

“UNREEL” Goes To Bahia Magdalena, Mexico!

November 1-16, 2004

By Vic Jedlicka

Angler Chair Diaries:

Planning a 16 day Marlin fishing trip to Mag Bay, Mexico fishing grounds started one year ago when Bob Godfrey's 48 foot Ocean "Unreel" returned from a fantastic trip. Yes, Bob and his crew Vic Jedlicka, Andy Blister, Mickey Scheinbaum and Jeff Morris were going again from November 1-16, 2004. This was a first trip for Mickey & Jeff. The entire planning, extra freezer, provisioning, extra fuel, tackle etc. was ready. Bob, Vic, Andy, Mickey and Jeff left MDR at 9:00AM Sunday morning 10/31. Stopped at San Pedro, to top off the main tanks, two extra 50 gallon tanks strapped to the bow and also filled the bait tank with fuel. Unreel left San Pedro at 11:45 AM setting a course for Turtle Bay at 10 knots (430 miles 43 hours estimated running time). Andy cooks the first day. Breakfast was lox, cream cheese rye bread and onion. Lunch was hot dogs with all the fixings. Andy's dinner was homemade steak stew, baked potato, onion/garlic and salad. All took our shifts during the night and the seas were calm.

At daylight Monday, 11/1 we were passing Punta Colonet. The two new member's Jeff & Mickey were still sleeping away at 9:00AM. Jeff had KP clean up and breakfast was done so the galley was a mess. Heck this was no cruise ship. They soon got the hang of it after some ribbing by us seasoned crew. Bob made a great dinner of fresh ham, potatoes and salad with Jeff on KP. It's 6:45 PM and 50 miles north of Cedro's Island. As we slipped into the lee of Cedros at 1:00 AM the wind came up so bad from the east off the mainland making the seas extremely rough. The Unreel was very difficult to handle down swell turning us at times almost 360 degrees. It was touch and go until we reached the southern end and worked our way to a sheltered cove on the windward side of the island at 3:30 AM.

Tuesday morning 11/2 at 9:00AM we left for Turtle Bay through the Dewey Channel. Yes, we were trading for Lobster (27ea.) from the Panga fisherman. OOPS, Andy! Tangled in lobster lines. On with his scuba gear and in he goes to cut us free. Off we go. OOPS, Andy again and down he goes to free us! Arrived at Turtle Bay at 1:45 PM. fueled and stayed the night. The 2 days before our arrival the winds blew at 30-45 mph and up to 54 mph in Turtle. Just missed it or maybe not based on last night's experience.

Wednesday 11/3 discover problem with inverter batteries. Called Marshall Wax to pick up spares at West Marine for the Unreel on his way south and transfer to us in Santa Maria. You got to love those satellite phones. Thanks Marshall! After breakfast at 8:45AM, left Turtle Bay heading for Punta Abreojos.

Thursday 11/4 after great breakfast of Bacon, eggs, peppers, onion and coffee we left Abreojos at 7:30 AM. Yes, we picked up 6 each more lobsters on our way out. Time to get ready for fishing, so Vic along with Mickey rig up all the rods & reels with the proper lures. All lures rigged with short wire leader as Wahoo strikes expected as we cross the banks on our way to the Uncle Sam Bank. At about 10:30 AM lines go in the water for the first time.

Trading for lobster on the way, first 12 each, and then 18 each. Seas were smooth and the coastline just beautiful. Arrived Abreojos at 7:00 PM. Lobster pots every where so needed Andy's eyes on the bow as we maneuvered to an anchorage. Jeff is chef tonight and serves a dinner of meat loaf, pasta with fresh garlic and salad. Very, very good.

We picked up three nice Dorado on jigs & bait in the morning (water 74-degree). Then, at 2:00 PM near the Moore Bank one of the rods goes bendo and the reel is screaming out. Vic in the cockpit grabs the rod and sets the hook. Two strong long runs and he knew he had a big one and probably a big Wahoo based on his runs. As Vic brings the fish to the boat no one can believe their eyes. This fish is huge and I mean huge. We used three gaffs and all our strength to get this Wahoo over the side into the boat after a good clubbing by Bob. A world class record fish for sure estimated at 140-160 LB. Biggest Wahoo anyone has ever seen.

What away to start our fishing trip. A real highlight! A few bonito and a yellowfin tuna caught after. At about 4:00 PM Vic hooks up again on another big Wahoo who takes to the air on a jump.

