FISHING The Philippines

Futile Fishing

Jigging Fever

Larang Bottom Bouncing

Pigek For the Record

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On the Cover:
Dipolog Angler and tackle shop owner Kenny Ong shows off his good sized Trumpetfish which he caught slow jigging off the waters of Dipolog.
2016 has been an exciting year for Sportfishing here in the Philippines. Saltwater jigging has gained popularity, new tackle shops have opened, anglers have formed new groups to share their catches and experiences, and new record breaking fish have been caught. These are just a few of the great developments that anglers can be proud of and applaud one another for. Also this year a new president was elected here in the Philippines who has bolstered efforts to put an end to unsustainable and illegal fishing practices.

Anglers both here and abroad have much to look forward to in the New Year as well. Upcoming fishing tournaments, increased supply of high quality fishing tackle, as well as opportunities for community based projects, fishing clinics, seminars and more! It is our hope at FTP that the angling community will continue to grow and develop in this coming year.

FTP would also like to encourage anglers throughout the country to take an active part in developing sport fishing in this country. Feel free to share with FTP your pictures of fish you have caught, relevant news or articles, your own personal DIY (Do It Yourself) tips, or anything else you think would benefit the angling community. With that we would like to Wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Benaiah J. Fogle

On Right:
A small Leopard Flounder lies flat on the sandy sea floor waiting for unsuspecting prey to wander close. Flounder, though somewhat uncommon, can in fact be caught here in the Philippines. Most species however when full grown only reach a length of 20 inches.
Topwater and subsurface lure fishing are by far the most exciting ways to fish lures. The ferocious splash of a predator engulfing its prey or swirls of the fish as it turns to run after snapping at its prey is hard to beat in terms of fishing excitement. But sadly, fish are not always active near the surface. Some days you can fish the whole day trying to tempt a surface strike with no luck. What do you do in times like this?

The answer is that you put your lure where the fish are. When you find that there are no takers on your topwater lures try switching to sinking lures that you can work along the bottom. There are a variety of lures to choose from. Jighead, soft plastic, deep diving plugs and sinking plugs all can produce on days the action is slow near the surface.

A couple things to be aware of though, are the terrain on the bottom, your terminal tackle setup and the behavior of the species you are targeting. When fishing along the bottom in places you have not fished before it is advisable to use cheap lures that don’t break the bank if you lose them. My favorites for this are Jigheads with soft plastics, handtied flies or bucktail or other DIY lures that you can make at home. As you fish your lure along the bottom you will learn what the bottom is made of and where the
When you are in need of a quick loop for your braided line the Spider Hitch is the perfect solution. Though not as low profile as the Bimini Twist, this knot boasts almost equal strength. You can use the spider hitch to form loops for a loop to loop connection when adding more braid to your spool or as a loop to double up the end of your line for a stronger and more secure connection to lures and terminal tackle. Be sure to moisten the knot when you pull it tight.
... snags are. Once you are confident that you can fish the bottom without snagging and losing your expensive lures you can give them a try.

Choosing the right terminal tackle for bottom bouncing means you go a little heavier than usual. A thicker leader helps keep your lures from breaking off when you snag weeds or a rock or something else along the bottom. I generally use a couple line sizes larger than what I would use for topwater. For example; if I normally fish a 12lbs mono leader, I might switch to a 20lbs or 25lbs mono leader for bouncing lures along the bottom.

Lastly knowing the behavior of the species you are targeting when they are hooked can help you land a fish and not lose it. For example; a snapper when hooked typically will run. Some other species will stop and make you think that you have snagged on a rock. Having an idea of what the fish will do when hooked will help you anticipate the fish and bring the fish in.

Bottom bouncing can be a rewarding way to fish lures on slow days. Give it a shot the next time you are not having any luck on the surface and see if you can tempt any lunkers to strike.

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**Article Image:** Vincent holds his nice Grouper that he caught on a soft plastic sinking shrimp lures. Grouper are most often caught near the bottom and make a great species to target on the bottom.

