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May, 1919

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FIELD AND STREAM

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**BIG
TUNA
BY
ZANE
GREY**

IN THIS ISSUE
PRIZES AND CONDITIONS
9TH ANNUAL PRIZE FISHING
CONTEST

H. S. WATSON

FIELD AND STREAM



May

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FIELD AND STREAM PUB. CO. E. F. WARNER, Publisher
 25 WEST 45th ST., NEW YORK
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 Issued Monthly. Yearly Subscription, \$2.00 in advance. Single Copy, 20c. Foreign Postage, \$1.00. Canadian Postage, 50c.
 Copyright, 1918, by the Field and Stream Publishing Company, in the United States. All rights reserved.
 Entered at the New York Post-office as Second-class Matter, March 25, 1898, under act of March 3, 1879.
 MEMBER OF THE AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS

BIG TUNA

By
Zane
Grey

IT took me five seasons at Catalina to catch a big tuna. And the event was so thrilling that I had to write to my fishermen friends about it. The results of my effusions seem rather dubious. Robert H. Davis, editor of *Munsey's*, replies in this wise: "If you went out with a mosquito net to catch a mess of minnows, your story would read like Roman gladiators seining the Tigris for whales."

Now I am at a loss to know how to take that compliment. Davis goes on to say more, and he also quotes me: "You say 'the hard diving fight of a tuna liberates the brute instinct in a man.'—Well, Zane, it also liberates the qualities of a liar!"

Davis does not love the sweet, soft scent that breathes from off the sea. Once on the Jersey coast I went tuna fishing with him. He was not happy on the boat. But once he came up out of the cabin with a jaunty feather in his hat. I admired it. I said: "Bob, I'll have to get something like that for my hat."

"Zane," he replied, piercingly, "what you need for your hat is a head!"

MY friend Joe Bray, who publishes books in Chicago, also reacts peculiarly to my fish stories. He writes me a satiric doubting letter—then shuts up his office, and rushes for some river or lake.

Will Dilg, the famous fly-caster, upon receipt of my communication, wrote me a nine-page prose-poem epic about the only fish in the world—black bass. Prof. Kellogg always falls ill and takes a vacation, during which he writes me that I have not mental capacity to appreciate my luck.

These fellows will illustrate how my friends receive angling news from me. I ought to have sense enough to keep my stories for publication. I strongly suspect that their strange reaction to my friendly feeling is because I have caught more and larger black bass than they ever saw. Some day I will go back to the swift streams and deep lakes, where the bronze backs live, and fish with my friends, and then they will realize that I never lie about the sport and beauty and wonder of the great outdoors.

Every season for the five years that I have been visiting Avalon there has been a run of tuna. But the average weight was from sixty to ninety-five pounds. Until this season only a very few big tuna had been taken. The prestige of the Tuna Club, the bragging of the old members, the gossip of the boatmen,—all tend to make a fisherman feel small until he has landed a big one. Come to think of it, considering the years of the Tuna Club fame, not so very many anglers have captured a blue button tuna. I vowed I did not care in particular about it,



Zane Grey and Tuna, showing the slim, powerful, projectile-like shape of the fish.

but whenever we ran across a school of tuna I acted like a boy.

A GOOD many tuna fell to my rod during these seasons. During the present season, to be exact, I caught twenty-two. This is no large number for two months' fishing. Boschen caught about one hundred, Jump eighty-four, Hooper sixty. Among these tuna I fought were three that stand out strikingly. One seventy-three pounder took fifty minutes of hard

fighting to subdue. A ninety-one pounder took one hour and fifty, and the third, after two hours and fifty minutes, got away. It seems, and was proved later, that the number fifty figured every time I hooked one of the long, slim, hard-fighting male tuna.

Beginning late in June, for six weeks tuna were caught almost every day, some days a large number being taken. But big ones were scarce. Then one of the Tuna Club anglers began to bring in tuna

that weighed well over one hundred pounds. This fact inspired all the anglers. He would slip out early in the morning and return late at night. Nobody knew where his boatman was finding these fish. More than one boatman tried to follow him, but in vain. Quite by accident it was discovered that he ran up on the north side of the island, clear round the West End. When he was discovered on the west side he at once steered toward Clemente Island, evidently hoping to mislead his followers. This might have succeeded, but for the fact that both Bandini and Adams hooked big tuna before they had gone a mile. Then the jig was up. That night Adams came in with a one hundred and twenty and a one hundred and thirty-six pound tuna, and Bandini brought the record for this season—one hundred and forty-nine pounds.

