

1 ½ Day Shallow Water Rockfishing – January 16, 2010 - On the Constitution

By Bob Eades

John Devine and I along with a couple of John's buddies decided to shake off the cabin fever and get a little fishing under our belts. We headed down to San Diego Friday after noon. (So did everybody else in California) After a 3 hour drive we arrived at the landing with the Constitution ready to leave the dock. The ride down was smooth and after a good night's sleep, we awoke to an amazing sunrise coming up over Colonett. Joe, the Constitutions owner and captain had a plan to chase the yellowtail early and then fill the sacks with rockfish and lings.

As we hit the high spot, I dropped down a dropper loop and was instantly bit. It was heavy, but didn't feel like a yellowtail. After about three minutes a huge Humboldt Squid surface and showered the side of the boat with its inky discharge. Damn, I thought. There goes the chance at yellowtail. Joe, though dismayed didn't falter. We looked around and tried a few more spots. Finally away from the squid, I dropped down and was bit before I hit bottom. This was the right kind. Headshakes and pumps, even some drag pulling. After a short battle a nice 22 lb or so yellowtail came to gaff. A couple of other guys hooked up but mine was the only one to hit the deck.

About 9am, Joe headed for deeper water and some rockfish. From the first drop the boat went bendo. Huge Reds and Salmon Grouper started coming aboard and filling our sacks. Ling Cod were on the bite as well. A couple of nice 10 pounders were brought up and sacked for the fishermen. As the day wore on, the fishing stayed great. It was early afternoon when a Mexican gun ship pulled up and decided to board us. After about a half an hour, they decided we were harmless and took off towards another boat fishing the same area.

As the afternoon wore on, fishing started to slow down but nobody was worried. We were at or very near limits for everybody. Then about three o'clock I heard a big yell and looked over to see a monster Ling Cod hit the deck. It was big, 25 to 30 pounds and easily knocked my Yellowtail out of the first spot for the jackpot. Oh well, you can't win them all. It was a great day of fishing and you could not ask for better conditions. Flat calm seas, little wind and biting fish. Finally, we decided to call it a day about 4PM.

About the boat and crew. The Constitution is an 85 foot boat with plenty of fishing room. We had 20 guys on the boat and I never felt crowded. The bunks were clean and comfortable as was the rest of the boat. The galley is small, seating 10 diners at a time but nobody cared. The food was really good. The other Joe did a great job. The portions were hearty, he went out of his way to make your food the way you wanted it and his demeanor was friendly and courteous. The deck crew were professional and helpful, ready to assist everybody that wanted it or needed it. Cudos to Joe and his crew for a great trip. I'll look forward to our clubs two day Labor Day weekend trip on the Constitution later this year.

