

# Nice Set of Hooters

By Brett Craik

When the forecast reads crappy for the weekend everyone including myself takes the opportunity to do those other mundane activities that life offers to us. The winds were forecast to range between 15 – 25 knots for the two days so everyone thought it's just not worth it, the Hannings decided to work the weekend and well I thought a drinking/nite club session will partially fill the void, I was wrong it just never comes close. Arriving at home on Sunday morning at 9:30am after staying somewhere else the night before I was met by Dougie saying do you want to go for an afternoon dive, feeling a little worse for wear I paused before slapping myself and giving the all clear.

It was just the three musketeers today, it had actually been a while since just the three of us had had a dive together, unlike many of the other divers individualism is not part of our repertoire, we work exceptionally well as a team and always get results, therefore I had a good feeling about this afternoon even if it was only going to be a couple of hours.

The forecast had improved too but quite late in the piece consequently there were very few boats out, that always helps us. We didn't make it to the reef until about 1:30pm immediately starting a drift with two in the water one gun & one camera.



particular reef in question had a couple of boats trolling around at the time we began, this tends to scare off or at least push the pelagics a little deeper, making our job just that bit tougher. The first couple of drifts produced very little action at all, on face value it would have appeared to be a ghost town but we knew better the fish were there we just had to expose them. An intense session of burleying began and it just happened to coincide with the departure of the trolling boats. Immediately we found a response, the reef below came alive but of more interest to us was the appearance of the first wahoo, I was in the boat at the time but I just knew from watching the guys exactly what was happening. Dan swiftly disappeared from the surface followed immediately by Doug with the camera to capture the action the next thing I noticed was a float hurtling away from them at a rapid speed with water spaying up in the air, such power and speed it just had to be a wahoo I knew it.

Some 10 minutes later Dan threw a 22/23 kilo wahoo onto the deck of the boat and there was much rejoicing. The fish was in great shape we cut open its belly to have a look and found a Mac Tuna perfectly sliced into three pieces matching the shape of the wahoo's jaw, we deduced that the wahoo must have hit the poor little tuna at incredible pace directly from below, remind me to never be reincarnated as a baitfish.

Back in the water I took the gun for a change and on the next two dives I noticed a very large jobfish was taking a feed on our burley, they are a very difficult fish to hunt. Patiently I prepared at the surface thinking perhaps this



time I would get in range, as my heart slowed I exhaled and sank beneath the waves when suddenly out of the corner of my eye a large familiar shape appeared, another wahoo! In a flash I changed course and propelled myself towards the unsuspecting fish, this took Doug on camera by surprise as he could not gather himself in time to capture the shot, the fish ran like a bullet, it was totally out of sight in the 25 metre vis water within a couple of seconds. I then began freestyling after the float which was now aquaplaning across the surface. I was surprised by the run it make me think perhaps my shot was not that great, Doug must have been thinking along the same lines as he called for another gun from the boat for a second shot. Dan the boatie threw over an untethered gun quickly as my wahoo made a pass underneath the boat, Doug had looked down when he noticed a much larger Wahoo had appeared to see what all the commotion was about. Doug screamed to Dan "give me a gun with a rig!" There was a large splash as a fully kitted up gun hit the water next to Doug he loaded it up but by that time the wahoo had vanished. I now had my fish clearly in sight below me as Doug began to swim towards



me in preparation for the nail in the coffin, when suddenly out of the blue literally the wahoo appeared again he must not have not satisfied his curiosity. I watched as the wahoo slowly moved away while Doug left the surface with a camera in one hand and a gun in the other. I thought to myself there is no way in hell he is going to pull this one off, I know from experience just how

difficult it is to film and shoot reef fish and that is while resting on the reef, to chase a pelagic midwater with a gun and camera trying to equalise at the same time is even much more difficult than that. Doug pressed on as the wahoo pushed further away into the current he was around the 20 kilo mark that I was fairly sure of, a nice fish indeed, I was amazed to see Doug was actually closing the gap, it then became apparent that he was going to close in range for a shot, I watched in anticipation of a probable miss when in a flash there was a shick and the wahoo rolled over in submission. I could not believe it he had somehow run it down and stoned it while carrying a heavy bulky camera and a 1.5 metre gun, it was truly awesome I had to admit that, especially since the whole thing was caught on camera. I cried out a "Wahoooo!" at the surface thus alerting Dan to what had just transpired a moment of brilliance.



My wahoo was almost dead now so we pulled them up and began to throw them in the boat when four bull sharks came to the party they were no doubt attracted by my wahoo not Doug's, rising from the depths they began circling about ten metres below us 'too late suckers'. The wahoo were quickly boated and Doug had got in



the boat so I quickly asked for the still camera to see if I could get a couple of pics of the sharks but unfortunately they knew the wahoo were gone and began to disappear as I dived on them. In the space of no time at all the esky began to look impressive three wahoo will do that, we still had some time left for another couple of drifts too so we set about getting back into the action.

As we began to give it another go a couple of boats happened by and began trolling consequently the two wahoo we caught sight of on this drift were down deeper 15 - 20 metres and difficult to chase unless they happened to pass underneath just as you are half way down. Instead we focussed our attentions on a massive jobfish that was having a good old feed in the burley trail. This fish was so smart it would not let us get anywhere near close enough to taking a shot and if



we aimed at a piece of burley it would take everything else and wait until we had to surface before taking that piece too, this was most frustrating. The jobbie was just too smart for us being around 15 kilos I guess it may have developed a bit of nous over the years. After 10 or 15 dives at the fish we decided today the jobbie had won his freedom for now, we would however return to claim his scalp another day.

The sun was now setting over the horizon leaving a glowing trail for us to follow home, it was a pleasant trip back always a pleasure seeing a nice set of hooters come on board.