Next day we were all out there on the west side, a few miles off shore. The ocean appeared to be full of blackfish. They are huge black marine creatures, similar to a porpoise in movement, but many times larger, and they have round blunt noses that looked like battering rams. Some seemed as big as gun-boats, and when they heaved up on the swells we could see the white stripes below the black. I was inclined to the belief that this species was the Orca, a whale-killing fish. Boatmen and deep sea men report these fish to be dangerous, and had better be left alone. They certainly looked ugly. We believed they were chasing tuna.

THE channel that day contained more whales than I ever saw before at one time. We counted six pairs in sight. I saw as many as four of the funnel-like whale spouts of water on the horizon at once. It was very interesting to watch these monsters of the deep. Once when we were all on top of the boat we ran almost right upon two whales. The first spouted about fifty feet away. The sea seemed to open up—a terrible roar issued forth—then came a cloud of spray and rush of water. Then we saw another whale just rising a few yards ahead. My hair stood up stiff. Captain Dan yelled, leaped down to reverse the engine. The whale saw us and swerved. Dan's action and the quickness of the whale prevented a collision. As it was I looked down in the clear water and saw the huge gleaming gray body of the whale as he passed. That was another sight to record in the book of memory. The great flukes of his tail moved with surprising swiftness and the water bulged on the surface. Then we ran close to the neighborhood of a school of whales, evidently feeding. They would come up and blow, and then sound. To see a whale sound and then raise his great broad shining flukes in the air, high above the water, is, in my opinion, the most beautiful spectacle to be encountered upon the ocean. Up to this day, during five seasons I had seen three whales sound with tails in the air. And upon this occasion I had the exceeding good fortune to see seven. I tried to photograph one. We followed a big bull. When he came up to blow we saw a yellow moving space on the water—then a round, gray, glistening surface, then a rugged snout. Puff! His blow was a roar. He rolled on, downward a little, the water surged white and green. When he came up to sound he humped his huge back. It was shiny, leathery, wonderfully supple. It bent higher and higher in an arch. Then this great curve seemed to slide swiftly out of sight and his wonderful tail, flat as a floor and wide as a house, emerged to swing aloft. The water ran off it in

sheets. Then it waved higher and with slow, graceful, ponderous motion sank into the sea. That sight, more than anything, impressed me with the immensity of the ocean, with its mystery of life, with the unattainable secrets of the deep.

THE tuna appeared to be scattered, and none were on the surface. I had one strike that plowed up the sea, showing the difference between the strike of a big tuna and that of a little one. He broke my line on the first rush. Then I hooked another and managed to stop him. I had a gruelling battle with him, and at the end of two hours and fifty minutes he broke my hook. This was a disappointment far beyond reason, but I could not help it.

Next day was windy. The one following we could not find the fish, and the third day we all concluded they had gone for 1918. I think the fame of tuna, the uncertainty of their appearance, the difficulty of capturing a big one, are what excite the ambition of anglers. Long effort to that end, and consequent thinking and planning and feeling bring about a condition of mind that will be made clear as this story progresses.

But Captain Danielson did not give up. The fifth day we ran off the west side with several other boats, and roamed the sea in search of fins. No anchovies on the surface, no sheerwater ducks, no sharks—nothing to indicate tuna. About one o'clock Captain Dan steered southwest and we ran sixteen miles toward Clemente Island.

It was a perfect day, warm, hazy with light fog, smooth heaving opalescent sea. There was no wind. At two-thirty not one of the other boats was in sight. At two-forty Captain Dan sighted a large dark rippling patch on the water. We ran over closer.

"School of tuna!" exclaimed the Captain, with excitement. "Big fish!—Oh, for some wind now to fly the kite!"

"There's another school," said my brother, R. C., and he pointed to a second darkly gleaming spot on the smooth sea. "I've spotted one, too," I shouted.

"The ocean's alive with tuna—big tuna!" boomed Captain Dan. "Here we are alone—blue button fish everywhere—and no wind."

"We'll watch the fish and wait for wind," I said.

THIS situation may not present anything remarkable to most fishermen. But we who knew the game realized at once that this was an experience of a life-time. We counted ten schools of tuna near at hand; and there were so many farther on that they seemed to cover the sea.

"Boys," said Captain Dan, "here's the tuna we heard were at Anacapa Island last week. The Japs netted hundreds of tons. They're working southeast, right in the middle of the channel, and haven't been in shore at all. It's ninety miles to Anacapa. Some traveling! . . . That school close to us is the biggest school I ever saw and believe they're the biggest fish."

"Run closer to them," I said to him.

We ran over within fifty feet of the edge of the school, stopped the boat, and all climbed up on top of the deck.

Then we beheld a spectacle calculated to thrill the most phlegmatic fisherman. It simply enraptured me, and I think I am still too close to it to describe it well. The dark blue water, heaving in great low lazy swells, showed a roughened spot of perhaps two acres in extent. The

sun, shining over our shoulders, caught silvery-green gleams of fish, flashing wide and changing to blue. Long round bronze backs deep under the surface, caught the sunlight. Blue fins and tails, sharp and curved, like sabers, clear the water. Here a huge tuna would turn on his side, gleaming broad and bright, and there another would roll on the surface, breaking water like a tarpon with a slow heavy souse.