Vic tries to hand off the rod to others but no takers as the line peels off. Almost to the boat and the hook pulls. It took us 1 ½ hours to process that huge Wahoo. Mickey brought his vacuum packing machine for processing the fish. Stayed on the Uncle Sam Bank, for the night, with the sea anchor chute. Vic and Mickey decide it's time for lobster dinner. Two nice tails each boiled in beer and spices along with pasta and salad. Oh Boy! These tails are a tasty delight. Jeff and Mickey brought camera equipment and we can expect great coverage with PICS and Video. Jeff's camera was strapped to him constantly and I know he shot hundred's of PICS of fish, boats sunrise, sunset, villages, spectacular scenery etc.. Mickey promises a professional video of our Marlin catches....

Friday 11/5 after great breakfast pulled in the chute trolled Uncle Sam Bank with no luck so we headed for the Thetis Bank catching on the way Dorado and Yellowfin tuna. A look to the south spots on the horizon two sportfishing boats from San Diego boxing an area. Off we go to see if they have action. Well guess who it is? The Vagabond on an eight-day trip working they're way north. I exchange some talk with Capt. Mike Lackey about fishing, weather etc. who then puts Elliot Wasser and Ken Raymond on the horn. The boys (MDRAnglers) were having a nice trip catching wahoo, tuna, dorado and grouper. We said our good byes and went on our way. That night we decided to stay on the Thetis Bank so out went the sea anchor chute.

Settled down as Vic prepared a nice homemade lasagna dinner (By Melanie) with salad as we talked and enjoyed our cocktails. Saturday 11/6 only drifted 4 miles in the night off the bank so we headed back to troll the bank all with wired up lures at 6:00AM. At 6:06 first nice Dorado. Then as we went back and forth over the bank we picked up 6 more nice Wahoo ranging 40-60 LB, 3 Dorado and 2 tuna. The fish hold was full and we had to stop catching fish to take time to clean the fish we already had. The fillets filled the first freezer that Vic brought. Andy, Mickey and Jeff spent the rest of the morning cleaning those fish while Bob & Vic went on the hunt to find Marlin.

At about 1:30 PM we found some and Vic took this first one skillfully demonstrating to Mickey & Jeff the hook up, setting the hook and retrieving method. Hot fish with great jumps. Nice fish averaging 150 LB range. Bob and Andy handled the leader like pros and removed the jig hook.

Jeff was up next and shortly after he hooked up on the second Marlin. After about a 25 minute fight with many spectacular jumps Jeff eased his first ever marlin up to the side of the boat where Vic and Andy released the fish. This was a great time for Jeff as it was his first marlin. Bob skillful handled the boat while both these fish were fought and caught. What a great day this was with a full freezer of Wahoo fillets and two successful Marlin releases. On that note we set course for Santa Maria to spend the night on the hook. We earned it Cocktails, Dorado appetizer and a Wahoo dinner with a calm night sleep.

Sunday 11/7 Early rise and greeted by Marshall Wax and crew on his "Good Vibrations".

We shared fishing info and transferred our needed inverter batteries while eating breakfast and having coffee together. Andy installed the batteries and pulled anchor at 11:00 AM. Back to where we got yesterday's marlin. Seas are rough 25-30 knots of wind. Uncomfortable but we stick it out and pick up 3 Dorado for the day. We go on the hook in Santa Maria for a comfortable night. The guys want to go into see the little fishing village at Santa Maria before dinner. We hail one panga over to take them. You can go up this little actuary at high tide from the village to see the mangroves. I stayed behind to watch the boat. Jeff got some great PICS and they had fun. Bob was our chef for the night and prepared Margarita Cocktails, dinner chicken cutlet, baked potato and cucumber salad. Good Stuff.

Monday 11/8 up at 6:00 AM with breakfast by Mickey and out to sea by 7:30 PM. Bad seas again with the day producing one bonito. Are we really in Baja? Crew decides let's go into San Carlos and fuel up. Mag Bay was just blowing as we went in to SC. Fueling is always an experience at this dock as we side-tie to a local fishing trawler. Bob & Jeff went to check in with the paper work and then to town shopping for produce, milk & beer. Andy, Mickey & Vic fueled the boat & cleaned up the cockpit. We shared T-shirts, beer with the locals and the shrimp boat we were side tied to bestow upon us some freshly cooked shrimp to eat. It was a tough day and nerves were on edge. We moved to an anchorage over by Belchers. Cocktails and the second prepared lasagna dinner were served mellowing us all out at day's end.