**Pet Project**

Fishponds or small private lakes make great places for pet projects. Anglers can enjoy everything from growing exotic fish like Mikko’s Peacock Bass (left), to tilapia and catfish for food or even their own monster pond. Anglers who are lucky enough to own land with ponds just need to do a little research on what would do best in their ponds conditions while those who aren’t as lucky might have to build their own little ponds. Though the second is a bit of work it can be quite rewarding!
One of the inhabitants of the clear streams and estuaries of the Philippine Islands is the Tapiroid Grunter. This species of grunter, known locally as Pigek or in the south as Pigok, makes a wonderful angling species unique to the Philippines.

*Pigek* are amphidromous, that is, they migrate between fresh and salt water. They are most abundant between the months of April to September when they apparently move up river. *Pigek* can be found far upstream as many as 10km from the sea.

Though not well known in the country this species does have the reputation of being a highly valued food fish. In some places these fish fetch a price of 500 php per kilo. Two unique characteristics of the *Pigek* are; its pronounced and fleshy upper lip, and its often portly appearance. Though they do not grow to long lengths the *Pigek* do put on significant weight and which can be seen in their fat bellies. *Pigek* have been caught up to sizes of around 1 kilogram and lengths of 30 centimeters.

*Pigek* are of most interest to fly fishermen and bait anglers interested in endemic species. They are not known to take lures but instead to take such baits as; worms, *masa* (doughbait), insects, and shrimp. Fly Fishermen can target these fish in clear streams around the country on a variety of floating and sinking flies. Catch and release of this species is encouraged in order to assure that this gem of Philippine fish remains for generations to come. <>
Species Checklist

Black Snapper... Check! An elusive predator like the estuary Black Snapper is a real trophy fish regardless of the size. Jerrold here has not been fishing very long but has already started keeping track of all the different species he has caught. Some of his species include; barracuda, hairtail, trevally, and more. A species checklist is a great way to keep track the fish you have caught as well as to remember times, techniques and other tips that helped you catch the fish. You can use an app like Evernote on your phone, or go old school and keep a notebook or a bulletin board of pictures of you and your fish. FTP’s own website started out as a species checklist just like that.

Record Catch! Freshwater Snapper

FTP would like to personally congratulate Mark Omilig of Marky’s Kampay fishing Tackle Shop for successfully landing the largest Freshwater Snapper on rod and reel to date. This whopper weighed in at 7.5 kilos and is a true river monster. Mark Caught this Monster in Dipolog city which is blessed with a river full of trophy fish. Great work Mark!

If you have a record catch, please contact FTP in order to have it featured in our next issue!
It was April 16, 2016 when we headed out under a clear cloudless summer sky for the jigging spots near Aliguay island, Zamboanga del Norte. It was near 7am and the other buddy boat, which sailed out earlier than us, had its share of black scabbard catches using the speed jigging method. I was geared for the slow pitch game with my new slow pitch set up consisting of a Eupro Shogun 621H slow pitch rod paired to a Shimano Biomaster 13 SW5000XG. The first spot produced a small amberjack which ambushed my Eupro slowfall 160 gram jig when I cranked it all the way up from the bottom and it gave a pretty decent fight despite the smaller size. I was pretty much new to the slowfall game since I got used to the speed jigging game and the tricky part is making the rod and jig work for you. Slowfall jigs are a different game since the enticing slow fluttering action to the bottom is designed to elicit strikes on the drop or on the slow retrieve.