"Look at the leaders," said Captain Dan. "I'll bet they're three hundred pound fish."

I saw then that the school, lazy as they seemed, were slowly following the leaders, rolling and riding the swells. These leaders threw up surges and ridges on the surface. They plowed the water.

"What'd happen if we skipped a flying-fish across the water in front of those leaders?" I asked Captain Dan.

He threw up his hands. "You'd see a German torpedo explode."

"Say! tuna are no relation to Huns!" put in my brother.

IT took only a few moments for the school to drift by us. Then we ran over to another school, with the same experience. In this way we visited several of these nearby schools, all of which were composed of large tuna. Captain Dan, however, said he believed the first two schools, evidently leaders of this vast sea of tuna, contained the largest fish. For half an hour we fooled around watching the schools and praying for wind to fly the kite. Captain Dan finally trolled our baits through one school, which sank without rewarding us with a strike.

At this juncture I saw a tiny speck of a boat way out on the horizon. Captain Dan said it was Shorty's boat with Adams. I suggested that, as we had to wait for wind to fly the kite, we run in and attract Shorty's attention. I certainly wanted some one else to see those magnificent schools of tuna. Forthwith we ran several miles until we attracted the attention of the boatman Captain Dan had taken to be Shorty. But it turned out to be somebody else, and my good intentions also turned out to my misfortune.

Then we ran back toward the schools of tuna. On the way my brother hooked a Marlin swordfish that leaped thirty-five times and got away. After all those leaps he deserved to shake the hook. We found the tuna milling and lolling around, slowly drifting and heading toward the southeast. We also found a very light breeze had begun to come out of the west. Captain Dan wanted to try to get the kite up, but I objected on the score that if we could fly it at all it would only be to drag a bait behind the boat. That would necessitate running through the schools of tuna, and as I believed this would put them down I wanted to wait for enough wind to drag a bait at right angles with the boat. This is the proper procedure, because it enables an angler to place his bait over a school of tuna at a hundred yards or more from the boat. It certainly is the most beautiful and thrilling way to get a strike.

SO we waited. The boatman whose attention we had attracted had now come up and was approaching the schools of tuna some distance below us. He put out a kite that just barely flew off the water and it followed directly in the wake of his boat. We watched this with disgust, but considerable interest, and we were amazed to see one of the anglers in that boat get a strike and hook a fish.

That put us all in a blaze of excitement.

Still we thought the strike they got might just have been lucky. In running down farther, so we could come back against the light breeze we ran pretty close to the school out of which the strike had been gotten. Captain Dan stood up to take a good look.

"They're hundred pounders all right," he said. "But they're not as big as the tuna in those two leading schools. I'm glad those ginks in that boat are tied up with a tuna for a spell."

I took a look at the fisherman who was fighting the tuna. Certainly I did not begrudge him one, but somehow, so strange are the feelings of a fisherman, that I was mightily pleased to see that he was a novice at the game, was having his troubles, and would no doubt be a long, long time landing his tuna. My blood ran cold at the thought of other anglers appearing on the scene and anxiously I scanned the horizon. No boat in sight! If I had only known then what sad experience taught me that afternoon I would have been tickled to pieces to see all the great fishermen of Avalon tackle this school of big tuna.

CAPTAIN DAN got a kite up a little better than I had hoped for. It was not good, but it was worth trying. My bait, even on a turn of the boat, skipped along just at the edge of the wake of the boat. And the wake of a boat will almost always put a school of tuna down.

We headed for the second school. My thrilling expectancy was tinged and spoiled with doubt. I skipped my bait in imitation of a flying-fish leaping and splashing along. We reached the outer edge of the school. Slowly the little boils smoothed out. Slowly the big fins sank. So did my heart. We passed the school. They all sank. And then when Captain Dan swore and I gave up there came a great splash back of my bait. I yelled and my comrades echoed me. The tuna missed. I skipped the bait. A sousing splash—and another tuna had my bait. My line sagged. I jerked hard. But too late! The tuna threw the hook before it got hold.

"They're hungry!" exclaimed Dan. "Hurry—reel the kite in. We'll get another bait on quick. . . . Look! that school is coming up again. They're not shy of boats. Boys, there's something doing."

Captain Dan's excitement augmented my own. I sensed an unusual experience that had never before befallen me.

