

Fishing Treasure Cay

Treasure Cay is a Bahamian hot spot that provides anglers with plenty of fishing options.

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The Abacos have long been known as a premier Bahamas big-game destination, a place where blue marlin — some of the biggest in the region — and schools of large dolphin migrate each spring through early summer. Actually, some of the largest blue marlin tend to show up here toward the end of June and beginning of July, extending the trolling game a bit for die-hard bait- and lure-draggers.

When the waters cool with the arrival of winter, wahoo — often loads of them — make their run along the islands, setting up some fast fishing between Thanksgiving and March. These fish aren't the monsters that invade San Salvador, but there are lots of 20- to 40-pounders, with the occasional 50-plus-pounders in the mix. It's more of a numbers and action game.

Land of Opportunity

Fishing pressure here is minimal during the winter, and that suits Capt. Joe Trainor of the Over Under Charters team just fine. For the past three years, Trainor, who runs out of the Treasure Cay Hotel Resort & Marina between November and March, has had remarkable wahoo fishing almost all to himself here. "It's an easy place to get to, and the fishing is excellent," says Trainor.

"The runs to the fishing grounds are short, so we spend more time fishing. Plus, there is no shortage of things to do on land here, so it appeals to anglers who wish to bring their families along."

I recently took a trip to Treasure Cay, Great Abaco, and spent a fun day of fishing with Trainor. I brought along my cousin, Terry Flora, who would be one of the designated crankers. It was early July, a period considered dead by Abaco standards. As is usual in late summer, only a handful of boats remained in the marina, with the serious marlin-fishing machines having left in search of greener (make that bluer) pastures. Yet, like winter here, summer offers a lot fishing-wise; one just needs to know where to look.

Deep in Thought

The bottomfishing during hot and sultry months can be fast. I have bottomfished in the Abacos many, many times and know just how good it can be. In fact, the largest grouper taken to date on my boat remains the 68-pound black taken by Joe Skorupa off Walker's Cay many moons ago. I've enjoyed good action with large yellowfin, black grouper, muttuns, yellowtail, and even amberjack and horse-eye jack. At times, the most impatient angler can stay busy catching bottomfish.

And bottomfishing is what we planned to do on this day. Trainor anchored in 20 feet of water, still inside the Sea of Abaco. He has spent days just idling about and using his fish finder — and even snorkeling — to uncover prime bottom. Much of it he located in the Sea of Abaco, which can be fished when high winds make it too tough for the offshore reefs. We planned on hitting a series of sharp ledges, rocks and sea fans within these relatively shallow waters even though it was calm offshore.

Hot Time in the Abacos

I'd fished before in the same general area where the Over Under 54-foot Bertram was now anchored, using pretty much the same tactics. On that particular outing, we got a few big grouper — one weighing close to 20 pounds — lost some brutes we couldn't keep out of the bottom and released several big horse-eye jacks, among other species. On this trip, Trainor put out a block of chum and then readied the 8-, 12- and 20-pound spin tackle for yellowtail, muttuns and grouper, respectively. We were spooled with 50-pound line for baiting large grouper. There was nothing fancy in the bait department, just a smorgasbord of squid, ballyhoo and mackerel. The knocker rig (a sinker riding on top of a hook) was the main terminal setup, save for small jigs tipped with squid and ballyhoo strips for the yellowtail.