

Fishing Tips Sea of Cortez Summer 2011

These tips were given to the fleet via the Sonrisa ham net over the course of the summer by Chuck on Jacaranda and Dave on Juniata. Most of them pertain to fishing from a skiff and a few pertain to fishing from the big boat. This summer has been a great summer for Dorado. Combined Dave and I caught in excess of 20 Dorado from the dinghy! The Yellow Tail and Sierra bite were equally as good.

- **Protecting your Reel from Sun Damage** – Leaving your fishing reel and rod out in the sun on the stern as a storage location is a sure way to loose fish. The line is NOT UV protected. Once the line is weakened it's all over. Marsha on Juniata made a small bag for me out of Sunbrella that is opened on either end. After we have finished fishing we rinse our gear with fresh water and then slip the cover over the reel and move the pole out of the sun.
- **Testing your line for strength and sun damage** – Strip a couple feet of line off the top of the reel and tie an overhand knot in the line and then jerk it tight. Sun damaged line will snap.
- **Dorado Cleaning tips** - An easy way to remove the skin from the Dorado. With your knife make a slight cut thru the skin all the way around the filet. Grab the edge of the skin above the gill near the head with a pair of pliers. Holding the gill in your other hand peel the skin off. Flip the fish over and do the same with the other side.
- **Trigger Fish Cleaning** - Using a box cutter with a razor blade cut around the filet exactly as you would do for the Dorado. Using a pliers starting at the head grab the skin and pull it off. BEWARE do not get your hand near the mouth they bite even when being fileted.
- **Fish Teasers** - Use a few old cd's or DVD's and tie them together and drag them 20-30 feet behind the boat in front of your lures. (Suggested by the Dark Side) Jacaranda uses a clear wine bottle stuffed with potato chip bags, corked and then dragged behind the boat. We have seen Dorado swim right up to it to investigate.
- **Keeping Hooks Sharp** – Use of a hook sharpener is a must. Sharp hooks catch fish so keep your hooks razor sharp!
- **Testing Hook Sharpness** - Drag the hook over your finger nail. It should make a solid cut in your nail if the hook is sharp.
- **Boobie Hook Removal** - Boobies diving mean there are bait fish and bait fish means there are larger fish around. Boobies get excited and many times will dive after your fishing lures. Its only time before you catch one. Now the fun begins.... Glove up! Boobies have a sharp bite and with a hook attached to them

they are not happy campers. Reel them in and careful but quickly grab the Boobie by the beak with the gloved hand. Move your hand to hold the beak and at the same time cover the eyes. This will calm them down and allow you to carefully remove the hook. Be gentle and hopefully do as little damage as possible allowing them to fly away and attack your lure another day. Also a rag over the head will calm the Boobie down as well.

- **Reel Drag Setting-** Drag setting is critical to catching fish. To set the drag after letting the lure out grab the line and pull. There should be some resistant to the line when you pull but the line should be able to be pulled out. When trolling near rocks (Chuck) always set the drag to a fairly light setting in case we hook a rock or reef the line will not snap. This allows us to work on getting our lure back without losing it.
- **Fishing Float** – I (Chuck) always have a small 2” fishing float in my fishing bag. If I snag a rock or hook a fish that dives into a hole and refuses to budge we pull the line in reasonably tight. Pull 3-4’ of loose line off the reel and cut it off. Tie this line around the float and toss it over. Come back with your mask and snorkel and retrieve your expensive lure. Luckily this past season I have not lost a single lure
- **Pole Position** - From the dingy we keep the rod about 90 degrees to the boat. This allows the fisherperson to observe the pole tip and watch the lure action. Once you have a hook up put the pole up in the 11 o’clock position. Never point the pole tip towards the fish as this transfers the load to reel and often you can lose your fish.
- **Pumping the Pole** – While trolling if you slowly move the rod forward about 3’ and then quickly back to your regular fishing position it will simulate a bait fish that might be injured. Quite often we catch the fish on the back swing.
- **Use of a Fish Stringer** - I have been using a Skin Diver Stringer for a number of years now. This is a heavy SS wire loop attached to a piece of webbing with a quick release buckle. Before this we just used a sail tie. Using a stringer keeps the fish in the water and alive while you continue fishing. You can purchase these SS stringers in any dive shop and we have seen them in many of the fishing stores on the Baja. We also use the stringer from the big boat. Once caught and landed, the fish is put on the stringer, gills cut and tossed back overboard to bleed out!
- **Bleeding your freshly caught fish** - I use this method to lessen the blood when cleaning the fish and improving the quality of meat. After your fish is on the stringer and in the water pull the stringer up and lift the gill plate up on the fish with your fish knife. Slice across the gill plates. Drop the fish back into the water and you will notice the blood flowing out. Within a few minutes the fish is now ready to clean and the bloody mess will be greatly reduced. Dave does this

immediately for any fish I don't do this with the dorado until I get back to the boat as they usually swim with the dinghy and stay fresh. Just a personal choice to slit them now or later.

- **SS Leader Wire-** I (Chuck) always use SS leaders on our spinning rod setup and fishing from the dinghy. We lost dozens of expensive lures the first summer in the sea and quickly learned that many fish have very sharp teeth. Barracuda, Trigger fish, Sierra to name a few. We started with solid SS wire using a haymaker twist to attach the wire to the lure and swivel. This did not work out due to the wire being very fragile. If you grabbed the wire it would kink and bend. Next we switched to coated 1x7 SS wire. The problem with this wire is as soon as the clear coating cracks and lets water in the wire would rust and discolor the coated wire. What we finally ended up with is 1X7 SS bare braided wire. (AFW 1x7 Surf Strand 60lb test Color Camo requiring #2 AFW sleeves). We make these up by the dozens at 2' lengths and store them in our fishing bag. The 2' length works the best as it's the perfect length to grab the top of the leader and still reach the fish.
- **Lure Speed -** Trolling from the dinghy or big boat speed is critical. Some lures like the Rapala and Yo-Zuri work best at less than 4 knots others like feathers or cedar plugs require speed in the 5-7 knot range. You can usually tell with the Rapala or Yo-Zuri how fast or slow to troll by watching the lure when placed in the water. Its needs to jerk and swim like a live fish. The greater the movement the more realistic it looks. Normally the smaller the lure(Rapala & Yo-Zuri) the slower you will need to travel.

I hope you can use a few of these tips. Both Dave and I rarely came back to the boat without fish this summer. It's a learning curve and we are happy to talk fishing. If you see us in an anchorage stop by and say hello!!

Keep your hooks sharp & Happy Fishing

Chuck Jacaranda

Dave Juniata