



Sportfishing Club of the British Isles

Newsletter - December 2019

Dear Member

Firstly I have to advise that for a significant part of this year Charles Reaves, our Club Chairman, has been suffering from the debilitating and on-going effects of a serious knee infection; complications arising from earlier surgery and subsequent procedures. Given this, and despite support from existing Committee members, he feels he can no longer effectively continue in this role and has advised he will formally offer his resignation at the AGM. A shame, and on behalf of all Thank You so much Charles for your selfless contribution to the Club's administration over several decades.

Coupled with this much, over the last 40 years, has changed particularly in the way we communicate, access information and bank. So given Charles' pending resignation it seemed appropriate for the existing Committee to re-consider elements of its structure and, within it, individual members responsibilities. Those discussions are currently on-going and something - our ideas - we would wish to discuss with the membership at the AGM. What is apparent though at this particular stage is that we are likely to suggest that perhaps one possibly two additional members could join the Committee to relieve Chris Flower of much of the existing administrative load. It isn't envisaged the roles would be particularly onerous therefore if, in advance of the meeting, you feel you may be able to assist would contact me to discuss it. My home 'phone number's 01732 - 667451.

Any rate, moving on now to **Notable Fish**. Here much is obviously regularly reported through the Club's private Facebook page but for those not accessing it if I could just single out a few.

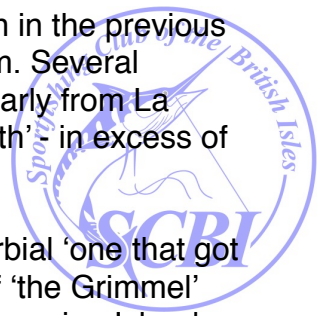
Marlin. Following the capture of his World Record Pacific Blue Marlin on 80lb stand-up gear - 1238lbs that still stands to this day - from Rodrigues Island in 2007 and, subsequently in 2011, a 'grander' Atlantic Blue - 1150lbs - from Cape Verde Stephan Kreupl set his sights on a 1000lb Black to complete a **Triple Grander Slam**. To my knowledge no angler had ever achieved that, although several 'globe trotting' skippers over the years have.

Any rate Stephan decided to focus on targeting one from what is arguably THE world's Black Marlin 'capital', Australia's Great Barrier Reef. And he finally got there after what has been some 8 years (and 96 days) in the coming with a 1032 pounder.

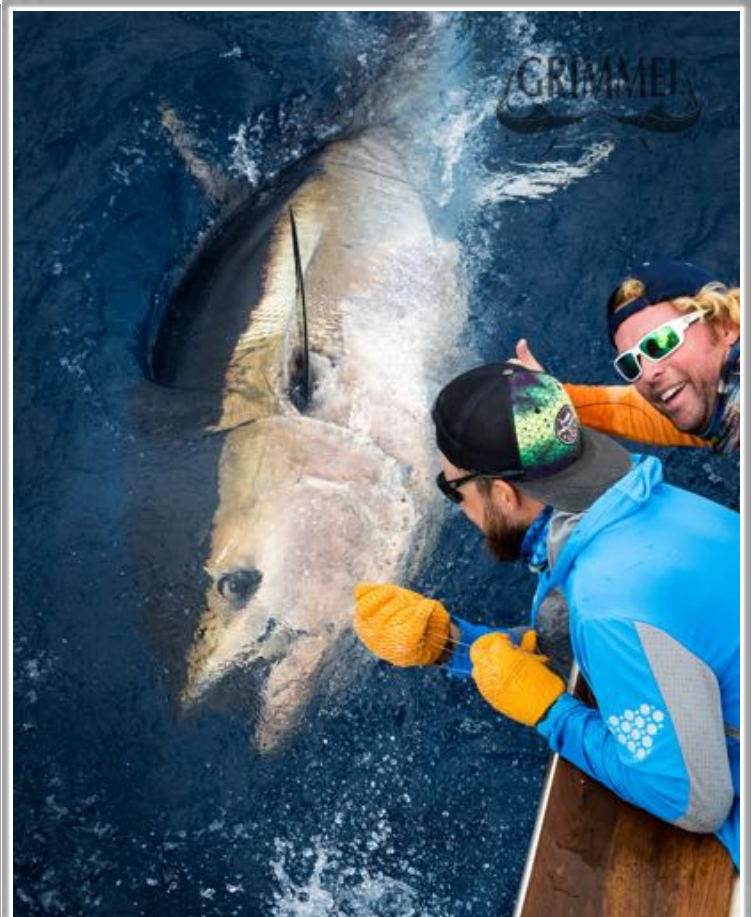
There's a well illustrate blog of his trip [on this link](#) with a heartfelt summary of those mixed sentiments and feelings he experienced throughout this quest. Well done Stephan, what an amazing and (currently still) a unique achievement!