The school of largest fish was farther to the west. The breeze lulled. We could not fly the kite except with the motion and direction of the boat. It was exasperating. When we got close the kite flopped down into the water. Captain Dan used language. We ran back, picked up the kite. It was soaked, of course, and would not fly. While Dan got out a new kite, a large silk one which we had not tried yet, we ran down to the eastward on the second school. To our surprise and delight this untied kite flew well without almost any wind.

WE got in position and headed for the school. I was using a big hook half embedded near the tail of the flying-fish and the leader ran through the bait. It worked beautifully. A little jerk of my rod sent the bait skittering over the water, for all the world like a live flying-fish. I knew now that I would get another strike. Just as we reached a point almost opposite the school of tuna they headed across our bow, so that it seemed inevitable we must either run them down

or run too close. My spirits sank to zero. Something presaged my luck. I sensed disaster. I fought the feeling, but it persisted. Captain Dan swore. My brother shouted warning from over us where he sat on top. But we ran right into the leaders. The school sank. I was sick and furious.

"Jump your bait! It's not too late," called Dan.

I did so. Smash! The water seemed to curl white and smoke. A tuna had my bait. I jerked. I felt him. He threw the hook. Half the bait remained upon it. Smash! A great boil and splash! Another tuna had that. I tried to jerk. But both kite and tuna pulling made my effort feeble. This one also threw out the hook. It came out with a small piece of mangled red flying-fish still hanging to it. Instinctively I jumped that remains of my bait over the surface. Smash! The third tuna cleaned the hook.

Captain Dan waxed eloquent and profane.



Whale sounding with flukes broadside.

My brother said: "What do you know about that?"

As for myself, I was stunned one second and dazzled the next. Three strikes on one bait. It seemed disaster still clogged my mind, but what had already happened was new and wonderful. Half a mile below as I saw the angler still fighting the tuna he had hooked. I wanted him to get it, but I hoped he would be all afternoon on the job.

"Hurry, Cap!" was all I said.

ORDINARILY Dan is the swiftest of boatmen. To-day he was slower than molasses and all he did went wrong. What he said about the luck was more than melancholy. I had no way to gauge my own feeling because I had never had such an experience before. Nor had I ever heard or read of any one having it.

We got a bait on and the kite out just in time to reach the first and larger school. I was so excited that I did not see we were heading right into it. My intent gaze was riveted upon my bait as

it skimmed the surface. The swells were long low smooth mounds. My bait went out of sight behind one. It was then I saw water fly high and I felt a tug. I jerked so hard I nearly fell over. My bait shot over the top of the swell. Then that swell opened and burst—a bronze back appeared. He missed the hook. Another tuna, also missing, leaped into the air—a fish of one hundred and fifty pounds, glittering green and silver and blue, jaws open, fins stiff, tail quivering, clear and clean-cut above the surface. Again we all yelled. Actually before he fell there was another smash and another tuna had my bait. This one I hooked. His rush was irresistible. I released the drag on the reel. It whirled and whizzed. The line threw a fine spray into my face. Then the tip of my rod flew up with a jerk—the line slacked. We all knew what that meant. I reeled in. The line had broken above the few feet of double line which we always used next the leader. More than ever disaster loomed over me. The feeling was unshakable now.

Nevertheless I realized that wonderful good fortune attended us in the fact that the school of big tuna had scarcely any noticeable fear of the boat—they would not stay down—and they were ravenous.

ON our next run down upon them I had a smashing strike. The tuna threw the hook. Another got the bait and I hooked him. He sounded. The line broke. We tried again. No sooner had we reached the school when the water boiled and foamed at my bait. Before I could move that tuna cleaned the hook. Our next attempt gained another sousing strike. But he was so swift and I was so slow that I could not fasten to him.

"He went away from here," my brother said, with what he meant for comedy. But it was not funny.

Captain Dan then put on a double hook, embedding it so one hook stood clear of the bait. We tested my line with the scales and it broke at fifty-three pounds—which meant it was a good strong line. The breeze lulled and fanned at intervals. It seemed, however, we did not need any breeze. We had edged our school of big tuna away from the other schools, and it was milling on the surface, lazily and indifferently. But what latent speed and power lay hidden in that mess of lolling tuna!

R. C., from his perch above, yelled: "Look out! You're going to drag your bait in front of the leaders this time!"

THAT had not happened yet. I glowed in spite of the fact that I was steeped in gloom. We were indeed heading most favorably for the leaders. Captain Dan groaned. "Never seen the like of this!" he added. These leaders were several yards apart as could be told by the blunt-nosed ridges of water they shoved ahead of them. That was another moment added to the memorable moments of my fishing years. It was strained suspense. Hope would not die, but disaster loomed like a shadow.

