

# A Man and His Jig

By John 'Afishinado' King

Bob is not the only character that I fish with, in fact, come to think of it, I only fish with characters. One of them is Paul, but we call him Skids, and his nickname was born on an overcast day in September while Marlin fishing aboard Afishinado. Paul has owned a couple of boats and he found himself in a partnership on a real nice 38' Egg Harbor. Chasing Tuna off-shore is fun, but this newer, bigger boat needed to target bigger fish, so Paul decided to start chasing Marlin in Southern California. Before this story can proceed, it is important that the reader get a good sense of what "Marlin fishing in Southern California" really means. Let me elaborate...

Marlin Fishing in Southern California is a little like planning a picnic in Alaska. There are only two months out of a year where the outing stands a chance of succeeding. A really good So Cal Marlin boat might get 1 fish out of 10 trips. An average Marlin fishing boat might get one fish in a Season. There is quite a bit of fanfare in announcing the decision to target Marlin. Everybody seems excited at the prospect of catching a big one. That excitement quickly fades within the first couple hours of trolling, and then the Captain's job becomes one of managing the crew. Imagine fishing for something that is as elusive as the Loch Ness Monster but probably taste worse. Preparing the crew for hours and hours, no make that days and days of endless trolling is easy compared



to preparing them with responses for family and friends that want to know "How did you do?" or "What's fresh for supper tonight?". Like it or not, a fisherman's sense of self worth rises and falls with the weight of the sashimi and with Marlin fishing, there is no sashimi, ever, even if you do manage to snag one.

Here is where a Captain's job gets tricky, particularly if any of the crew is in one of those relationships where people ask questions such as, "You mean to tell me that you are going fishing, again, for a single fish that is rarely caught and is not even edible?" Trust me, there is no good answer to that question. It is a trap and the best approach is to admire the shoes that your spouse is currently wearing and gently inquire..."Those new?"

I digress, the point is that Marlin fishing comes with a price and Skids was ready to pay it. He had scrounged up the gear, arguing that it is more manly to fight Marlin on light gear that could also be used for catching Tom Cod and Mackerel. He had paid up for a 3 day membership to [www.findthemarlinpunchthemonkeyandwin.com](http://www.findthemarlinpunchthemonkeyandwin.com) and he found some Marlin jigs at Big Al's Watch and Jewelry Resale. Needless to say,

Paul is an excellent shopper.

Then, he went out and caught not one, but two Marlin!

Prior to becoming a Marlin expert, Paul had agreed to join Team Afishinados for a big money Marlin Tournament. By Tournament time, we could barely afford to have him on the team. After much negotiating, Paul and his partner, Mean Gene the Dancing Machine, agreed to join Team Afishinados under the condition that they would get to run their magic Marlin lure.

This is not the first time that a Marlin fisherman has become obsessed by a lure. It happens more than you might imagine. It is perfectly understandable. When *the* So Cal Marlin bites a jig that you are running, that *is* magic. If it happens twice, the lure takes on a mystical quality, and, if you happen to snag a third Marlin on the lure that you have chosen and have so carefully positioned to run in the perfectly orchestrated pattern of Marlin enticements...well, you get the point...Move over Elvis, there is a new star in town!

Paul wasn't sure that he was ready to share this magic lure with any of us. In fact, he was sure that he did not want us to gaze upon this mystical Marlin catching piece of wonderment. So, we had to agree not to peek. We could watch any of the other lures in the pattern but this one. When we caught the winning fish he would reveal this lure for us, until then, the lure was to operate

incognito.



For two days we dragged this lure around the ocean with no sign of Marlin until off in the distance we saw it. A sleeping Marlin is difficult to see, but once you see him you know. There is no other shape like that and the excitement is incredible. Once you have locked on, there is nothing else in the ocean. You must watch this shape until you are in position, never taking your eyes off the quarry until all aboard have him spotted. The concentration is intense, so much so that it is easy to snag a piece of kelp or debris thereby fouling the magic lure as the clicker goes slowly off

sounding a false alarm.

Paul was the only one who could look at the magic lure, so it made sense that he yelled to stop the boat. Not wanting to take my eyes off the marlin for even a second, I yelled back, "What's up Paul, talk to me." "We're fouled, stop the boat." I pulled out of gear but I kept my eyes on the sleeping marlin ahead of us, hoping that we would simply hang around and wait for us to come feed him. Paul's alarm confirmed a change in strategy for us. It is always an interesting moment as you troll jigs around the ocean, hoping to spot a marlin, and then you do spot one. You find yourself in an immediate quandary. Do you continue to troll into the zone in the hopes that the marlin will see and attach your jig, or do you switch to a live bait strategy. In Southern California it is usually an easy decision, you always try to get a live bait on a fish...always. However, in this case, we had

committed to lure fishing, and we had the magic lure in the pattern, so...Then, suddenly, a blood curdling yelp rings out, "noooooo!" This noise came from some deep human place where only cave men had been before. It was enough to spin the heads of every crew member just in time to see Paul stripping down to his skivvies and diving in to the deep blue. The magic lure had been hung up in the kelp but as Paul was retrieving it, the line parted and then broke. The lure suspended and then started slipping thru the kelp and was lazily spinning ever deeper followed closely by a very large man, clad only in his mostly white, Jockey underwear. In the moment that we broke our vow of blindness we saw a Zuker's Bleeding Mackerel jig being chased to the deep by a man who will be known to us all forever after simply as Skids.