

January, 1923

Fishing with Zane Grey

By Lone Angler
(J.A. Wiborn)

Zane Grey with Harness on, Fighting Broad Bill Swordfish.

"THIS is the greatest game fish in the world, Wiborn," said Zane Grey. "Some monsters out there! Catalina is an Empire consecrated to the sun and to the sportsmen. It always does wonders for me. No other place I go replenishes mental creative powers as this place. The bracing salt air, the vastness and the magnificence and the mystery of the sea; the great game fish; the quiet, restful nights, all make for vigorous mental activity and physical recuperation. Did you ever see such a day? Come go out with me and forget that darn old Angler boat of yours. I want to show you my *Gladiator*. This is going to be the greatest boat ever built for swordfishing."

So, in the spirit of keen anticipation, we climbed aboard Zane Grey's Catalina fishing launch. Gasoline, water and grub enough to last a week, and a goodly supply of flying-fish for bait.

Other fishing launches were racing away to favored spots beyond the horizon, mostly after tuna. Very few anglers have the time, patience, or strength to stay with the swordfish game day after day, and week after week. It is a killing game to ride the sun-blistering sea, and know you will be lucky to get one fish out of a hundred that strike; one out of twenty that you are fortunate enough to actually hook.

But the old sea captain, familiar with every whim of the swordfish and possessing a canny owl-sense of weather and sea, headed into the northwest, for a straight run of fifteen miles, disregarding bird signs, bait schools and surfacing tuna.

The day is all too short to handle these big swordfish, and they are desperate and dangerous fighters after dark, in the rough sea. Opening the throttle wide, he lit a deep-sea pipe and settled down, as though he knew exactly where to find one ready and waiting to give battle. Zane Grey and I in the comfortable revolving seats chatted and watched the Magic Isle slip astern, glorious and enchanting in the reflected blaze of early morning sunlight. There is more to fishing than the killing of fish, and nowhere in all the world is this so true as here at Catalina, where the great majestic rollers of the far sea-stretch, heaving and surging, hurl themselves against the battlements of the island.

Just as the mountain man at eventide stands in his cabin door watching the shadows from the setting sun

slowly creep up the mountainside, and the twilight settle in his little cabin glade, so at sunset stands the islander looking far out to sea, watching for the last glimpse of the red ball of fire, as it disappears into his beloved ocean—each so much a part of God's great open air, no thought of strife, or discontent, or vain longing can enter his dreams. His world is all before him—open, fair, its bounties to be had for the winning. Independent—undisturbed—happy.

"Swordfish!" The captain's voice cut in on us. "Some fish, too, believe me. What do you think of that one, Doctor?"

And when I sighted the spread of that old dorsal fin and tail, far enough apart to sail between without putting the fish down, weaving black and ominous, with dignity and power—well, darn me for a jelly fish, if I didn't hear all three hearts beating above the noise of the engine! Five hundred pounds, sure! Still gazing, I felt the engine roar change to a quiet purr and cautiously we paralleled the quarry, till his general direction was ascertained. Then Captain Boersater slipped the bait overboard, with a grin as if to say—"You may win, old boy, but we're sure going to give you one helluva fight."

Z. G., standing close to the stern of the boat, with rod raised at ready, slowly let the line run out. Fifty yards more and we cautiously cut in ahead of the fish. Often they are very wary, dip under the bait no matter how tempting it may look, and disdainfully continue on a definite course. But not so this old warrior. Here was just what he had been looking for and presented to his entire satisfaction. So, with a flit of his huge tail, he gave chase. Then he sounded, and the Captain drew the clutch so the boat slipped ahead without a ripple. Tinging with expectancy, almost I had begun to doubt the old boy was interested, and had partly turned to search for surfacing signs, when, there in a beautiful transparent setting of opalescent blue appeared the huge dark shadow, weaving close behind the bait.

