



## Surf Casting and Angling Club of WA (Inc.)

PO Box 2834, Malaga WA 6944

ABN 29 925 237 020

Telephone 0459 183 375 Email [surfcast@iinet.net.au](mailto:surfcast@iinet.net.au)

Club Web page <http://www.surfcasters.iinet.net.au>

Kalbarri house [www.surfcasters.iinet.net.au/KalbarriHouse.html](http://www.surfcasters.iinet.net.au/KalbarriHouse.html)

### May 2015 fishing field day

**Synopsis.** Looking at weather forecasts showing terrible conditions, and the reality was even worse. Our thought processes on the way across were a bit on the pessimistic side. The weekend was scheduled to be storms, rain, wind and swell both Saturday and Sunday peaking on Sunday afternoon. Swell was to be very large. The late afternoon tide was a low, but with the other conditions there was no way we thought we could get onto the reefs we usually fish. In particular Radar reef.

The Club owns an air conditioned holiday house at Kalbarri which is available for rent to the public and club members at competitive rates. Link is above.

However as in past years, the May 2015 Rottnest field day lived up to and exceeded expectations, and all of us who fished on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons had a mind blowing fishing experience with some demersals, miscellaneous fish, and fantastic bags of yellowtail kingfish and tailor.

As per last year, the thought of a Rottnest field day was always an anticipation of catching great fish like salmon, yellowtail kingfish, skippy, tailor, miscellaneous species and of course herring.



*Wet weather gear was a must for this weekend*

Unfortunately although only a small appearance of salmon and skippy it was memorable weekend of fish due to appearances of yellowtail kingfish and tailor.

A team of some 8 SCAC fishers, Peet and Sandra Wessels, Theo Van Niekerk, Shane Wignell, Peter Osborne. Ian Taggart, with his visitors, Paul Terpkos and son Nicolas (Nic), arrived Friday night, and divided into the two pre-arranged bungalows.

While one group participated in some pizza etc. at the local pub on Friday night and watched the football, the rest had their precooked meals run through the microwave. The bungalows are two bedrooms of 2 beds per room. Facilities are basic but very comfortable.

Saturday morning at 11am we had the bus trip out to West End stopping at the bakery to get a hot pie to eat for lunch on the way out. And as in past years to mine and Sandra's palette, the lamb and rosemary pies were on the agenda as they really are a gourmet treat. Sandra rushed to the front of the queue but the bakery had already run out of lamb pies. A repeat of last August, we missed out again.



*The "hot spot" at West end, early afternoon Saturday, reasonable as protected from wind by cliffs behind us*

On arrival shortly after 12 noon, looking down on Radar, the reef was unfishable so we decided to try the Tennis Courts as history says this can yield a few miscellaneous fish.

We spread out around the Tennis Courts on the rock platform. I was accompanied by Shane, Theo, Ian and his visitors Paul and Nic. The Wessels started just to the east of tennis Courts/Radar.

We all set up our gear, the heavy outfits, reels loaded with 15 kg line and bait-casting with 60 or 80 lb leaders. Our gear also consisted of wearing a wet suit, waterproof jacket, warm sweater underneath, a floatation snake, and reef boots.

Conditions from the rocks in this area looked pretty reasonable considering the weather. As the wind was generally from the north, and fishing from the south side we had the cliffs giving us protection. While the water surface was chopped up, the wind did swirl around a bit, but casting was relatively easy. The visitors, Paul and Nic, hastened down the cliff face and while I was still rigging up, Paul had a yellowtail kingfish and a salmon on the rocks before I had a bait in the water. This set the agenda for the afternoon.

It wasn't long before Shayne was also stuck into some yellowtail and also captured one of the two salmon this group caught. Have you ever seen a grin from ear to ear for someone catching the very first of his large fish of these two species? He could not stop grinning the whole weekend. His grin was even larger when advised his bag was the heaviest for the field day. As a newcomer Shane wants to share this adventure with any persons contemplating going to Rottnest in the future, hence he has written a separate report detailing his experience as he wanted to provide specific details of what this trip entails and the potential enjoyment to be encountered. See elsewhere in this magazine.

Initially, Sandra and Peet started fishing on the east side of Radar Reef in relatively protected and shallow water on the reef. They caught a small yellowtail and miscellaneous fish but when they saw Ian signaling, standing tall with arms outstretched, the patting his backside, Sandra immediately recognized he was telling them yellow tail were on in the Tennis Court. They relocated and joined us around to the Tennis Courts to enjoy the yellowtail kingfish action.