Before I was ready, before we expected anything, before we got near these leaders a brilliant hissing white splash burst out of the sea, and a tuna of magnificent proportions shot broadside along and above the surface, sending the spray aloft and he hit that bait with incredible swiftness, raising a twenty-foot square furious splash as he hooked himself. I sat spellbound. I heard my line whistling off the reel. But I saw only that swift-descending kite. So swiftly did the tuna sound that the kite shot down as if it had

been dropping lead. My line broke and my rod almost leaped out of my hands.

WE were all silent a moment. The school of tuna showed again, puttering and fiddling around, with great blue and green flashes caught by the sun.

"That one weighed about two hundred and fifty," was all Captain Dan said.

R. C. remarked facetiously, evidently to cheer me: "Jakey, you picks de shots out of that phuejay an' we makes ready for anudder one!"

"Say, do you imagine you can make me laugh!" I asked, in tragic scorn.

"Well, if you could have seen yourself when that tuna struck you'd have laughed," replied he.

While Dan steered the boat, R. C. got out on the bow and gaffed the kite. I watched the tuna tails standing like half cimeters out of the smooth colored water. The sun was setting in a golden haze spotted by pink clouds. The wind, if anything, was softer than ever; in fact we could not feel it unless we headed the boat into it. The fellow below us was drifting off farther, still plugging at his tuna.

CAPTAIN DAN put the wet kite on the deck to dry and got out another silk one. It soared aloft so easily that I imagined our luck was changing. Vain fisherman's delusion! Nothing could do that. There were thousands of tons—actually thousands of tons—of tuna in that three-mile stretch of ruffled water, but I could not catch one. It was a settled conviction. I was reminded of what Enos, the Portuguese boatman, complained to an angler he had out:

"You mos' unluck fisherman I ever see!"

We tried a shorter kite line and a shorter length of my line, and we ran down upon that mess of tuna once more. It was strange—and foolish—how we stuck to that school of biggest fish. This time Dan headed right into the thick of them. Out of the corners of my eyes I seemed to see tuna settling down all around. Suddenly my brother yelled.

Zam! That was a huge loud splash back of my bait. The tuna missed. R. C. yelled again. Captain Dan followed suit: "He's after it! . . . Oh, he's the biggest yet!" Then I saw a huge tuna wallowing in a surge round my bait. He heaved up, round and big as a barrel, flashing a wide bar of blue-green, and he got the hook. If he had been strangely slow he was now unbelievably swift. His size gave me panic. I never moved, and he hooked himself. Straight down he shot and the line broke.

My brother's sympathy now was as sincere as Captain's Dan's misery, I asked R. C. to take the rod and see if he could do better. "Not much!" he replied. "When you get one then I'll try—stay with 'em, now!"

NOT improbably I would have stayed out until the tuna quit if that had taken all night. Three more times we put up the kite—three more flying-fish we wired on the double hooks—three more runs we made through that tantalizing school of tuna that grew huger and swifter and more impossible—three more smashing wide breaks of water on the strike—and quicker than a flash three more broken lines!

I imagined I was resigned. My words to my silent comrades were even cheerful. "Come on. Try again. Where there's life there's hope. It's an exceedingly rare experience, anyway. After all, nothing

depends upon my catching one of these tuna. It doesn't matter." All of which attested to the singular state of my mind.

Another kite, another leader and double hook, another bait had to be arranged. This took time. My impatience, my nervousness were hard to restrain. Captain Dan was pale and grim. I do not know how I looked. Only R. C. no longer looked at me.

As we put out the bait we made the discovery that the other anglers, no doubt having ended their fight, were running down upon our particular school of tuna. This was in line with our luck. Other schools of tuna were in sight, but these fellows had to head for ours. It galled me, when I thought how sportsmanlike I had been to attract their attention. We aimed to head them off and reach the school first. As we were the closer, all augured well for our success. But gloom invested whatever hopes I had.

We beat the other boat. We had just gotten our boat opposite the school of tuna



Whale sounding with flukes edgewise.

when Dan yelled: "Look out for that bunch of kelp! Jump your bait over it!"

THEN I spied the mass of floating seaweed. I knew absolutely that my hook was going to snag it. But I tried to be careful, quick, accurate. I jumped my bait. It fell short. The hook caught fast in the kelp. In the last piece! The kite fluttered like a bird with broken wings and dropped. Captain Dan reversed the boat. Then he burst out. Now Dan was a big man and he had a stentorian voice, deep like booming thunder. No man ever swore as Dan swore then. It was terrible. It was justified. But it was funny, and despite all this agony of disappointment—despite the other boat heading into the tuna and putting them down—I laughed till I cried.

The fishermen in that other boat hooked a fish and broke it off. We saw from the excitement on board that they had realized the enormous size of these tuna. We hurried to get ready again. It was only needful to drag a bait anywhere near that school. And we alternated with the other boat. I saw those fishermen get four more strikes and lose the four fish immediately. I had even worse luck. In fact, disaster grew and grew. But there is no need for me to multiply these instances. The last three tuna I hooked broke the double line on the first run

This when I had on only a straight drag!