Tuesday 11/9 Left Belchers anchorage heading out of Mag Bay past the Punta Entrada. At about 10 miles up the ridge we hooked up on a marlin. Andy's turn to fight this fish. He was thrilled and waiting for this chance. Andy used all the skills he learned on last year's trip and had himself a real runner and jumper to contend with on his hands. But, after a strong 20-minute fight Andy brings the fish to bay and Vic leaders the fish and releases it. Seas continued to be very rough. A nice hit with a Dorado goes off and Mickey takes to the rod bringing him to gaff. This fish was loco and did many jumps for him. Then a bonito caught and kept for bait on anchor. Jeff filleting the dorado and cutting up bait drops Vic's fillet knife overboard (my favorite). Of course Jeff took some ribbing for awhile but was forgiven.. After all it was an accident or was it? After all Jeff this was knife number two (dropped Andy's over to).

Wednesday 11/10 6:15 AM and we are on our way to the Thetis Bank. Information says one boat hooked up eight marlin yesterday. Short of the bank we found the Riviera fleet.

They were having a tournament put on by the dealers. The Marlin where there and we got into them. Mickey's turn as the reeled screamed. Wow! It was tail hooked and gave him some workout. He had to pull hard but he had the harness on. A long fight of at least 30 minutes until he was brought to leader and successful released. Nice going Mickey. Next it was Bob who got hooked up on a green knobbie lure.

This fish fought spectacular with at least 10-12 aerial jumps and greyhounding his way away from the boat ripping off line. No contest for Bob's skillful handling as he eased it to the side of the boat. Wow! He got tail wrapped on one of his jumps making that catch really tough. Mickey gets his chance to be part of the successful release.

Bang! One more fish into the jig pattern.. Hits one jig, then another, and still another..bait & switch but no go on that marlin. We decided to put the sea anchor chute out for the night on the Thetis Bank. Settled back with cocktail and dinner prepared by Chef Andy. Oh Yes! We caught a mako shark about

125 LB on a bleeding mackerel jig. Mouth full of teeth gave us tense moments on the release but Bob successful got it done. Jeff is out in the cockpit fishing with chunk bait as we drift over the bank. Hey! Nice catch Jeff a 12LB grouper. Goodnight!

Thursday 11/11 Last night was uncomfortable on the sea anchor. However, we got up early ate breakfast and started trolling for marlin. Vic's turn on the next fish. Slam Bam!..Off goes the reel just screaming. The hook is set and the fight begins.

A real jumper and greyhound. Bob handles the boat skillful to help Vic retrieve some line. Fish is brought to leader and released. Later in the morning we hooked up Jeff. He fought the fish nicely and almost to leader when the hook pulled. Sorry Jeff! Then a nice Dorado hooked up by Vic and boated. Andy was up for the next Marlin. Bang off went the rod bendo with the reel singing out. A real long run this one took. Andy had to pull hard. Seems like Andy was on this fish for 45 minutes before all the line was gained and the fish was released. One more Dorado taken for the day. Mickey took some great video of all of us pulling on our marlins. Can't wait to see the finished product of professionally edited film. The Marlin build up was not wide open as it was last year. The high winds and colder water was the key factor of the lessor action. Winds blowing 30 knots into Santa Maria for the night ..Cocktails & dinner by Bob/Andy chicken on the grill.

Friday 11/12 on deck at 5:30 AM transferred fuel from forward reserve bow tanks to the mains. Checked weather with another cruiser boat "Southern Cross". No go to the north until Sunday to Wednesday. A really blowing wind 25-30 knots and rough seas eight footers all the way to Ensenada. Our window is set for the trip home. So, for the day out we go to fish. At 10:30 AM only a bonito to our count. Another boat Capt. Hook calls us in on a two fish hook- up jig (pink zucker) and then bait (mackerel). We set our course to join up with him and trolled the area but no luck. We got a nice Dorado on the way back to Santa Maria where we will spend the night. Yes..Cocktails and a nice dinner prepared by Chef Jeff.

Saturday 11/13 Early start at 6:30 PM heading out for the banks. Decision is to fish our way north and go a day earlier toward home. Keeping our options open for lobster stops along the way. We decide to run night and day to Turtle Bay. Dinner tonight is dorado, corn, and garlic/onion potatoes prepared by Mickey. We start our shifts at 6:00 PM. Bouncy night..washing machine seas. By daylight we were at Asuncion..