After some more fruitless trips to the other jigging spots and the heat of the day making it unbearable for the rest of the jiggers to fish on we decided to sail for the shady comfort of Aliguay island. My group consisted of Rene, Arnel, Jun, Chiul, Roland and Rene’s parents who are first timers to the jigging game. The other group consisted of veteran jiggers Bryan, Armin, doc Vincent, and Roi. They already had a foam box full of black scabbards and we proceeded to have lunch consisted of kinilaw na amberjack and roasted black scabbards. We had a hearty meal and spent the time waiting out the fierce summer sun before we decided to head back to jig.
At 2 pm we arrived at the first spot near Aliguay which is known to produce big fish and we wasted no time dropping our jigs to the bottom. Fish on! I was the first to hook up to a big one! The Shimano Biomaster 13 SW5000XG screamed like crazy as the unknown big fish ambushed my slowfall jig and made off with it peeling line fast from the reel. After what seemed like an eternity slack line! The fish somehow got itself loose from my Xesta Aomono tune jigging hooks. I have to immediately drop the jig again to the bottom as all the guys around me had hook ups and somehow lost the fish in the process. A few cranks and one long lift of the rod and bang! Fish on! This time the fish only fought briefly and I worked a bit fast reeling it up from the bottom thinking if I cranked in too slow I might lose another fish. After 5 minutes, the ocean bottom gave up a 2kg plus Pacific trumpetfish and it was not only the first trumpetfish I landed on slow fall method but also the biggest I have ever seen! The other guys were like dumbfounded because this was the biggest trumpetfish the saw landed using the jigging method.

The bites tapered off at around 3pm and we proceeded to another productive spot. The guys were thinking amberjacks and ruby snappers but it was an otherwise different scenario. There were a lot of hook ups but somehow the fish manage to unhook themselves near the surface and this gave inspiration for the guys to land the escape artists with dogged determination. Seeing that I have landed that big trumpetfish using the slowfall jigs they immediately changed to using the slowfall method for more bite rates. And then and there it was an orchestra! Trumpet fish after trumpetfish were landed and I believed we landed 10 pieces of those same specie with 2 ruby snappers thrown in for variety.

By 5:30 pm we called it a day as we decided to head home and grill the catch for dinner. We were somehow entertained to a trumpet fish feeding frenzy. A very first for our group and the very first event to happen here in the jigging waters of Zamboanga del Norte.

Slow Fall Jigs like the blue one above were what worked wonders this day. He is a small amberjack that fell prey to the slow fluttering motion of one of these jigs.

Ruby snapper like this one are a common catch for anglers that are deepwater jigging around the Philippines. Slow fall jigs work great on them as well.
By Corman Beluso

Responsible Angling necessitates that you should respect nature and practice catch and release to the major portion of your catch, if not all. Releasing breeding or spawning snakeheads will guarantee a healthy population of snakeheads in our hunting grounds. Snakehead survival depends on the proper handling and releasing, the length of time of the fight, and where the fish is hooked. SSFP recommends the following guidelines to give snakeheads the best chance for survival.

1. Be ready
   Be sure to plan ahead and have all the gears you’ll need close at hand, such as a landing net, pliers, camera, brag mat etc. before a snakehead is at the end of your line.

2. Use barbless or single hooks
   Using whenever possible, barbless and single hooks helps lessen trauma and stress to the snakehead because it can easily be removed, will less likely tangle in landing nets and causes less damage. Barbless and single hooks also reduce the risk of serious hooking injuries to the angler.

3. Play fish quickly
   Don’t fight a snakehead to exhaustion. Always make it a point to land a snakehead as quickly as possible. If it takes you a long time to land a fish, your drag maybe set too loosely or your gear may be too light for the snakehead you are catching. Play it quickly so it has enough energy to recover quickly and swim off once released. But be careful not to play the fish in so hard that you risk breaking your line. As rule of thumb, use appropriate gears for known snakehead size in your hunting grounds.

4. Use a landing net
   The use of a landing net aids in reducing the amount of time required to land a fish and it keeps the fish from thrashing about in shallow water or on the shore. Wet your hands, your landing net, and other materials, such as the brag mat, that may come in contact with the snakehead. This reduces the removal of the mucus from the snakehead and lessens the possibility of bacterial infection. In addition, try to keep your hands “clean” when handling your catch —sunscreen, lotions, gasoline, etc., can be detrimental to snakeheads. Also, don’t let the snakehead come into contact with a hot surface and remember that direct sunlight can damage a fish eye. So, if you are in an open area with no shade, use your shadow to keep the snakehead’s eyes shaded.
5. Remove hooks quickly
After landing the snakehead using the landing net, right away remove the hook to prevent further injury to the snakehead and to you. A thrashing snakehead with a lure still embedded on its jaws is a recipe for disaster. A long-nose plier is an essential tool for quickly removing hooks.