The other boat puddled around in our school and finally put it down for good. And as the other schools had disappeared we started for home.

THIS was the most remarkable and unfortunate day I ever had on the sea, where many strange fishing experiences have been mine. Captain Dan had never heard of the like in eighteen years as boatman. No such large-sized tuna, not to mention numbers, had visited Catalina for many years. I had thirteen strikes, not counting more than one strike to a bait. Seven fish broke the single line and three the double line, practically, I might say, before they had run far enough to cause any great strain. And the parting of the double line, where, if a break had occurred, it would have come on the single, convinced us that all these lines were cut. Cut by other tuna! In this huge school of hungry fish, whenever one ran for or with a bait, all the others dove pell-mell after him. The line, of course, made a white streak in the water. Perhaps the tuna bit it off. Perhaps they crowded it off. However they did it, the fact was that they cut the line. Probably it would have been impossible to catch one of those large tuna on the Tuna Club tackle. I hated to think of breaking off hooks in fish, but after it was too late, I remembered with many a thrill the size and beauty, and tremendous striking energy of those tuna, the wide white foamy, furious boils on the surface, the lunges when hooked, and the runs swift as bullets.

That experience would never come to me again. It was like watching for the rare transformations of nature that must be waited for and which come so seldom.

BUT such is the persistence of mankind in general and the doggedness of fishermen in particular, Captain Dan and I kept on roaming the seas in search of tuna. Nothing more was seen or heard of the great drifting schools. They had gone down the channel toward Mexico, down with the mysterious currents of the sea, fulfilling their mission in life. However, different anglers reported good-sized tuna off Seal Rocks and Silver Canyon. Several fish were hooked. Mr. Reed brought in a one hundred and forty-one pound tuna that took five hours to land. It made a dogged desperate resistance and was almost unbeatable. Mr. Reed is a heavy, powerful man, and he said this tuna gave him the hardest task he ever attempted. I wondered what I would have done with one of those two or three hundred pounders. There is a difference between Pacific and Atlantic tuna. The latter are seacows compared to those blue pluggers of the West. I have hooked several very large tuna along the Seabright coast, and though these fish got away they did not give me the battle I have had with small tuna of the Pacific. Mr. Wertheim, fishing with my old boatman, Horsemackerel Sam, landed a two hundred and sixty-two pound Atlantic tuna in less than two hours. Sam said the fish made a loggy rolling easy fight. Crownshield, also fishing with Sam, caught one weighing three hundred pounds in rather short order. This sort of feat cannot be done out here in the Pacific. The deep water here may have something to do with it, but the tuna are different, if not in species, then in disposition.

My lucky day came after no tuna had been reported for a week. Captain Dan and I ran out off Silver Canyon just on

a last forlorn hope. The sea was rippling white and blue, with a good breeze. No whales showed. We left Avalon about one o'clock, ran out five miles, and began to fish. Our methods had undergone some change. We used a big kite out on three hundred yards of line; we tied this line on my leader; and we tightened the drag on the reel so that it took a nine pound pull to start the line off. This seemed a fatal procedure, but I was willing to try anything. My hope of getting a strike was exceedingly slim. Instead of a flying-fish for bait we used a good sized smelt, and we used hooks, big and strong, and shap as needles.

WE had not been out half an hour when Dan left the wheel and jumped up on the gunwale to look at something.

"What do you see?" I asked, eagerly.

He was silent a moment. I daresay he did not want to make any mistakes. Then he jumped back to the wheel.

"School of tuna!" he boomed.

I stood up and looked in the direction indicated, but I could not see them. Dan said only the movement on the water could be seen. Good long swells were running, rather high, and presently I did see tuna showing darkly bronze in the blue water. They vanished. We had to turn the boat somewhat, and it began to appear that we would have difficulty in putting the bait into the school. So it turned out. We were in the wrong quarter to use the wind. I saw the school of tuna go by, perhaps two hundred feet from the boat. They were traveling fast, somewhat under the surface, and were separated from each other. They were big tuna, but nothing near the size of those that had wrecked my tackle and hopes. Captain Dan said they were hungry hunting fish. To me they appeared game, swift and illusive.

We lost sight of them. With the boat turned fairly into the west wind the kite soared, pulling hard, and my bait skipped down the slopes of the swells and up over the crests just like a live leaping little fish. It was my opinion that the tuna were running inshore. Dan said they were headed west. We saw nothing of them. Again the old familiar disappointment knocked at my heart, with added bitterness of past defeat. Dan scanned the sea like a shipwrecked mariner watching for a sail.

"I see them! . . . There!" he called. "They're sure traveling fast."

