

Trevally and a kingie!

A cracking weekend in the Bay of Islands.

By Andy Doncaster



Roelof's reward!

Okay so the weekend started with a bunch of us in serious need to get out of work and get some fishing done. As all good plans go this one was no different. Everyone ran late and some had to turn back for forgotten stuff at home... it would have been a very dry weekend if they had not turned round.

On rising we found the sea was flat, a mild swell running and only about a two foot (60 cm) shore break to contend with. My plan was to join my mate at the nearby islands after a quick throw just off the end of the peninsula while waiting for another friend to join me.

After a couple of tries and a bit of filming in different spots I'd already landed a nice sized snapper. Good for the pan.

With the snapper on board and dispatched for later consumption I got the soft bait back in the water with a flick of the wrist. Before the bait reached the bottom I was spooling line at a rate of knots. I hit the handle, flicked the bail arm

over and the fight was on.

The fish took line and I got it back. After a few minutes I started



Andy looking pretty pleased with his Trevally

to turn the tables on the fish, retrieving more line than the fish was taking. In a while I could make out the fish's colours. Yes! A BIG travally. But when the fish saw the boat it took off on another blistering run. The retrieve started all over again. Eventually I got the fish next to the boat ready to bring it onboard. Where was I going to put it? Best I despatch him on the side of the boat. So with the obligatory photos taken further fishing resulted in several big snapper and many bust offs on barracuda. They plagued us for the whole weekend.

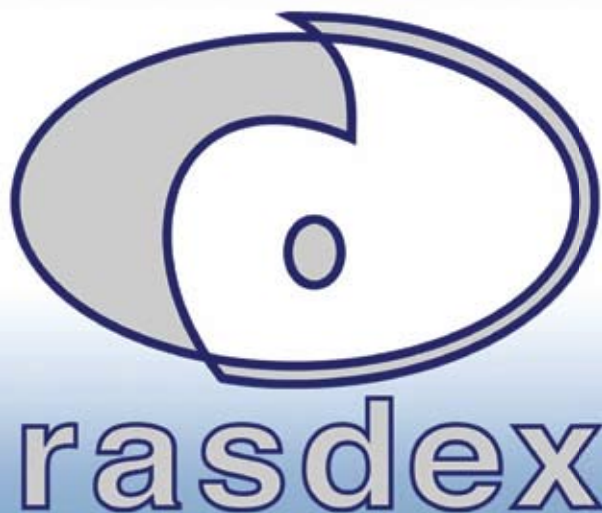
Sunday dawned with very similar conditions and we were on the water shortly after sunrise to be immediately bothered by the barracuda. To lessen the bother we joined the fluorocarbon to the braid main line, trimming the braid as short as possible. Otherwise these fish go after the furry end of the braid and snap you off with their very sharp teeth.

I got a call over the VHF. A mate of mine had hooked into a big stingray and was trying to get his line back before cutting loose. This big stingray and an hour and some change later resulted in a very respectable 15.2 kg kingfish. I will let him tell the story from here:

At 9:05 I stopped briefly in 17 metres of water to adjust my sounder... "Nek minnit"... all hell broke loose behind me. I grabbed the 8 kg spinning rod out of the holder, and so began the fish-fight of my life. The line was peeling off my brand new Penn Conquer 5000 at an alarming rate, but I knew the drag was set just right for the rod, so couldn't dare fiddle with it. The braid was running low on the reel, and the kayak was on a steady pace towards an island which was behind me until about a minute before. The fish changed direction a couple of times with me reeling like mad. I kept the rod pointing towards the bow of my kayak, so the boat followed the fish in every direction. After about 10 minutes I was slowing down, and felt confident that I could deploy the drogue without getting spooled completely. The fish was steadily making way towards the island, and when I reached the 7 metre mark, my worst fear was confirmed: I could feel that sickening vibration on the rod of the braid being wrapped around structure. The sounder still showed a sandy bottom, so I felt pretty confident that I was wrapped up in kelp. I backed off the drag slightly, allowing the fish to peel off even more line, and my plan worked: the braid cut through the kelp, and soon a huge bush of kelp popped to the surface. I turned the drag back on, but knew that I had to get out of the shallows, as the rocks were looming just 50 metres away... I asked my good mate Dave, who was close by all the way, to hook a tow line on my boat and paddle us out of there. He managed to tow me to about the 15 metre mark. Thanks Dave!

About 40 minutes had passed when the fish started to surface, and for the first time we could see the silver beauty with the yellow tail glow in the sunlight. "It's a kingie!!" At that moment the next rush of adrenaline kicked in, as I realised that sharks in the neighbourhood would be calling in any minute to check out the commotion under the water, and demand their share. Another good friend, Arnold, was also close by the whole time, and took some photos. It took another 20 minutes, and three attempts with the gaff, before I had the fish on my lap. What a relief!! I got on the VHF and asked the rest of the boys: "How do you iki a kingfish??" The answer over the airwaves was more of a "Yeeehaaa!!" than anything else. I ended up not dispatching the fish, as it was even more wasted than I was. I put the fish in the back of my 'yak, opened a cold Coke, and started the paddle back to the beach. The kingie weighed in at 15.2 kg. Back at the beach I received a crash-course on "how to fillet a kingie" and it fed six big families... What an awesome ending to a great weekend.

For the whole article and video of this trip, go to:
www.canoeandkayak.co.nz/fishing.



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