6. Don’t touch the gills
Do not handle snakehead by placing your fingers in the gill slits. Gill filaments are very sensitive and can easily be damaged. Snakeheads should be handled by gently holding them near the head and the tail if possible. If you are not comfortable using your wet hands, use a lip grip. If the tips of your lip grip is made of metal, modify it by putting a rubber padding to prevent it from piercing the snakehead’s lower lip. Also remember to support snakeheads with your other hand when you lift the snakehead using a lip grip.
Large snakeheads should have their body fully supported at all times to avoid damage to internal organs and its spine. Damage may occur when a snakehead thrashes while being held upright by the jaw. The best method for handling a snakehead with a lip grip is to slip your other hand under its stomach to take the weight off its jaw.

7. Minimize the time snakeheads are out of water
Keep in mind to minimize the amount of time a snakehead is held out of water. However, sometimes hook removal takes longer, or you want to take a photo or two, weigh and measurement. In such cases, simply give the fish a break and dip it back in the water to keep the gills wet. Always try to keep photo, weighing and measuring sessions as short as possible and handle the snakehead as little and as careful as possible.

8. Revive
If necessary, hold the snakehead with your hands and gently rock it back and forth until it is revived. Make sure released snakeheads swims readily and vigorously before letting them go.

9. Be responsible
Always use common sense, empathy and consideration when hunting for snakeheads. Treat your fellow men and nature with respect, take nothing but images and memories, observe rules and regulations, leave nothing but footprints, leave the place better than it was before, share your smile and experience, and hopefully kill nothing more than just time and worries.
Setting an Example

The thrill of hooking a shark is hard to beat as Ferwin here can attest. He hooks this Thresher in waters off Liloan, Cebu while out jigging with Charlie and Apollo. These three newcomers to jigging were thrilled yet had the right thinking to quickly release this shark after a their priceless photo. Anglers like these whom are committed to catch and release fishing are the great examples of high quality sportsmen and the future of sport fishing here in the Philippines! Keep up the great work guys!

Custom Made Spearguns

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19mm Rubber Tube 28 php per Inch

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BFAR turns over 19 patrol boats to coastal municipalities in Southern Leyte

Earlier this year the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Region VIII turned over 19 fiberglass motorized outrigger (banka) boats equipped with 12 horsepower diesel motors to the LGU units of coastal municipalities in Southern Leyte. This was done in conjunction with the 495th celebration of the historic first mass conducted in the Philippines on Limasawa Island. The donation of these boats was part of a move by the BFAR to equip coastal municipalities to monitor and police their local waters against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUUF). The towns that benefitted from this donation were: Silago, Hinunangan, Hinundayan, Anahawan, St. Bernard, San Juan, Libagon, Sogod, Bontoc, Tomas Oppus, Liloan, San Francisco, Pintuyan, San Ricardo, Malitbog, Maasin, Macrohon, Padre Burgos and Limasawa Island. (BFAR)
Fish Be With You

Futile Fishing

By Charlie Bing

I was fishing for white bass on my favorite Texas river with a friend. As we headed back downriver in our canoe, we drifted toward the only people fishing from the bank, a man and woman. The man asked how we did.

“Caught a few,” I humbly answered—we had done well.

“What did you catch them on?”

As we floated by, I showed them my simple small grub-tail jig that cost me pennies. I asked what he was using and he held up a large and expensive chrome-colored plug with hooks dangling all over it. I thought to myself, this couple has hiked in for about forty minutes to get way up here and they’re not going to catch much! I pulled out my small box of jigs and tossed him a couple saying, “Use these.”

We had not floated more than 30 meters past them when I heard a yell and looked back. “Hey, I got one on my first cast!” he beamed as he held up a very nice white bass.