THAT stimulated me with a shock. I looked and looked, but I could not see the darkened water. Moments passed, during which I stood up, watching my bait as it slipped over the waves. I knew Dan would tell me when to begin to jump it. The suspense grew to be intense.

"We'll catch up with them," said Dan, excitedly. "Everything's right now. Kite high, pulling hard—bait working fine. You're sure of a strike. . . . When you see one get the bait hook quick and hard."

The ambition of years, the long patience, the endless efforts, the numberless disappointments, and that never-to-be-forgotten day among the giant tuna,—these flashed up at Captain Dan's words of certainty, and, together with the thrilling proximity of the tuna we were chasing, they roused in me emotion utterly beyond proportion or reason. This had happened to me before, notably in sword-fishing, but never had I felt such thrills, such tingling nerves, such oppression on my chest, such a wild eager rapture. It

would have been impossible, notwithstanding my emotional temperament, if the leading up to this moment had not included so much long-sustained feeling.

"Jump your bait!" called Dan, with a ring in his voice. "In two jumps you'll be in the tail-enders."

I jerked my rod. The bait gracefully leaped over a swell—shot along the surface, and ended with a splash. Again I jerked. As the bait rose into the air a huge angry splash burst just under it, and a broad-backed tuna lunged and turned clear over, his tail smacking the water.

"Jump it!" yelled Dan.

BEFORE I could move a circling smash of white surrounded my bait. I heard it. With all my might I jerked. Strong and heavy came the weight of the tuna. I had hooked him. With one solid thumping



Holding hard on the first run.

splash he sounded. Here was test for line and test for me. I could not resist one turn of the thumb-wheel, to ease the drag. He went down with the same old incomparable speed. I saw the kite descending. Dan threw out the clutch—ran to my side. The reel screamed. Every tense second, as the line whizzed off, I expected it to break. There was no joy, no sport in that painful watching. He ran off two hundred feet—then marvelous to see—he slowed up. The kite was still high, pulling hard. What with kite and drag and friction of line in the water that tuna had great strain upon him. He ran off a little more, slower this time, then stopped. The kite began to flutter.

I fell into the chair, jammed the rod-butt into the socket, and began to pump and wind.

"Doc, you're hooked on and you've stopped him!" boomed Dan. His face beamed. "Look at your legs!"

It became manifest then that my knees

were wobbling, my feet pattering around, my whole lower limbs shaking as if I had the palsy. I had lost control of my lower muscles. It was funny; it was ridiculous. It showed just what was my state of excitement.

THE kite fluttered down to the water. The kite-line had not broken off, and this must add severely to the strain on the fish. Not only had I stopped the tuna but soon I had him coming up, slowly, yet rather easily. He was directly under the boat. When I had all save about one hundred feet of line wound in the tuna anchored himself and would not budge for fifteen minutes. Then again rather easily he was raised fifty more feet. He acted like any small hard-fighting fish.

"I've hooked a little one," I began. "That big fellow—he missed the bait, and a small one grabbed it."

Dan would not say so, but he feared just that. What miserable black luck! Almost I threw the rod and reel overboard. Some sense, however, prevented me from such an absurdity. And as I worked the tuna closer and closer I grew absolutely sick with disappointment. The only thing to do was to haul this little fish in and go hunt up the school. So I pumped and pulled. That half hour seemed endless and bad business altogether. Anger possessed me and I began to work harder. At this juncture Shorty's boat appeared close to us. Shorty and Adams waved congratulations, and then made motions to Dan to get the direction of the school of tuna. That night both Shorty and Adams told me that I was working very hard on the fish, too hard to save any strength for a long battle.

CAPTAIN DAN watched the slow steady bends of my rod, as the tuna plugged, and at last he said: "Doc, it's a big fish!"

Strange to relate this did not electrify me. I did not believe it. But at the end of that half hour the tuna came clear to the surface, about one hundred feet from us, and there he rode the swells. Doubt folded his sable wings! Bronze and blue and green and silver flashes illumined the swells. I plainly saw that not only was the tuna big, but he was one of the long, slim, hard-fighting species.

Presently he sounded, and I began to work. I was fresh, eager, strong, and I meant to whip him quickly. Working on a big tuna is no joke. It is a man's job. A tuna fights on his side with head down and he never stops. If the angler rests the tuna will not only rest, too, but he will take more and more line. The method is a long slow lift or pump of rod—then lower the rod quickly and wind the reel. When the tuna is raised so high he will refuse to come any higher, and then there is a deadlock. There lives no fisherman but what there lives a tuna that can take the conceit and the fight out of him.

