

Big Jobfish

By Doug Hanning

Green jobfish are an elusive prey most of the time, generally on approach they will hang well outside of range and usually are only found on deeper reefs making them out of reach of most divers. However this is not always the case as sometimes they will swim up the water column if there is something there for them to eat.

The weather was not great but we had the time so we just had to go end of story. Dan started in the water first there was only two of us today so we were going to have to spend the drifts alone in the deep blue water, at first we found this situation a little unnerving but now we are becoming quite accustomed to it. As boatie my responsibility was to keep the boat close just in case one of the Bull sharks were to lose the plot, and also so I could burley like mad from the boat its too difficult for one lone diver to do it properly. The water was a bit too deep to dig them out so we needed to set a trap.

Dan had performed many dives to around 20 metres seeing quite a few of the typical reef fish but he was not interested in them today he wanted big fish a view I also shared, its funny like that one day you are happy to ping a few small tasty reefies the other you find yourself with a lust for large quality game.

After alternating on a series of drifts the consistent burley trail began to create some action, I noticed a yellow fin approach to smash the burley, I descended but he was too fast taking a flying shot but I think he outran the spear, damn little fellas move so quick when they are feeding. In addition to the little tuna there were also several jobfish appearing and disappearing on the burley as it sank deeper, it was proving to be a battle of attrition the question was did we have enough burley to last until we got one.

After numerous dives Dan once again found himself hanging down in amongst the burley scanning below as the jobbies milled around he was not prepared to dive deeper to get them as he knew they would simply move away from him, no patience was the name of the game. As Dan waited he decided to turn around when he came face to face with a wahoo that was closer than 2 metres on his back for god knows how long. Momentarily Dan was stunned they rarely come that close, but he gathered himself in a flash and began to swing his 1.5 metre gun around, that's not easy to do quickly and the whole movement from Dan spooked the fish he began to move away by the time Dan took the shot the fish was beyond his capabilities, potential glory is fleeting like that.

With things still smoking due to our consistent efforts with the burley I was anticipating seeing a few fish on the next drift, it was my turn for some action. Sure enough I noticed a couple of nice jobbies working on the burley as it sank closer to the reef. They were generally hanging around 20 – 25 metres, I was working out a strategy of dropping and hanging with the burley when I noticed a very large jobfish enter from stage left. He began feeding shallower at around 15 metres the burley down there was almost consumed but I feared that should I make a descent on him he would move away. Instead I decided to wait for the second wave of burley, which was now just below me at about 7 metres, to fall. That was very difficult, a true test of my nerves as my trigger finger was becoming incredibly itchy if I did not act soon it was going to start acting independently. Eventually the burley sank down to his level and I slowly descended behind it, the jobbie had tailed off a little deeper to collect some smaller pieces he had missed earlier, I laid motionless mid water waiting to see how this would unfold. The fish started to rise he had noticed the burley and was hungry for more; he began taking the bait when something very unusual happened. The jobbie noticed me, turned and headed straight over towards me, this was

highly unorthodox behaviour from such an elusive species; I was stunned but not paralysed as I aimed and pulled the trigger releasing the spear as the fish approached me. The shot entered the front end of the fish then exited down near the tail, the response from the jobbie was to almost spear me, he charged forward like a rampaging unicorn just slicing past me, as I turned to get out of the way I noticed a large Bull shark was only a couple of metres from all this. The Jobbie then dived rapidly and down went the shark in



hot pursuit it was all happening so fast. In one motion I hit the surface yelling 'boat!' while quickly grabbing my rig. I started hauling it up in a mad rush to beat the shark when Suddenly the line went slack, 'damn it' I thought the shark has beaten me to him, well maybe not yet as below me appeared the jobbie now swimming straight up at me! This time he had attracted more attention there were now three sharks

aggressively pursuing him. In one of those miracle moments where everything just comes together the jobbie flew past me, I grabbed hold of the spear using the momentum of the fish to throw it in the boat which was now right beside my head, then very quickly I jumped in the boat to get away from the savages, the whole event from shot to boat took just 90 seconds, now that is how you land that big job! I bet that has not been done with a jobbie of this size too often before.

It was about this time that I realised we had a 10 kilo fish in the boat that had not been killed, not that I needed to remind Dan of this as he was in the midst of a titanic struggle for survival in trying to subdue the beast, eventually he resorted to lying on top of it before giving it the old iki jimi. The fish came in at an impressive 10.6 kilos we don't get many around that size so I was very satisfied. With the rain beginning to pelt down and the ocean not becoming any tamer we decided to call it a day besides I had a big jobbie to show off to my other dive mates.