It appeared these species came in on the high tide and initially the main action happened during the first two hours. By about 2pm, 7 of the 8 of us had the bag limit of 3 yellowtail kingfish. Hence some of us went into a catch and release mode. For one of the hardest fighting fish, yellowtail are hard to beat. They also fight "dirty", by this I mean if you give them a chance they will run you around reef or rocks. Sometimes if you let the line loose and just wait several minutes they will swim out, but this is not the general rule but is worth a try if this problem is encountered.



*Sandra took this photo of us with those great fish.*

They are also a fish the harder you fight them the harder they fight back. Some of us hooked into much larger sizes of this species and after a short period of a reel being stripped get busted off. Most of us use 15kg mono line but for the really big fish it is underpowered.



*Quality fish. Peet Wessels with a baldchin groper and a yellowtail kingfish*

Some of us kept trying by bait casting mulies to get one of those elusive salmon, but no show. Others switched to bottom fishing, meaning a lot of rigs lost as the bottom was weed and reef. However for a few, in particular Peet and Sandra and Theo were rewarded by the way of demersals. This included blue lined emperor, breaksea cod, a baldchin groper and an undersized dhufish that was returned.



*A first for Shane. A magnificent yellowtail kingfish*



A couple of wrasse, herring and skippy also came in but late afternoon the fishing slowed down. Faced with increasing wind and rain, Peet contacted the bus driver and requested he come and return us to our accommodation. Hence instead of 7:30/8 pm, we were picked up at 6pm. Hence back to the bungalows for a clean-up/shower/hot meal and yarning to each other discussing highlights of our fishing adventures.

Paul had a work commitment so his plan was to give the Sunday fishing a miss and he and his son would get the ferry back to Fremantle.

The following morning, Sunday, a repeat of loading up the bus at 11am, stopping off at the bakery again and out to West End. Sandra rushed to the front of the queue and managed to secure the last two lamb pies. The rest of us missed out again, I had been looking forward to one of those bakery delights but was outpaced by Sandra. Ian considered he had enough fish for the weekend thus decided not to fish on the Sunday, relax at the pub and watch the footie.



*Peter Osborne with one of his best yellowtail kingfish*

On arrival at the West End and viewing the sea, the weather conditions confirmed our expectations of an even higher swell and a wind change so just about blowing in your face. During this fishing period winds reached 100+ kph and were accompanied by many showers varying from light to heavy. So we immediately concluded that the tennis courts were out as being unfishable so with some advice from our bus driver and we relocated a couple of kilometres further east to a more sheltered spot.

He showed us a bus turning circle that was overlooking rocks with reef in front and beaches to both sides. We all piled out and agreed that while some wind from our right it was fishable. We noted a channel in the reef in front of a rock platform that looked fishy.

We all rigged up and headed down an easy climb low cliff. I managed to make the first cast but misdirected and did not retrieve my bait casting rig quickly enough hence got stuck on the reef and had to break off.



*Off the rocks where we caught the Tailor*

Re-rigged and with my next cast put the mulie on the entrance to that channel, bang, a tailor not huge but a good fish. In the next 10 casts I had my bag limit.

From 12 noon to 12:20 I managed a bag of tailor. The rest of the team saw me land that first one, so it wasn't long before tailor were coming in to the left and right of me. By 2pm all had their bag limit of 8 of these species, except Shane who didn't manage to get his eight.

While it was the middle of the day, rather than dusk or dawn, it appears the fish were active at the top of the tide. After 2pm when this action stopped we switched to targeting other species, herring being fairly active, a few skippy, a couple of western rock blackfish and some trumpeter.



*The Wessels modeling Rottneest fishing attire. Life vests a necessity if wading on reefs.*

The weather continued to worsen over the afternoon and as the sky darkened and rain was relentless at times with no fish showing, Peet again called our bus driver and he arrived before 6pm.

Again an early return to the Bungalows with a clean-up, weigh-in, shower, hot meal and again yarning about what a great weekend we had. It was noted that it had been several years since we had a school of tailor appear.

*May 2015 Fishing field day report.*

Despite our unfounded fears, the ferry trip back to Fremantle early Monday morning was relatively comfortable and fast as the waves had abated and with a SW wind gave a following sea.

Results of the competition are shown in the following tabulations. If reviewed with past history of Rottnest this weekend was up with the biggest catches. The top 5 bags weights varied between 13 and 16 kg with 5 to 8 species.

**Local field day.** Due to severe weather conditions and north to north west winds, only two Surfcasters ventured out to fish locally.

George Holman tried the local marinas on Saturday and after soaking a mulie and herring fillet for several hours, without even a single bite he returned home early evening. On Sunday he looked at a few places he fishes along the northern beaches near his home but conditions were so atrocious he decided to give fishing a miss.

Mark Nurse did his usual bit of going down to fish his favourite reef spot north of the Preston Beach access point.