FOR an hour I worked. I sweat and panted and burned in the hot sun; and I enjoyed it. The sea was beautiful. A strong salty fragrance, wet and sweet, floated on the breeze. Catalina showed clear and bright, with its colored cliffs and yellow slides and dark ravines. Clemente Island rose a dark long barren lonely land to the southeast. The clouds in the west were like trade-wind clouds, white, regular, with level base-line.

At the end of the second hour I was tiring. There came a subtle change of spirit and mood. I had never let up for a minute. Captain Dan praised me, vowed

I had never fought either broadbill or roundbill swordfish so consistently hard, but he cautioned me to save myself.

"That's a big tuna," he said, as he watched my rod.

Most of the time we drifted. Some of the time Dan ran the boat to keep even with the tuna, so he could not get too far under the stern and cut the line. At intervals the fish appeared to let up and at others he plugged harder. This I discovered was merely that he fought the hardest when I worked the hardest. Once we gained enough on him to cut the tangle of kite-line that had caught some fifty feet above my leader. This afforded cause for less anxiety.

"I'm afraid of sharks," said Dan.

Sharks are the bane of tuna fishermen. More tuna are cut off by sharks than are ever landed by anglers. This made me redouble my efforts, and in half an hour more I was dripping wet, burning hot, aching all over, and so spent I had to rest. Every time I dropped the rod on the gunwale the tuna took line—zee—zee—zee—foot by foot and yard by yard. My hands were cramped; my thumbs red and swollen, almost raw. I asked Dan for the harness, but he was loath to put it on because he was afraid I would break the fish off. So I worked on and on, with spurts of fury and periods of lagging.

AT the end of three hours I was in bad condition. I had saved a little strength for the finish, but I was in danger of using that up before the crucial moment arrived. Dan had put the harness on me. I knew afterward that it saved the day. By the aid of the harness, putting my shoulders into the lift, I got the double line over the reel, only to lose it. Every time the tuna was pulled near the boat he sheered off, and it did not appear possible for me to prevent it. He got into a habit of coming to the surface about thirty feet out, and hanging there, in plain sight, as if he was cabled to the rocks of the ocean. Watching him only augmented my trouble. It had ceased long ago to be fun or sport or game. It was now a fight and it began to be torture. My hands were all blisters—my thumbs raw. The respect I had for that tuna was great.

He plugged down mostly, but latterly he began to run off to each side, to come



A blue button Tuna, 138 lbs. One of the long, thin male species; the most indomitable and hard fighting fish known to anglers.

to the surface, showing his broad green-silver side, and then he weaved to and fro behind the boat, trying to get under it. Captain Dan would have to run ahead to keep away from him. To hold what gain I had on the tuna was at these periods almost unendurable. Where before I had sweat, burned, throbbed and ached, I now began to see red, to grow

dizzy, to suffer cramps and nausea, and exceeding pain.

THREE hours and a half showed the tuna slower, heavier, higher, easier. He had taken us fifteen miles from where we had hooked him. He was weakening, but I thought I was worse off than he was. Dan changed the harness. It seemed to make more effort possible.

The floor under my feet was wet and slippery from the salt water dripping off my reel. I could not get any footing. The bend of that rod downward, the ceaseless tug, tug, the fear of sharks, the paradoxical loss of desire now to land the tuna, the change in my feeling of elation and thrill to wonder, disgust and utter weariness of spirit and body,—all these warned me that I was at the end of my tether, and if anything could be done it must be quickly.

RELAXING I took a short rest. Then nervening myself to be indifferent to the pain, and yielding altogether to the brutal instinct this tuna fighting rouses in a fisherman, I lay back with might and main. Eight times I had gotten the double line over the reel. On the ninth I shut down, clamped with my thumbs and froze there. The wire leader sun like a telephone wire in the cold. I could scarcely see. My arms cracked. I felt an immense strain that must break me in an instant.

Captain Dan reached the leader. Slowly he heaved. The strain upon me was released. I let go the reel, threw off the drag, and stood up. There the tuna was, the bronze and blue-backed devil, gaping, wide-eyed, shining and silvery as he rolled, a big tuna if there ever was one, and he was conquered.

WHEN Dan lunged with the gaff the tuna made a tremendous splash that deluged us. Then Dan yelled for another gaff. I was quick to get it. Next it was for me to throw a lasso over that threshing tail. When I accomplished this the tuna was ours. We hauled him up on the stern, heaving, thumping, throwing water and blood, and even vanquished he was magnificent. Three hours and fifty minutes! The number fifty stayed with me. As I fell back in a chair, all in, I could not see for my life why any fisherman would want to catch more than one large tuna.



With a Movie Camera in the Cassiar

BY WM. N. BEACH

His bag contained a Caribou head with sixty-seven points; a regular He Goat head, the Moose head measured 63½ inches, some trophies, an intensely interesting story; after big game with guns and cameras in the far distant Cassiar country. In June FIELD AND STREAM