I haven't been off this boat yet. Vic at the helm heading for Turtle Bay when he is hailed over the VHF by this sexy woman's voice: "sport boat I am over here on the beach". So, naturally we had fun kidding back and forth until we were invited to come to shore. Hard right starboard straight into Baja San Roque Bay and we anchored at a lobster fishing village. A lobster fisherman took us to the beach in his panga. They were loading their lobster catch on commercial seafood trucks for market. Our mystery woman Shari met us on the beach with her daughter Sirena where we all exchanged hugs. Then we walked through this little fishing village to her place on top of the hill overlooking the beautiful bay.

She was a Canadian who married a Mexican and settled in Asuncion where they built a house on the point overlooking the ocean. Their place here in the fishing village was rustic but interesting. They come here on weekends etc.. They are trying to attract boaters with plans for a marina in Asuncion. Nice to visit and exchange gifts with ours being of course lobsters. They took us back to the boat and we took off at 15 knots for Turtle Bay. Arrived at Turtle 3:15 PM dropped the hook and Jeff Vic & Mickey went to town shopping while Bob & Andy fueled. Caught a ride on a panga to town and shopped. Felt good to

plant my feet on solid ground. At the dock an Amigo escorts us all around town catering to our needs and carrying our groceries back to the panga. A welcome service for us.

Sunday 11/14 Vic made a nice breakfast of scrambled eggs with chicken and bean salad. Side order of turkey pastrami and biscuits. Yummy! Just made to stops for lobster trading 6 + 13=19. Working our way up the coast looking for more. We will fuel at Turtle Bay and spend the night. A chance for me to go to shore and by some staples, beer, tomatoes etc.

We also stopped for a beer at a local restaurant with our companion and to check it out for other trips. Loading our groceries (gin, beer, limes, tomatoes, & soda) and tipping our friend we head back to the "Unreel" in the panga. Dinner time with Vic as chef tonight. First lobster appetizers & Cocktail. He then prepares linguini with clams, mussels & lobster (onions/garlic). A long movie that night put into the VCR "Lucky" until 12:15 PM. Good night! Monday 11/15 up at 6:00 AM breakfast by Andy of eggs & onions. Hauled the anchor and on our way to hunt lobster. We collected "Bugs" all the way up to the Dewey Channel. A lobster haul for sure. Traded in total for 172 ea. Lobsters....Yummy!

Yes we ate lots of lobster on the trip to. Oh Yes! Can you believe Andy once again ran over a lobster line that (#3) and diving he went to cut us free? Now that is cut and re-tie so the traps are still in tact. Now twenty miles north of Cedros Island and the seas are the best we have ever seen. Flat calm! Cruising at 10-12 knots up the line past the Sacramento Reef, Isla San Martin, and Ensenada and into customs at San Diego. Estimated time to SD 25 hours. Cocktails and dinner on the way. At 4:00 PM every afternoon Andy prepared his signature refreshment of a Gin & Tonic with lime for all of us. Since I am back home it's hard to let 4:00 PM go by.

Tuesday 11/16 Seas still dead calm. My shift starts in 20 min. 6-8:00 PM time for coffee. Sun is rising I'll catch a PIC of it out the salon window. Now 10:00 AM and we just past Ensenada, MX. We will arrive San Diego at 3:00 PM. Seas are great!

Customs was a snap as we were done by 3:45 PM and away from the fuel dock by 4:30 PM. Headed out of San Diego and Bob turned the "Unreel" toward Marina del Rey the last leg for home. We arrived at our slip at 1:30 AM. Our count not as good as last year but respectable. Seven Marlin Releases, Ten Dorado, Four Tuna, Eight Wahoo(one world class), and Two Mako Sharks. Of course lots of Lobster!!!!

A lifetime trip like this is more than just fishing. It is a serious adventure. It tests your true grit. It is being with old & new friends and sharing some wonderful experiences at sea and in ports. An every day learning experience for all of us on how to get along, share and care for each other's well being. Oh Yes! Let's not forget what takes us on this adventure "Fishing & Catching". We are in pursuit of the beautiful Stripe Marlin who challenges us in the hunt and during the fight. It is a wonderful beautiful experience to find him, hook him, fight him, view him and successful release him back to his habitat.