While conditions were also pretty bad, success came to him early Sunday morning with a good tailor and a good salmon, quality but not quantity. His salmon was the heaviest fish for the field day, beating the salmon and some yellowtail caught at Rottnest by a few grams.

It is noted that Mark did have a bit of excitement. He sleeps in swag beside his car, however with a high tide and large waves shortly after midnight; he found the swag was becoming a boat. Fortunately he had the swag between his car and the sand dune at the top of the beach. otherwise we would have heard of a person in a canvas boat heading towards South Africa.

**Afterthoughts.** As SCAC has a Rottnest field day scheduled for August, if you are looking for a fishing experience of a lifetime this venue gives a high probability of achieving this goal. It was noted that the costs continue to rise with the bus rental cost jumping nearly 30% from last year. However this like other fixed costs, the more people attending the "per person" cost reduces.

The cost experience for May with only 8 persons attending, excluding bait, drinks and food but including accommodation, bus hire, ferry, car park and field day fee was in the order of \$312.00.

Our June general meeting the instruction period will be on Fishing Rottnest and including not only fish to be caught, with applicable fishing gear and rigs, but discussion on wet weather and safety gear, clothing, food and drinks and meal planning.

As the accommodation and bus have to be booked well in advance, for the June general meeting would like to get an idea of who is going. We will require a final commitment and payment of the accommodation and bus costs at the July General meeting.

PS. Historically we have had greater success on fish captures in August when compared to May.

Tight lines

Field Day Officer, Peter Osborne

### **Shane's Rottnest story**

Since joining Surfcasters in early 2010 I have always been interested in attending a Rottnest field day. The reports are always full of details of great fishing, camaraderie and all that we look for in a field day. Unfortunately there always seemed to be some obstacle or reason not to go. Work, children's sport, my sport, family commitments etc.

This year, however, I decided that the rest of the world could make do without me for a few days so I paid my deposit and finally fully committed. As usual my timing was perfect. Costs went up due to low numbers as well as a price hike for the bus. There was some talk about pulling out but following a ring around and much work by Peter Osborne, all the 8 who said they would go held true to their word and pushed on.

The weekend before the trip saw Perth bathed in the most beautiful autumn weather. This made me nervous as the pessimist in me thought that the weather would be bound to change. As we know this premonition turned in to fact. The weather was terrible with all the key elements of wind, swell, higher than average tides and some serious rain all banding together to try to ruin the trip. However, what they didn't count on was the accumulated wisdom and determination of a handful of Surfcaster Rottnest veterans.

I was witness to a few very astute decisions made about where to fish in these difficult conditions with, what could only be described as, spectacular results. I am sure the results will be detailed elsewhere in Reel Talk so I won't go on about them here. At a personal level, in the space of about 90 minutes on day 1 I landed my 4 biggest land based captures ever, 3 yellow tail kingfish and 1 salmon. I was pretty happy with that! I also noted that the Rottnest veterans also seemed pretty chuffed with the day's proceedings. The next day we had to make do with a frantic tailor session with all getting their bag of 8 except me who managed 7.

My principal purpose in writing this piece is to encourage other members to seriously consider attending a Rottnest field day. This is particularly relevant to newer members. It is hard to think of many better opportunities to experience world class land based game fishing within 20 km of a major city.

You don't have to get up at the crack of dawn and after fishing are able to return to a comfortable bungalow with a hot shower and warm bed. You get to fish with several personal fishing guides keen to help you succeed. This provides the perfect environment for learning and improving your fishing. You can listen to the endless stories about successes from years gone by and if lucky can create some future stories of your own. Above all you get to do what most of us value most from our Surfcaster membership - enjoying the great pastime of recreational fishing in the company of our club mates.

One of the things we revere about our club is its rich tradition spanning the 63 years. Rottnest field days are a part of this. Many current and former members would agree that some of their greatest fishing memories were created on these days. There are also numerous non-fishing memories created just adding to the value of Rottnest field days. It would be a great shame if this part of our tradition did not continue long in to the future due to lack of support. In conclusion I would ask that members seriously consider attending a Rottnest field day as I am sure you won't be disappointed.

Shane Wignell

### **Catch results and points for May 2015 Field Day**

Angler	Weight	Species	Fish	Points
Theo Van Niekerk	14.5kg	5	27	205
Peter Osborne	14.93kg	6	26	229.3
Peet Wessels	15.62kg	8	23	256.2
Sandra Wessels	12.75kg	8	23	227.5
Shane Wignell	16.16kg	5	15	231.6
Paul Terpkos	9.84kg	2	4	128.4
Ian Taggart	7.15kg	1	3	91.5
Mark Nurse	5.12kg	2	2	91.2
Nic Terpkos	2.76kg	1	1	47.6
George Holman				20

Points include Field day and May General meeting points. Species weighed at the May Rottnest field day were tailor, herring, yellowtail kingfish, skipjack trevally, wrasse, western rock blackfish, tarwhine, salmon, breaksea cod, emperor, and baldchin groper.