Z. G. slipped into the seat, placed the rod butt in the socket and braced himself for the smashing jolt, that comes when the old demon slashes the bait with that great sword. It feels for all the world like someone striking the line with a baseball bat, and this fellow yanked Grey clear off the seat. The tension was light at that; now everything is thrown off, the bait goes dead,



the decoys are snatched in, the boat's momentum is checked to save line, a hasty glance to locate the ever-ready Vom Hofe detachable gaffs (I have had a fish make off with gaff and forty feet of half inch line, and recover both after an hour).

Breathlessly we wait for the next tug at the line. Plainer than Morse code-signals comes the feei—old fish has struck again lightly, now mouthing and gorging. Then comes a steady run out of line, jerky at first, in response to the great weave of that monster tail. "Hit him! Give him hell! Give him hell!" The Captain and I both yell, and Z. G. laces into him with all the power of those broad shoulders.

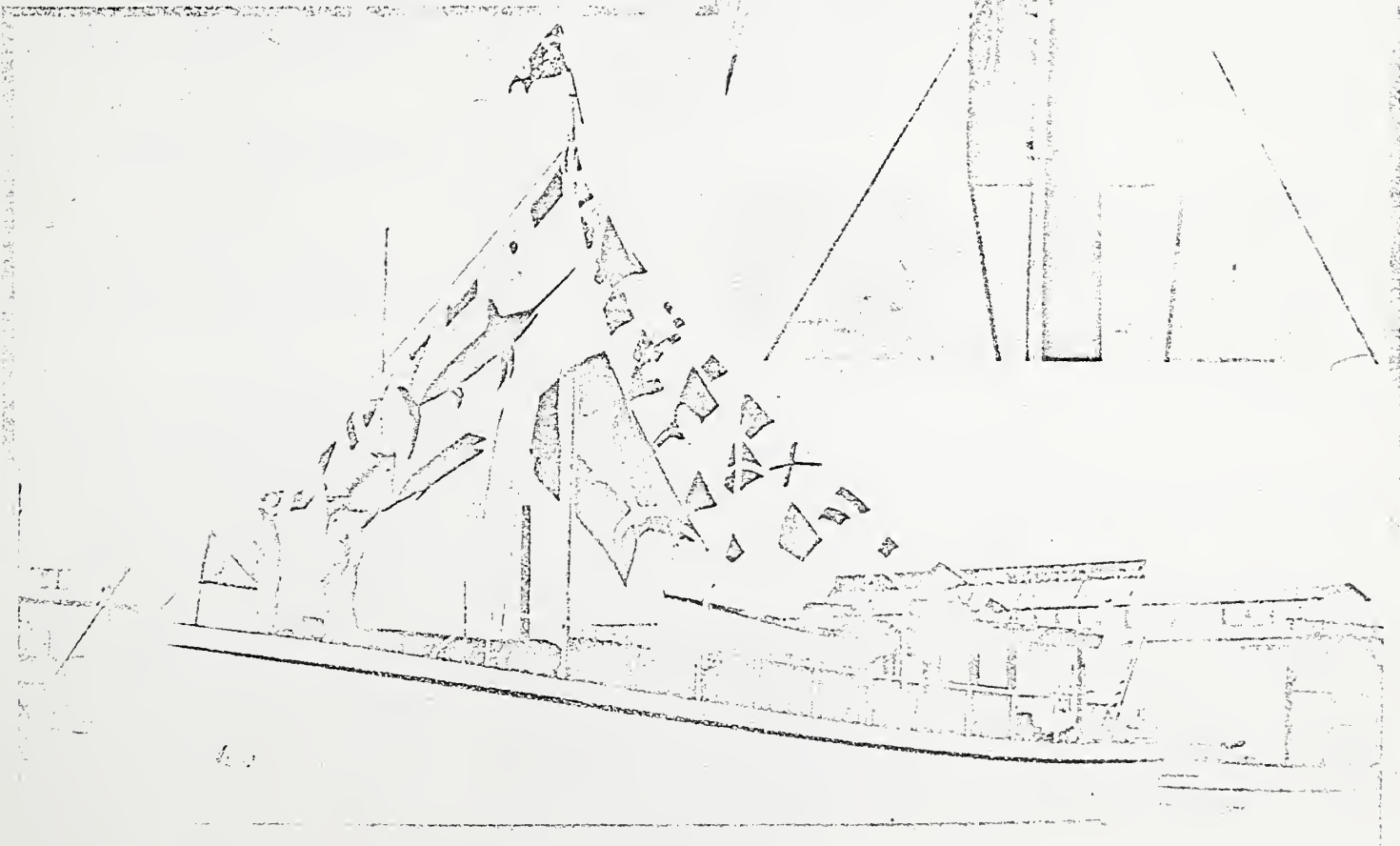
No, "Tell me when I have a bite, Captain," to that stuff, and no, "Wonder if I've hooked him." Feels like trying to break loose from a locoed steer. Catalina reel with 1,450 feet of 24-strand line sets up an awful scream, rod bowed and vibrating, arm straining. "Great work! Well hooked!" The suspense is broken. The fight is on. Fair play and let the best man win. One hundred and seventy-five yards measures the first wild rush. The whirling launch races away after the fish to save line.

