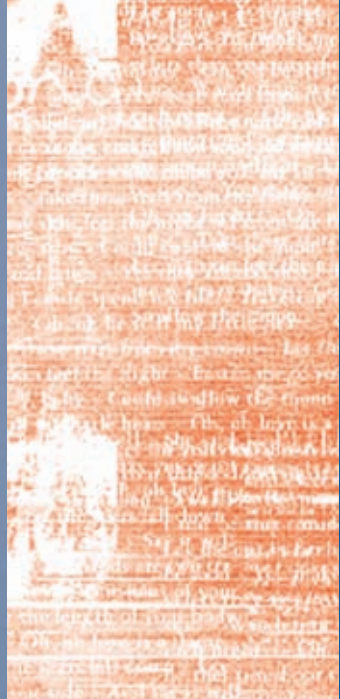


Andre Bartlome and one of his Big Eye Tuna.



I was fortunate enough to drop into a school of larger Big Eye Tuna. Fortunately I was armed with my Riffe Blue Water Express spear gun. This school was cruising at 15-25 meters and had specimens in the school up to 70 plus kilograms. I made a drop into approximately 15-20 meters and hovered there. Before too long the school approached within range. I made a 20 foot shot on a solid fish and it took off. The fight however was quite short as I had a great penetrating shot and within five minutes it was photo time. My fish weighed in at 45.5 kg or just on 100 pounds. It has since been verified as an IUSA World Record Big Eye Tuna. With line fisherman catching Big Eye and Yellow fin Tuna over 100 kg from this region I am sure it will not take long before the record books are rewritten. Fortunately, my mate Jack captured the whole catch on video and this and other action clips from this trip can be viewed on the Blue water Hunting International web site www.bwhi.com.au or the International Freediving and Spearfishing News website www.diving-action.com

This initial pioneering Big Eye Tuna Safari was a great learning curve and two of the most exciting days I have ever experienced in the open ocean. I plan to run several trips this November/December back to the Tuna Aggregation from Cairns, Queensland, Australia. Anyone interested in these trips should contact me on enquiries@bwhi.com.au



Rob Torelli and his World Record Big Eye Tuna.



Jack Monkiewicz surfaces with his Big Eye Tuna.

