

Kota Kinabalu (KK), SABAH.



Many people came to climb mountain, but we came here to fish. 🐟



I have been fishing in Sabah waters since 2004. This is my 6th year so this is my 8th trip.

Actually I was kind of getting bored with Sabah waters, as the fishes are getting smaller, bite rates are slower, airport rule getting stricter, excess baggage went higher (from RM2.30 to RM28.00).

I was thinking of giving Sabah a miss in my Fishing Year 2009 when starting late last year, 3 new budget airlines started flying into this jungle direct from Changi airport. Hooray!

When our team lead bought the air-tickets from Jetstar, it was available 7 days per week. It was later changed to 3 days only per week. So the impact to the group is we have one extra day to spend in KK. After a quick check with the captain, we extended our fishing to 5D/4N Live On Board.

We touch down on a very hot Thurs morning. With a quick lunch at the local noodle shop, and another RM500 spent on F&B supplies; we boarded the boat @ 1300 hrs.



The sea is mirror calm as the boat speed towards the first spot.

"Let's get some fresh bait tonight and relax, action will start tomorrow @ 7am sharp" The friendly captain told us.



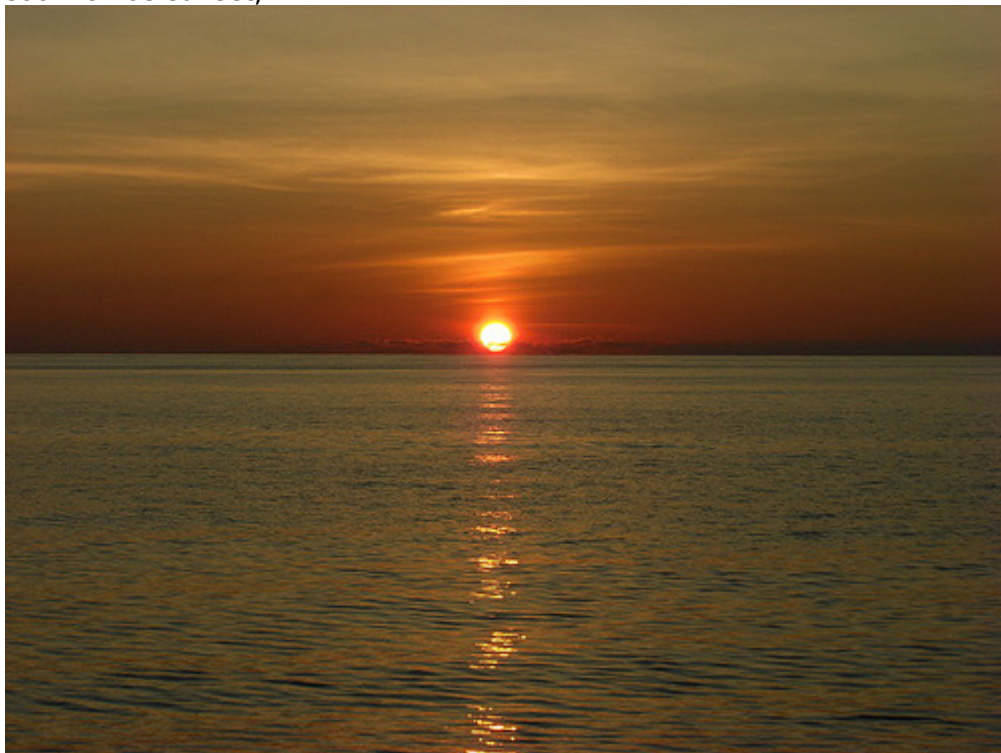
The first spot produce quite a number of sagai (white fish)



a rare goat fish, and plenty of fresh bait 🐟



soon it was sunset,



the night was warm, and not a bit of wind since the sea was mirror calm. Our Team Lead couldn't get to sleep, so he fished and was rewarded with 2 small Mangrove Jack (MJ), and that's about all for the whole night.



I was soundly asleep until engine noise started at around 5am when the captain steered the boat towards the fishing spot. There isn't much captain in KK that will wake up @ 5am to change spot, credit to him.

At 7am sharp, the engine came to a halt and everyone's heart sank after taking a look at the echo sounder - 185M 🤖

*So deep how to fish?
Got current or not?
Use what size sinker?*

were the usual grumbles from the team.... 🤖

4 of us at the back drop our bait while the rest still deciding which reel to use in such deep water.

Wham Bang! the bite was instantaneous !

*My fish or your fish?
Could be mine you know?
Control your fish, leh*

It took a while for us to pump the fishes up from 180M deep, all 4 of us got a fish each with no entanglement.





While we're busy taking photos, Michael silently brought up the first grouper of

the trip @ 15kg.



By the time everyone drop their baits again, there were lots of line entanglement, but mainly from the boatman fishing in front of the deck that got into our lines.



The bite is still hot at this moment, but at 180M, I decided to take a break and walk around the boat to take photos. 🍋

There was a massive bee-hoon on the right side of the boat, thanks goodness my line is up 🤖

After several minutes of patience & team work, we finally un-entangled our bee-hoon and the boatman's Gao Tun (Grouper that is more than 20kg by weight) was quickly bought in.



As we were bringing in the fish, we could see another "log" floating further behind. IT was Ah Chuan's fish! We could see he finally breath a sign of relief when the gaff finally sank in.



Another Gao Tun! 🌿
We weight it @ 38kg.



If you're wondering why the Gao Tun look so small..that's because you're looking at a 1.9m tall guy that weighs 350lbs. We all took turn playing around, trying to lift his fish 🐟

I like this photo best. Old man and the Beast!



There is really no need for bait presentation and no need the use of fluorocarbon leader line. Wire line does just fine.
The grouper, rubies and ping pong are willing to take anything you throw at them.

Big Hook + Big **Chunky Chunky** bait is the ticket to the biggies as Daryl proved it once again with another strong take on his Chunky bait.

I like this photo best - Teamwork!



Now that is no need to play around with Ah Chuan's fish, Daryl has gotten one just as big. We didn't weight it, maybe 35kg.



The rest of us continue to pull up groupers.
Not as big but still good size.





We also caught some species that we're not familiar with, and we are pending some NUS research folks to help identify.





this one slightly different, it got a croaker's mouth



this one got a dorado's head. 🤪



This is not the first time we see this, we caught 2 this round. The interesting thing is Uncle Albert landed the same fish in June 08..and he did it again this year !





The groupers actions did not stop at night fall, as the boatman hauled up another Gao Tun, close to 40kg.





So at the end of 2nd day, we filled up all the big ice boxes with fishes and was running short of ice then. The captain suggested we head back on the next morning - 3rd day. After some discussion, we compromised to end the trip on the 4th day. Since we still have 1 more day to go, please find more biggies for us to pump!!

We are not interested in "makan" fish anymore!

For the next day and night we were basically fighting with more and more red rubies







I tried some jigging and the choice of colour made a lot of difference here.

A nice 10kg AmberJack christened my new JM400 rod. It was no match for my

Shimano Ocea Jigger 4000P and my perseverance to fight it from 180m.



And again red rubies average 10kg type



The group finally ended this trip after 4D/3N onboard, and spent 2N in KK.

The total catch onboard was estimated @ 700kg, our best so far since 2004.

We sold 200kg (at RM8/kg) back to some distributors waiting at the Pier and used that proceeds to fund our additional one night stay in KK, Happy Hour @ Hyatt (Chivas Regal & Vodka) & "Terminator – Salvation".

Next Episode -> Maldives Feb 2010... coming to a theatre near you.

