

Bluewater Hunting Brizzi Style

By Daniel Hanning.

Brisbane at times can provide some exciting spearfishing action, I still find it somewhat surreal to live in a city of 1.5 million people and still be within an hours boat ride to deep blue water, schools of mackerel, wahoo and the odd tuna or billfish.

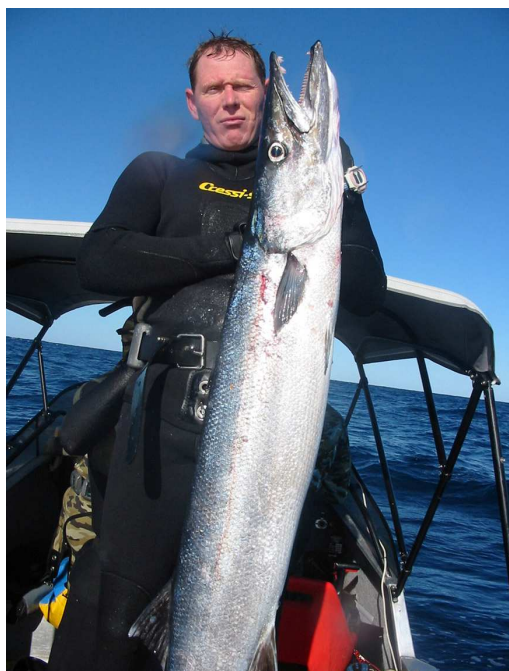
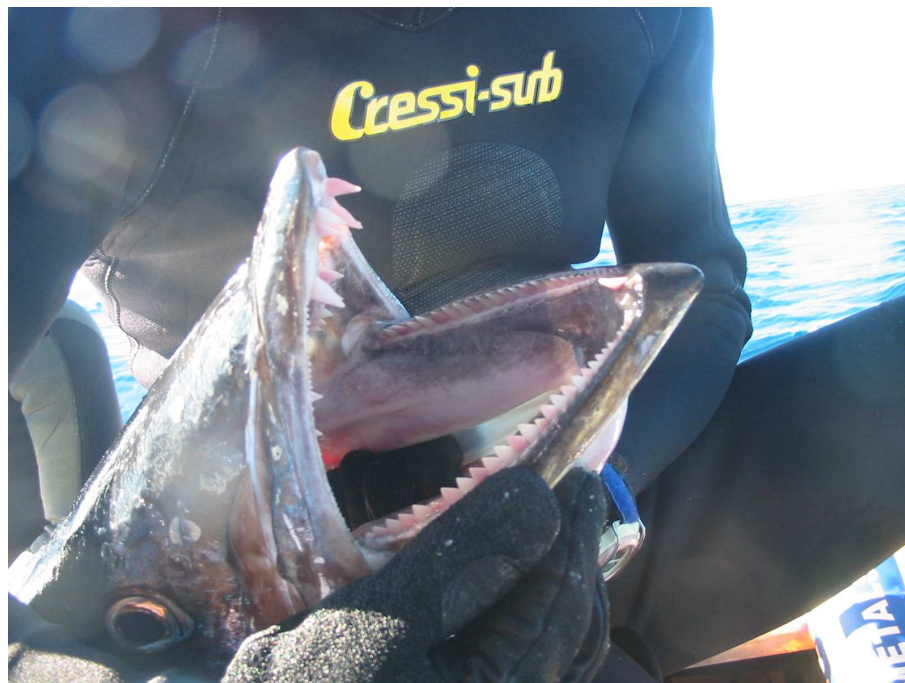
I have been spearfishing now for two years, the waters off Brisbane have become a playground for myself and a select group of hard core spearo's. In this time we have been fortunate enough to spear with some very experienced divers showing us what can be achieved in this sport.

On this particular day we decided to get out there and challenge ourselves on both a mental and physical level, so we pushed out further past our usual reefs to a much deeper reef than we had dived before.

We entered the water to find ourselves immersed in beautiful blue with about 25 metres visibility, the reef was not in view from the surface.

One of the divers onboard this day was Tappies Joubert a recent immigrant from South Africa, Taps is a very experienced diver whom has dived among Great Whites back home he is a doctor during the week and a submarine in the weekends.

Taps had the honour of the first dive of the day, we watched with awe at he levelled out at 25 metres and waited for what seemed an eternity, then bang away goes his rig trailing a nice Spanish. My brother Doug and Cousin Brett both descended immediately but the school of Spanish had passed, however swimming through sawtails Doug & Brett



were both able to spear a barracuda each. Now floats were flying in all directions and it was only the first drift.

Enough I thought my turn for a look and down I went flattening at 20 metres I could see a shape in the distance approaching, possibly interested in the activity we had created in the area. The shape began to take form as the distance closed, then finally I realised....Dog Tooth Tuna!! A nice one of about 20 Kilos unbelievable for this far south I have only ever seen pups before. Maintaining an intercept course I began to sing in my head "here doggie doggie", "here doggie doggie", I was almost ready to fire when he spooked and veered off, damm! on the way up the "here doggie doggie" was replaced with "stupid #@%&\$#* mut".

