

The Inconspicuous Rock

By Daniel Hanning

It never really ceases to amaze me where we find fish sometimes repeatedly they appear in places we do not expect to see them. But each time they do we learn more about them, each time unlocking more secrets, secrets which in the fullness of time will expose them or their brothers as we become more experienced and efficient hunters.

A rare overcast day greeted us first up, the wind was strong from the south too so it was a little cool being wet and out of the water, the water at 24 degrees was okay although a few of the lads still found the wind on the back a bit cool, including me.

After only a couple of dives working a nice drop off in rough conditions you could already see a couple of parrot and tuskfish hanging off our floats and we were only just working in the shallows now the boys were now ready to look deeper.

I was ready to plunge down the drop off when both Daniel skinner and my brother Doug shot down before me I had a strange feeling I had just missed the boat as they began moving down past the ledge. I know both of these divers very well and subsequently I expected the skinman, as we call him, to out dive Doug for time and probably depth but it would count for nothing as Doug would inevitably haul up some magic fish to which we would all inevitable get pissed at him about and then skinner would inevitably have some hard luck story which would inevitable fall on deaf ears. Its all really quite inevitable if you think about it, such is life on the high seas.



Doug hit the bottom while skinner typically took his position a few metres deeper down the drop off, they both waited there holding for some action when what's that, a coral trout! Doug had noticed it was down a little deeper, skinner could also see it but he was further back on the drop. The trout began to slowly cruise up the ledge foolishly deciding to cross in front of Doug. It would be his final mistake, the shot was good but required some aggressive resistance from Dougie, he didn't want the spear stuck in a cave down 20 metres that's just too much hassle. Doug quickly threw the trout in the boat snapping a few pics to capture the remarkably bright colouration before it faded somewhat.

The guys had seen a few mackerel in the area and but they were behaving quite wary, the idea would have been to keep trying to hunt for them but the wind had increased significantly and it was beginning to get quite rough where we were diving so the decision was to dive some more sheltered waters, besides it had been



quite a good morning session whatever happened from here out would be a bonus.

Finding some low scattered rocks in about 10- 12 metres a few of the guys remarked that there appeared to be significant bait in the area, entertaining the though that perhaps this rather featureless terrain could turn on some fish, well here would be only one way to find out time to get wet and get hungry again. The boys staggered out in this shallow water and began performing several long drifts using the flow to our advantage it was easy to cover a very large amount of territory in a short while.

Eventually the long drifts produced sightings of several good reef fish and a couple of mackerel too but they remained a little wide in the 20 metres



vis. I was beginning to tire of diving on flat nothing rock when I spied something a little larger up ahead, it was a rock about 2 metres wide and 1 metre high which appeared to cut under on the front edge, normally this would be an everyday unremarkable rock but in an area like this I thought perhaps it could be valuable real estate.

I dived prior to the rock letting the current of destiny take me towards it, the rock began to take shape the dark shades began to lighten growth could be seen and each nook and cranny became more defined. I was focused on this subtle and unexceptional rock when suddenly several cobia leapt out from behind it, they must have been heading up current from behind, I was gob smacked what are they doing here? I thought as I extended on the leader of the pack, ignoring all the reef fish looking blankly at me I selected the leader and took the shot. The shot was solid but they are a strong fish and I had a long fight to deal with, importantly I paused

briefly in the fight to yell to Brett in the boat so he could grab the waypoint, the rock was now ours. Once the mark was taken I was able to drift away in the fight joining the jealous boys back in the boat where I explained how many other fish I had seen on that small rock.



With this vital piece of information obtained the powers that be (i.e. Dougie the enforcer) made the decision to perform short consistent sweeps on the rock, Brett positioned us up current from the rock and yelled 'drop now' as we leapt out like a company of paratroopers we prepared to commence the Saturation Bombing, or Blitzkrieg for our German readers.

The effect of the attack was devastating each diver pulled quality fish in such a short space of time we were able to pull three drifts before the rock was silenced. They just kept appearing it was staggering, when you consider it was a tiny insignificant rock. The cobia may have moved on but Tusky after Tusky was thrown in the boat including a nice Venus usually they don't get

very big, Brett had his hands full dealing with all of them not to mention a couple of cod too it was all quite incredible.

With already a bunch of fish to clean we decided to spare the remainders for another time. The inconspicuous rock had been exposed as a fish magnet, we will be returning for a visit and possibly a raid in the near future I predict.