Tuna. We've already seen Steve Murphy's excellent update on UK Bluefin in the previous newsletter, but this wasn't the only places our members encountered them. Several members focussed on the Spring migration through the Canaries, particularly from La Gomera where Marc Towers released the largest, a fish estimated at 'North' - in excess of - 800lbs.

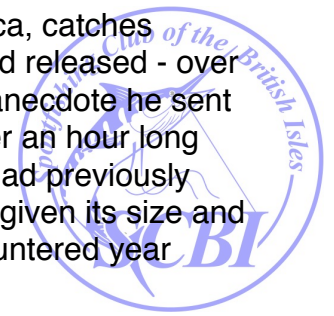


But that wasn't I understand the largest encountered - that was the proverbial 'one that got away'! Terry Smith and his brother-in-law (Dave Harnett), fishing with Olaf 'the Grimmel' Grimkowski (a number of our members will know Olaf from places like Ascension Island, the Azores and Cape Verde Islands) - released four Bluefin up to 700lbs. Dave then hooked a huge fish on a livebait which, despite the deckhand's prolonged attempts to raise the fish on the leader, they could not get to the surface. The leader finally popped. And those that know Olaf will know he was not impressed! How big? No one seemed willing to put an estimate on it beyond it was HUGE. In addition to the Bluefin they also had several BigEye topped out by Dave's one, taped out at 356lbs. (Richard Wooding also had a BIG BigEye, a 320 pounder, on his annual trip to Cape Verde as well as releasing seven Blue Marlin from 8 up to an estimated 700 pounder.)



Throughout the Summer months as well Roger Burston, based on the neighbouring island of Gran Canaria, was also encountering occasional Bluefin mixed in with the Marlin. It proved to be an excellent year for the Blue Marlin there; somewhere in those earlier formative years of the Club that was very much our 'spiritual home', and where Ann Holmes got her World Record Blue Marlin on 50 and an earlier light tackle Bluefish.

As well new member, Vince Riera who runs a charter operation in Mallorca, catches numbers of Bluefin ranging up to over 700lbs - all of which are tagged and released - over what is an extended season. I have to say though I found this particular anecdote he sent in, regarding a July charter with Chris Flower, particularly interesting. After an hour long fight they had the Bluefin boat-side and, as boarded, Vince noted that it had previously been tagged. They replaced the original tag and released the fish which, given its size and shape, indicated that it was part of a population, a sub-stock of fish encountered year round off Mallorca.

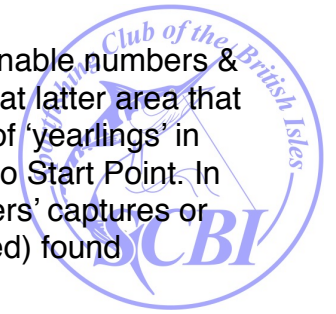


Vince then started investigating and established that it was a fish he'd earlier tagged a few months previous, in May. Even more surprising though was that May encounter had been a **RE-CAPTURE**, the fish had been caught three times within a year! Amazing!

But it's not only Bluefin Vince also targets Broadbill - and he's recently experimented with night-time trolling for them - and Spearfish. He's suggested, if you're interested, particularly for Broadbill then the New Moon phases in May, August and September are good. (June and July are also good but those dates are already booked.) 'Combinations' are also possible with, he noted, the larger 400lb plus Bluefin being present in the Spring, smaller 200lb plus fish in the late Summer/early Autumn with the Spearfish more common from June through August. Pricing structures are [set out here](#) but Vince has kindly offered fellow Club members a 15% discount off all of those rates.



Sharks. 2019 has seen the return, albeit currently in small numbers, of Porbeagles to Isle of Wight waters and the largest reported to me was an estimated 250 pounder taken by Dave Geddes; a PB for Dave. He's still though waiting for that elusive Thresher. But, in that regard, longstanding Club member, Danny Vokins, reported that his family - and in this case it was his son, another Dan - released what is the family's 50th Thresher overall aboard his boat **Midnight Rambler**. There's a video of the capture [on this link](#) and, listening to the sound track, Danny's family over the years have also racked up 100 Porbeagles off the Island.



