



Vol.2, No.1, Year 2

January 2007

GREATEST SPORT FISHING SPOTS IN PANAMA

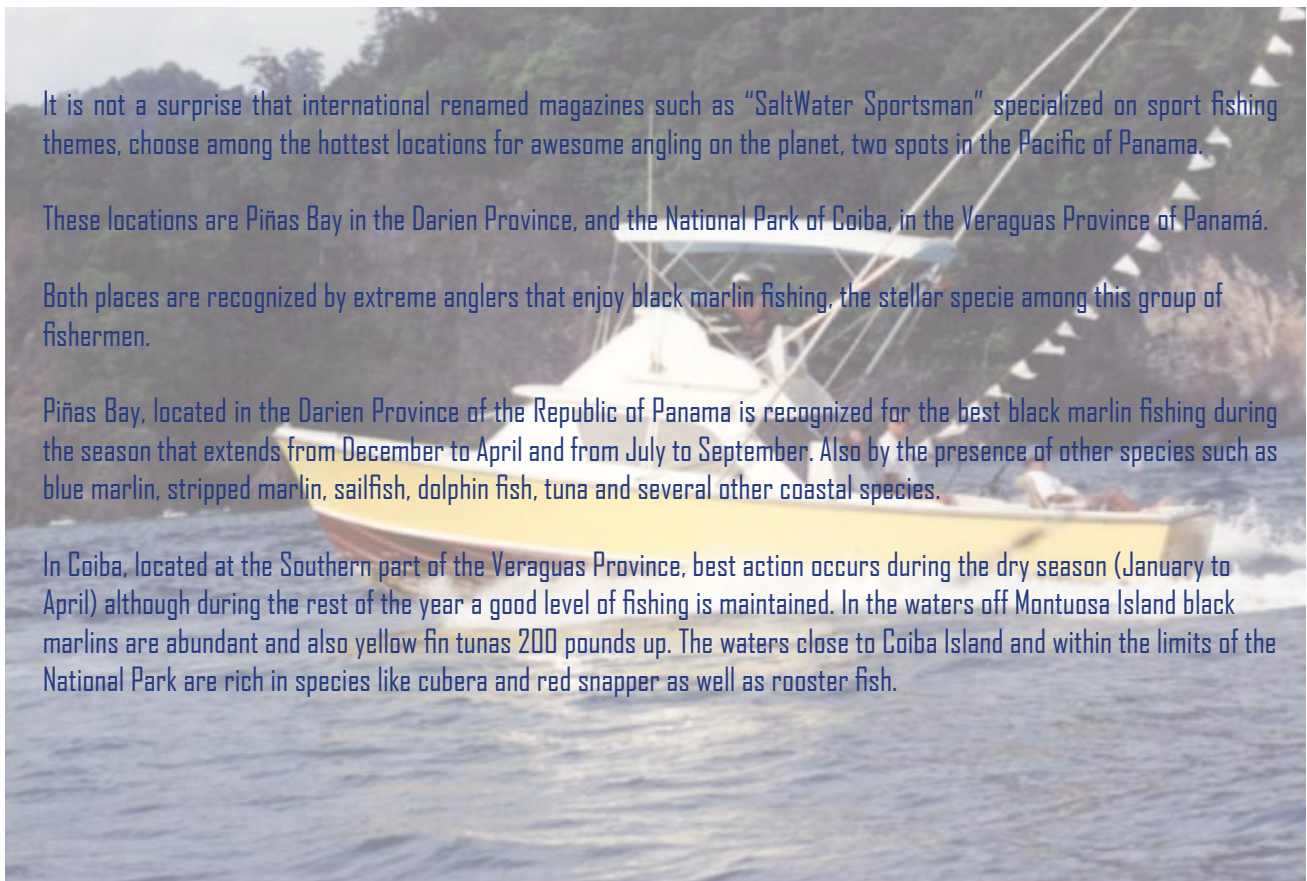
It is not a surprise that international renowned magazines such as "SaltWater Sportsman" specialized on sport fishing themes, choose among the hottest locations for awesome angling on the planet, two spots in the Pacific of Panama.

These locations are Piñas Bay in the Darien Province, and the National Park of Coiba, in the Veraguas Province of Panamá.

Both places are recognized by extreme anglers that enjoy black marlin fishing, the stellar specie among this group of fishermen.

Piñas Bay, located in the Darien Province of the Republic of Panama is recognized for the best black marlin fishing during the season that extends from December to April and from July to September. Also by the presence of other species such as blue marlin, stripped marlin, sailfish, dolphin fish, tuna and several other coastal species.

In Coiba, located at the Southern part of the Veraguas Province, best action occurs during the dry season (January to April) although during the rest of the year a good level of fishing is maintained. In the waters off Montuosa Island black marlins are abundant and also yellow fin tunas 200 pounds up. The waters close to Coiba Island and within the limits of the National Park are rich in species like cubera and red snapper as well as rooster fish.



WHAT DO THESE GREAT SPOTS LOCATED IN THE PANAMANIAN PACIFIC WATERS HAVE IN COMMON?

The key to all abundance lies in the conservancy and protection of coastal marine ecosystems containing high levels of biodiversity.

In the case of Piñas Bay, Executive Decree No.1-B, January 28 of 1994 regulates a reserved area for sport fishing and tourism. Taking Punta Piña (Darién) as epicentre, within a radius of 20 miles, fishing with longline, purse seine, trawling nets and gillnets is prohibited.

Small-scale fishing is allowed with hooks or vertical longlines with bottom hooks for demersal fishing, excluding dolphin fish, sailfish, marlin, wahoo, tuna, red mullet, rainbow runner, shark, rooster fish, swordfish and jack.

The tourist operator in the area promotes the protection of the billfish through the use of circle hooks and the practice of catch and release. It also promotes responsible sport fishing and the conservation of the terrestrial ecosystem, contributing with the surveillance of the vast prime forest surrounding the area.

On the other hand, in July of 2004 the National Park of Coiba was created. It has an extension of 270,125 hectares (667,209 acres) comprised of three kinds of ecosystems: marine, insular and coastal which make of this protected area one of the most extensive marine parks in the world.

The law establishes a Special Zone of Marine Protection which includes Montuosa Island and Hannibal Bank. It also creates an Exclusion Zone to the North of the 6°30' 00" parallel in Panamanian waters, prohibiting the utilization of purse seine nets for tuna fishing, as these kinds of nets affect the marine species of the area such as billfish, dolphins, cetaceans, sea turtles and others.

THREATS TO THE ACTIVITY

Coastal marine ecosystems are vulnerable to several threats such as global warming, over fishing, destructive fishing practices, forest and mangroove ecosystem destruction by several human activities such as the building industry, agriculture and aquaculture activities which cause high levels of sedimentation and pollution of all types, as well as recreational activities without the required controls.

As a result the government has found it necessary to join efforts with the responsible private sector and work together in looking towards conservation, protection and restoration of our main coastal marine ecosystems, respecting the existing legal framework, reinforcing it if necessary, creating new regulations favouring protection and conservation of the resources, and educating communities in the importance of observing the law.

In this manner positive impacts will be achieved on a long term basis instead of short term solutions that because of the loss of valuable natural resources, will have an opposite impact on the common objective: poverty eradication.