Taps had already thrown his macky in the boat and was now fighting a 20 kilo barracuda, I watched as the barracuda tore free only to get slammed by Brett who just happened to be coming up from another dive.

After breathing up Brett decided to do his deepest dive to date, he descended to 29 metres all well and good until he hit the surface coughing up blood, oh well no pain no gain, he would continue to dive beyond 20 for the rest of the day without any real problems.



The boat was now home to three barracuda not what we were after so we decided to burley over a ledge that came up from 40 to 25 metres, the current was hitting it quite nicely with schools of baitfish hanging around. The addition of burley received an immediate response with Brett almost hunting down some aggressively feeding snapper.

It was Taps turn again he plunged into the blue on the front of the ledge, unfortunately he still sporting his green water Cape Town rig line which maxed out at 26 metres, taps promptly untethered his gun and continued his descent beyond 30 metres in pursuit of a nice green jobfish he had sighted from above. Perhaps he was lucky he did not move into range of this fish as his beloved Rabbitech may have been put at risk.

Things were really beginning to heat up on this reef now, I managed to get my spear stuck in 31 metres of water after missing a Coronation Trout of about 8 kilos, I could not believe my eyes as I have never seen one this size before nor one this far south. It is a daunting prospect having to free a spear that far down when you are trying to breath up on the surface I can assure you, after one attempt I decided stuff this and I sent the South African down instead.

Another mate of ours Daniel Skinner whom had missed out on the early action now seized his chance sporting his brand new 1.5 metre railgun he slammed a large and strong kingie. Meanwhile Brett descended beneath the fighting kingie levelling out at about 18 metres, I watched as he waited silently then ever so slowly he began to rise, when suddenly he turned and plunged down deeper then horizontally he began to pursue his prey. I could see he was chasing a school of trevelly, I could not tell what type but I noticed he was getting quite deep. Then Bang away when the fish straight for the reef below, Brett obviously did not want to get his gun stuck on the bottom so he held his gun and fought hard for the surface. He was not really making any ground and eventually had to let go in a frantic rush for air, he had been down a while when he hit the surface gasping for much needed oxygen. Fortunately he had fought the fish long and hard enough preventing it from hitting the reef below, as I commenced hauling it up on the rig line until Brett regained his strength.



On the next drift Tappies also shot a solid kingie but he could not stop it from running into the reef some 32 metres below, with the fish and the gun all tangled up amongst the mix of rock and coral below he prepared himself. Descending to the bottom it took taps a few seconds before he could locate the gun but strangely he found that the line had been cut, he surmised that it must have cut on the reef but little did he no the real reason was about to become blaringly obvious. He turned to his left to find his kingie...well it used to be his kingie now it was the property of a 3.5 metre tiger shark and so was his spear. The shark was holding the entire fish in its mouth with the spear still trailing back down along the tigers lateral line, it nonchalantly faded into the blue mist. As if that wasn't enough picture this, here is Tappies whom has just witnessed a large tiger take his fish and his spear, holding a once powerful weapon now nothing but a walking stick, a broken man on the bottom in 32 metres of water when to make things worse he turns to his right to face the eyeball of a 150 plus kilo Black Marlin staring at him. It's a cruel game sometimes.

With the esky almost full and the day winding to a close we decided we would have just one more drift over the ledge before heading in. Diving down on the ledge I was met with a wall of barracuda beginning to circle me, even if they are only barracuda it still is a beautiful sight to see so many large predators staring straight at you. Just when I was thinking about heading up a large school of Amberjacks hit the scene just intermingling with the cuda's, its times like these you hesitate on the shot just to take and marvel at what is presented before you....well for two seconds anyway, I claimed the closest Ambo a good shot which resulted in a relatively easy fight.



Upon hitting the surface I informed the closest diver to me whom happened to be Brett of the situation below. Brett did not really listen to me, all he heard was Amberj... and away he went. He was presented with the same incredible sight as I, except now a large school of golden trevelly had come to the party. Brett selected his Ambo and bang!, the fish went off like a rocket, instantly the barracudas, trevelly and the other Amberjacks dispersed along with Brett's gun into the blue horizon. Brett surfaced near his float and commenced heaving the fish back towards him knowing he had placed a good shot that would not pull out. The fish was now only 5 metres under the surface and was still thrashing around when something quite remarkable happened, the big Black from earlier came flying up from out of the deep passing only centimetres underneath the struggling fish. Brett watched as the Marlin passed the Ambo before

stopping almost instantly turning his massive head around in an almost regal display of greatness to stare straight back at him. Brett immediately started yelling "there's a Marlin underneath me" hoping that someone would respond aside from the one idiot in the boat whom replied "well why don't you shoot it then". Daniel Skinner happened to be nearby in the water, he needed no more prompting descending quickly he began the chase, the Marlin had analysed the situation and was on his way out, Daniel realising he was as close as he could get decided that a tail shot was the only option. That Marlin swotted that spear away like it was a nothing but an annoying mosquito; I swear I could almost hear him say "I don't think so".

So that ended another day's diving proving to be a challenging day, a rewarding day but above all an inspiring day, I hope to experience many more days like this out of this south east Queensland paradise know as Brisbane.