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George Poveromo

Ray McConnell, right, slips a typical Bahamas dolphin into the box with the help of Cat Island guide Nathaniel Gilbert.

fish settled down and we began closing on it, I advanced the drag to its original setting, shifted into high gear and began gaining line, being careful to keep pressure on the fish at all times. Roughly 30 minutes later, a blue marlin of around 125 pounds was led to the transom, where Rhine billed the fish, removed the hook and turned it loose.

Soon after, another marlin crashed one of McConnell's lines. He took the rod and the fish took to the air, throwing the hook during an impressive acrobatic display. McConnell got another shot later that afternoon, but that fish also came unbuttoned.

The kicker of the day occurred while I was unhooking a dolphin in the cockpit. During this encounter we had reeled the remaining lures close to the boat to keep them away from other dolphin. With the boat sitting dead in the water, I was startled by the sound of line racing off the outfit directly behind me. Apparently a marlin had eaten one of the lures hanging off the transom!

Unfortunately, without any forward momentum to help set the hook, the fight was over before it began.

Freak strikes aside, McConnell and I enjoyed excellent fishing during our May trip to Cat Island. In fact, the prospects were so good around Columbus Point that we never felt the need to check out the other major hot spots: Tartar Bank and Devil's Point. The other plus

between the three major fishing spots and the deep drop-off paralleling Cat Island, there's usually a calm side to fish, no matter which

I saw the fish charge up and take the lure, so I grabbed the respective outfit and held on.

direction the wind is blowing.

Considering the remoteness of the area, the availability of a top-notch boat and crew, the variety of fishing spots and easy access, Cat Island should be drawing more attention from hard-core bluewater anglers in the coming years. I know I'll be back. ~

Cat Island Bonefish Option

Nathaniel Gilbert runs bonefishing trips on Cat Island, and can also guide you to great bottom-fishing and offshore trips aboard your own boat. Contact his business, Top Cat Fishing Service, by calling Hawk's Nest Resort & Marina at (242) 342-7050, or by e-mail at topcatfishing@batelnet.bs. — George Poveromo