Sticking with that theme Porbeagles are also being encountered in reasonable numbers & sizes off the North coast of Cornwall and in the Celtic Deeps - it was in that latter area that I first targeted them this year slow trolling - and there have been reports of 'yearlings' in significant numbers all the way along the South coast, from Mounts Bay to Start Point. In fact some are at times proving a nuisance around wrecks 'snaffling' anglers' captures or taking lures. Unfortunately though a number are being captured (and killed) found entangled in gill nets set around the wrecks.

Threshers are always perceived as relatively rare captures in our waters. But reports of occasional fish appear to be increasing off areas like the South coast of Cornwall by anglers fishing, quite often, relatively close inshore around the bait shoals, the same bait shoals being targeted by the Bluefin Tuna.

Then to the 'mainstay' of our fishing - Blue Sharks. Numbers definitely appeared down this year off the West Country. Although the atrocious weather conditions that led, amongst many other charters, to the cancellation of the Club's three day Plymouth tournament was patently a factor. Even so - just selecting two - Chris Adams and Andy Manfield released qualifying 'Shark Club' - SACGB - specimens with Andy's, the largest, estimated at 215lbs. Also off of Pembrokeshire, fishing the Celtic Deeps, numbers of Blues (and Porbeagles) seemed, again weather permitting, to hold up and Andrew Alsop's clients had a number of 200lb plus fish; the largest estimated at close to 270lbs.

Other Saltwater Specimens. Whilst obviously too numerous to report here a variety of specimens came from all of the 'normal' venues our members fish, but also from 'new' venues - Madagascar and Papua New Guinea. Those produced a whole range of species including, in both areas, decent GTs. Fellow Club members will be able to update us at the AGM on the undoubted potential of those areas.

Then Marc Towers fished - mainly shore casting - a lodge in southern Gabon, West Africa. It produced a range of species - there're some great [images on this link](#) including, and they proved elusive during the week Marc was there, three Tarpon. Marc had two. It did of course raise an imponderable that Marc, Tim Howe and I delight in speculating on - "was it Marc's 10th freshwater specimen of his 'ton up' - 100lb plus - club?" So imponderable, there is no precise answer. It was taken in freshwater, but not strictly a freshwater species...but then again, are Sturgeon and so forth? Um





Still staying with Tarpon Stephan Kreupl fished in Trinidad - southern Caribbean, just off Venezuela - where, in 5 1/2 days he released 58 Tarpon from 71 hook-ups plus a further one on a fly. Obviously a prolific fishery! Crazy stats! These were a mix of sizes 20lb juveniles through to a 130 pounder, however Stephan did report seeing

rolling fish in the 200lb range. There's a well illustrated report of the trip [on this link](#).

Freshwater. Here I'd just like to single out one particular specimen from the many reported, and reflected on the Club's private Facebook page. 'Globe trotting' Marc Towers targeted that iconic North American species - the Muskie - or to use its full 'handle' Muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*) on a trip to the Ottawa and St Lawrence river systems in Canada.



Trophy Muskies are considered 50 inch plus specimens - they tend not to weigh fish - but at what size do they become that 'once in a lifetime' catch? Marc's largest measured 59" - virtually 5 feet long - the largest the guide he was fishing with had encountered in literally 33 years of guiding. Wow!

Further details and a range of images are [on this link](#).



The '40 plus' Club. You'll perhaps recall the challenge that Charles Reaves set members at last year's AGM, to catch 40 different species in what was the Club's 40th year. From the plethora reported by our membership it has certainly brought up some strange and, at times, 'innovative' captures. (Just in case Roger Bradbury and others ask please let me confirm that *Nucella lapillus* - more commonly known as Dog Whelks - were definitely not included!) A number have already achieved or, in at least one case, significantly exceeded that target and that will be reported at the AGM. But if you have got there but perhaps been a tad lax in updating Charles could I please urge you to do so ASAP at chairmanscbi@gmail.com.

Concluding Comments. In terms of the AGM if there are any topic areas you would wish added to its agenda would you please advise Chris Flower in advance, before the end of the year. Similarly if you have any suggestions as to Rule changes. Chris' e-mail address is christopherflower471@gmail.com. Additionally should you wish to bring friends along to the meeting - individuals who may wish to consider joining the Club - again please advise Chris.

Have a great Christmas!

With best regards

Dave West