



Anglers often overlook some of the more isolated islands of the southeastern Bahamas.

jack and juvenile yellowfin tuna, while dolphin could be seen chasing flying fish just offshore. The waters were alive.

We immediately deployed a trolling spread of five to seven lines, some rigged with 8¹/₂-inch, chugger-style Bluewater Lure called the Spanish Dancer and the rest sporting an 11-inch, slant-head Bluewater Lure dubbed the Rick's Fancy. The former was rigged with three feet of 130-pound fluorocarbon leader and a single 9/0 hook, while the latter was rigged with 220-pound-test fluorocarbon and a single 11/0 hook. Each hook was positioned just inside the lure's skirt. The short fluorocarbon leader on each lure was clipped to a ball-bearing snap swivel on the end of a 15-foot, 200-pound-test wind-on leader coming off the main line. Reels were Penn International 70VS reels on matching Penn International Tuna Stick Rods.

Unfortunately, fishermen aren't the only ones working the waters off Cat Island. There are lots of sharks here — big ones, too! When you hook a fish, it often turns into a race to see which party ultimately gets to keep the catch. That's why heavy tackle is a must, despite the fact that it might be overkill for most of the fish here.

Species & Seasons

The months of May and June are the months of prime time for blue marlin, with the majority of Cat Island blues weighing between 100 and 200

pounds. When they're in, it's common to get a few shots at them each day. Dolphin gang up in these waters between April and June. Schoolies typically run between ten and 15 pounds, but many larger fish are available.

Yellowfin tuna are another spring headliner. Sometimes you'll encounter schools of "footballs," while other days might yield fish of 40 to 60 pounds.

As expected, it didn't take long for the first wave of dolphin to find us. We hooked a couple of 15-pounders, then scrambled to reel in the other lures before they were attacked. While folks back in Florida might think we were crazy to run away from 15-pound dolphin, our group was after bigger game, so we kept to the outskirts of the working birds. Unfortunately, there was no

escaping the marauding dolphin hordes, which continued wreak havoc with our spread.

With all those little dolphin around, we knew that a marlin or two couldn't be far away, so we continued to work the area. However, by the end of the day we had nothing to show for our efforts save for some dolphin-scarred lures.

The next day brought more of the same. There were plenty of skipjack and dolphin off Columbus Point, along with royal-blue water in tight to the drop-off. The occasional pod of dolphin found us, and we caught a few juvenile yellowfins and skipjacks whenever we added cedar plug to the spread.

We also missed a sizable wahoo. I noticed a tug on the port outrigger clip, only to look back and catch a glimpse of the fat 'hoo disappearing into the depths. The fish had obviously attacked the lure while swimming toward the boat, putting very little tension on the release clip as severed the fluorocarbon leader.

Marlin, At Last

About an hour later, a blue marlin finally came to play. I saw the fish charge up and take the lure, so I grabbed the respective outfit and held on. With the marlin taking 80-pound line at a feverish pace, Pete Fischer began quartering on the fish while McCornell and crew cleared the cockpit.

Concerned over the extra drag created by so much line in the water, I backed off the drag a bit. Once the

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Experience Cat Island offshore action on "George Poveromo's World of Saltwater Fishing" on ESPN2. The action-packed episode, which was filmed during the author's visit last year, airs Sunday, January 16, at 8:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time. Poveromo's fifth season on ESPN2 kicks off on Sunday, January 2, and airs every Sunday through March. Twelve exciting new episodes will showcase some of salt water's greatest game fish and the most successful methods of catching them. The show is presented by *Salt Water Sportsman*. For a complete listing of episodes and times, visit www.georgepoveromo.com. — Ed.