Through this safely, I settle down to enjoy the masterly rod work that matches every powerful rush. Twisting, backing, following, the launch plays its important part, and clever indeed is the captain who can out-manuever this cunning antagonist, the gladiator of the sea.

And right here is where I want to record my ever increasing admiration for Zane Grey's big, square and never-failing spirit of true sportsmanship. I knew him in the old days at "Penn." when he was struggling for an education, all unconscious of the wizardry of the Z. G. that was to come, to idealize and glorify and perpetuate the brave spirit of the Frontier, that is America. In victory or defeat, he gave the best he had. Under the taunting Princeton chant, "Goodbye, Dolly Grey," or in the glory of a well won pitching contest—always the same spontaneous smile of keen sporting chivalry. Since

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Zane Grey's fishing boat, the *Gladiator*, and "R. C." in crows' nest looking for swordfish.





Fishing With Zane Grey

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then we've tracked together through leafy wilderness trails, known the comradeship of desert campfire, and the lure of sunset seas. So I knew him down to the bottom of his fighting heart, and this day I realized he would have to draw on every ounce of sand he had.

Six hours and a half, and the last hour of the fight I had been driving him. The fish was getting close to the boat, rushing wildly from side to side where I could see him plainly, and he looked ponderous.

Anything could happen. Captain looked anxiously at the sea. It was breaking into white water.

The sun setting low beyond the west end of the Island lit up the gap at the Isthmus like a Gate to Fairyland. Z. G. was panting hard, but still took up line with short labored sweeps. At every rush of the fish I could see Z. G. was glad of a chance to free one hand from the rod and stretch out the cramps.

After a vicious rush close under the propeller the swordfish surfaced thirty feet from the boat and rolled. I was certain then we would get him. Already a half dozen times with gaff poised I had tried to give him the iron, but judged him out of reach. "Edge over! Hold him! Hurry!" Straining on a hard used and weakened line the end came—Bang went the line! I have seen Zane Grey release many fish, but this one we wanted. I'll not record what the captain said. I'm not answerable for him, anyway, and it sounded all right to me at the time. But I could only pat my friend on the back when, with eyes bloodshot and staring, with parched lips and swollen hands, he turned toward me, again the same old cheery smile—unconquerable.

Staggering to balance himself on his wobbly legs, he looked into the choppy sea where our antagonist had vanished, tremblingly held out the rod to me and gasped: "He beat me, old Red and Blue, but it was a great fight."

More About Minnesota Moose

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Other nations were concerned about the exact measurements of machine gun bullets, the recoil apparatus of a .75 mm. gun, and the perfection of trigger springs.

The problem of each game bird, each game animal, in this country can be worked out only after a study has been made and laws passed which pertain to each individual kind—not to "big game" and "small game." The animals must be grouped according to their habits, their habitat, and their prevailing numbers. They must not be grouped according to their size, their color, or the shape of their left hind foot.

Conservation advocates, it seems, are seldom naturalists—just as wartime orators were seldom soldiers.

"Look at the way such and such a refuge works," say persons who declare my moose conservation campaign is bunk, "establish more game refuges—that's the solution."