Species weighed in at the Local field day were tailor and salmon.

### **Sportsperson of the Year section winners for May 2015**

Best scale fish	Mark Nurse	Salmon	3.94kg
Best bag of scale fish	Shane Wignell	Mixed bag	16.16kg

### **Field day section winners**

Best scale fish	Mark Nurse	Salmon	3.94kg
Best bag of scale fish	Shane Wignell	Mixed bag	16.16kg

## Field Day top scores for 2015/16

Total scores calculated automatically by the field day scoring spreadsheet including May Field day and General meeting. Competition Rules section 2.4.5 specifies only the best 11 months out of 12 will count at the end of the competition year. The winners will be announced at the Presentation of Trophies in June 2016, and adjusted scores will be published after that. Names with equal scores are sorted alphabetically.

Name	Points	Rank	Name	Points	Rank	Name	Points	Rank
Peet Wessels	256.2	1	Theo Van Niekerk	205	5	Nic Terpkos	47.6	9
Shane Wignell	231.6	2	Paul Terpkos	128.4	6	George Holman	20	10
Peter Osborne	229.3	3	Ian Taggart	91.5	7			
Sandra Wessels	227.5	4	Mark Nurse	91.2	8			

## Catches on May 2015 Field Day

		Tailor	Herring	Yellowtail Kingfish	Skipjack Trevally	Wrasse	Western Rock Blackfish	Tarwhine	Salmon	Breaksea Cod	Emperor	Groper Baldchin	Total
Peet Wessels	Number	8	6	3	2	1	1				1	1	
	Total weight	3.43	0.74	6.76	0.63	0.26	0.54				1.42	1.84	15.62
	Weight of best	0.56		2.38									
Sandra Wessels	Number	8	4	3	3	1	1	1		2			
	Total weight	3.19	0.59	5.83	0.80	0.55	0.42	0.25		1.12			12.75
	Weight of best			2.08									
Theo Van Niekerk	Number	8	12	3	3						1		
	Total weight	4.19	1.52	6.52	0.97						1.3		14.50
	Weight of best	0.85		2.61	0.40								
Shane Wignell	Number	7	3	3	1				1				
	Total weight	3.67	0.42	7.84	0.47				3.76				16.16
	Weight of best			3.47									
Ian Taggart	Number			3									
	Total weight			7.15									7.15
	Weight of best			2.57									
Paul Terpkos	Number			3					1				
	Total weight			6.15					3.69				9.84
	Weight of best			2.12									
Nic Terpkos	Number			1									
	Total weight			2.76									2.76
	Weight of best												
Peter Osborne	Number	8	12	3	1		1	1					
	Total weight	3.87	1.45	8.30	0.28		0.73	0.30					14.93
	Weight of best	0.63		3.58									
Mark Nurse	Number	1							1				
	Total weight	1.18							3.94				5.12
	Weight of best												
George Holman	Number												
	Total weight												
	Weight of best												
		Tailor	Herring	Yellowtail Kingfish	Skipjack Trevally	Wrasse	Western Rock Blackfish	Tarwhine	Salmon	Breaksea Cod	Emperor	Groper Baldchin	Total

## **Field Day sections 2015/16**

Up to and including May 2015 Field Day.

1A	Best scale fish (1st six months)	Mark Nurse	Salmon	3.94kg	May
1B	Best scale fish (2nd six months)				
2	Most meritorious fish	To be awarded by Committee			
3	Best Shark (4.5kg min)				
4	Best Mulloway (2.0kg min)				
5	Best Tailor (1.0kg min)	Mark Nurse	Tailor	1.18kg	May
6	Best Salmon (3kg min)	Mark Nurse	Salmon	3.94kg	May
7	Best Skipjack Trevally (0.5 kg min)				
8	Best Mackerel (2kg min)				
9	Best Yellowtail Kingfish, Samson or Amberjack <b>(4kg minimum)</b>				
10	Best scale fish (other than above)	Peet Wessels	Baldchin Groper	1.84kg	May
11	Best bag of scale fish	Shane Wignell	Mixed bag	16.16kg	May
12	Best bag of Mulloway (2 fish min)				
13	Best bag of Tailor (2 fish min)	Peter Osborne	Tailor	3.87kg	May
14	Best fish on single handed rod (4kg line max)				
15	Best fish caught on fly rod				
16	Best fish caught on single handed rod (4kg line max) and a soft plastic lure				
17	Best fish caught on single handed rod (4kg line max) and a hard body lure				

Field day spreadsheet developer, Terry Fuller