"But such and such a refuge is inhabited only by deer," I persist, "and has nothing to do with moose. It is

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Plant a Bass

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We kept them alive, and when we were ready to start home it occurred to one of us to take those bass—instead of eating them—to a large new pond, some fifteen miles away, in a fishless district. We got milk cans and carried out this plan. For years that has been the finest fish pond I know of. If we had killed and eaten those bass it might have been unstocked to this day.

"Yes, I am strongly in favor of your 'Plant a Bass' Campaign, and of leaving no suitable waters unstocked." —ALBERT BIGELOW PAINE.

"It is good to know that there are Americans blessed with energy and foresight to plan for the conservation of wild life, and to take steps that game fish will not be driven from our streams. The hard worked years which came with the war and which followed it, have robbed me of the time I like to spend with a pack train—with gun or with rod—breathing God's air and grateful to Him for unspoiled nature. The time is coming again when I can take the trail.

All best wishes to all of you whose work will serve not only your pure pleasure but that of others like myself." —MEDILL McCORMICK.

Lady Angler's Triumph

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gained many prizes on the Caputh Bowling Green. Whilst proud of her achievement, Miss Ballantine has a word of praise for the splendid rod and tackle which brought the record salmon within reach of the 'gaffer,' her father, well known to Tayside anglers."

Miss Ballantine made her first catch when nine years of age. Earlier on the same day (Oct. 7, 1922), on which she caught the 64-pounder she had already landed three fine salmon weighing, 25, 21 and 17 pounds. Truly a red-letter day not likely to be forgotten, and Miss Ballantine may well be proud of holding a record that may not be beaten for a century or more.

a deer refuge, in a country not inhabited by moose at all."

But that, it seems, makes no difference. Both are "big game."

Some even pointed out how fine the Swan lake wildfowl refuge worked, and declared that that was what we should have for moose.

And, because both moose and deer are big game, men who try to dictate the conservation measures of this country—men who are in a position to do something—see no difference between them. The Big, Broad Minded men, who think in A Large way, can not be bothered by details.

But game conservation—intelligent conservation—will come only after an infinitely painstaking study of details. In the game conservation field the Master Minds are non compos. It is the small minds—the narrow gauge, single track minds—that are needed.

We must have laws pertaining to elk drawn up by men who know ELK—know all about them. We must have laws pertaining to grouse backed by the experience of men who make a study of GROUSE. We've got to have more narrow gauge minds!



Santa Claus Disappoints "Smiling Bill"

Happy New Year Ike

Here it is the middle of January already, and that reminds me I got to get busy and do a lot of winding and fixing up that old rod of mine so as to make it last another year. I made sure old Santa Claus would bring me a new one this year, seeing as he was about five years over-age, but all he brought was two neckties and a pair of suspenders.

I sure needed the suspenders all right for a fellow doesn't rightly enjoy fishing when he has to hold up his waders with one hand while he casts with the other. But I really didn't need the neckties for I aint got the one I got last Christmas wore out yet. But them suspenders will come in handy all right. You see it is kind of awkward to have to let go of your waders to land a fish, especially when you aint got anything on under the waders and a couple of strange females happen along just as you hook this blamed fish, which of course is a whopper and in shallow water. Then when you let him get away on account of having to hold on to the darned waders the best looker says "it is too bad you don't know how to fish."

I aint got no more to say. Same to you, and many fishes. Bill Jamison.



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I do not pretend to be a naturalist. I have studied the moose question in Minnesota as best I could, and I can see no other way but absolute protection if this animal is to be saved. Perhaps a real naturalist could tell me that some other way is better. Perhaps he could convince me that, even though hunted, the moose would thrive.

But nobody save a student of moose can tell me anything. No politician can, no orator can, no "game conservationist" can.

The narrow gauge mind can convince me. I wish one of them would come up to Minnesota and look into the moose question.

I believe the moose will be permanently protected by action of the state legislature next winter. I think the hunters really want it. Most of those who have replied to my articles are hunters—many are moose hunters.

Of those opposed to the closed season, every one gave as a substitute remedy, something that was working fine in the case of the deer, the goose, the partridge, the Polar bear, the Norway whale, the Dodo bird and the Wampus.



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