More recently, I was fly fishing a different river and having a great time catching white bass while wading the tail of a long pool. Since it was a Saturday morning, the banks were starting to fill with spin-cast fishermen not equipped to wade the cold water. They watched with envy at the access and success I had wading and flyfishing.

A young man and young boy emerged from the woods just a few yards behind me. With his peculiar hair, tattoos, and other décor, it looked as if the man had just come from a heavy metal rock concert.
Not a typical fisherman you’d expect to see, but I thought it was nice of him to take the boy (his son?) fishing. The man kept casting and trying different spots with no luck.

“Cast right near the bank,” I suggested as I pointed. “I was getting a lot of hits there.”

He nodded, and with his next cast, hooked a nice fat white bass. Immediately, he handed the rod to the boy, who was too absorbed in landing the “monster” fish to show his joy. But after the bass was safely secured on the bank, the boy looked at me with a big smile and said, “Thank you!” In fact he said it about every ten seconds for a minute or two!

I hate to see people fish in futility when they can easily catch fish. They just need someone to show them what to do and how to do it. I guess I’m sympathetic to people wasting their time and their lives, because I wasted mine for so long—until someone explained to me the good news about what I needed to do and how to do it. They explained to me that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, paid for my sins on a cross of pain and rose from the dead to offer me eternal life. And all I had to do was believe in Him, that is, believe that He would give me this eternal life absolutely free. There was nothing I could do but accept what was already paid for and provided for me. “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23b).

Accepting God’s gift changed my life. I am no longer casting futilely in the dark. Now I love to show other people the way to life—and fish!
It's a tough day. Totally drained. Everything went well but some of the task were not completed. The bell rang and all the guys went out to punch out. I too went out and when I got home took a cup of coffee. Looking at the spearguns on the wall I decided to spearfish. Besides what's to lose other than calories. The entire day was so hot and the lunar chart tells that its not a good day to fishing. I don't care. So long as I could get my thoughts out of a lot of things.

The tide was falling when I got to the sea. It's going to be a rough dive. Current is at its peak, a meter per second. Rubbed my mask with a mansanita leaf then made some lung prep and there I am right in the middle of a sardine ball. Tiny ones about my pinky. The clicking sound of their tail was music to my ear. The harmony is occasionally broken as I pump water out my snorkel. These little ones seems to know the old saying "An enemy of enemy is a friend." As they gather round me. A bit of anxious and wary as any predator could dash into the ball. As the clicking sound changed to an erratic, fast, and more like a panicked alarm I knew I'm in. Went out of the ball and scanned the blue for some silhouettes. We don't want any man I the gray suit coming too close do we? Then as the boundary is drawing near I saw that unmistakable shape, my prey. Hound fish and needlefish. Didn't make any eye contact as I saw a big hound steadily waiting for the ball to come close. The current swept me to the boundary. Made a turn. Was hard as I'm moving against the current. After fifteen meters or so I positioned my self at the tail end of the ball using it as cover. I guesstimate that in a few seconds I'd be on top of the big one but twas no longer there. Pretty smart. I hasn't grown that big to be stupid. I directed my attention to a couple good sized needles and bam! Got a good placed shot. Twas about thirty two inches long. Made another shot on another which is on a trance while some wrasses are cleaning it. Now I have two. Had to rest. Going against the current is pretty tiresome.

The sun is setting fast. I moved to my flounder spot. The sand is ivory and the water here is so clear. Silly flounders, trying to camouflage. Unfortunately for them I could spot them as their hunger forces them to feed on unwary little cardinal fish. As they snatch the poor ones they create a cloud of sand. Only took two left the others for some other time. They make good frying. On my way to the shore I couldn't let the opportunity of taking palm sized silver moharra slip as they make very tasty tinola. Besides the are good target. They stop movin when you open and close your hand. Seems to get their attention well. It was a good hour dive. Caught six. Perfect for supper.

Why do I dive? There in my beautiful and a not so silent world is where I find freedom. Till next time. <>
Brag Board
Have something to brag about? Send us your photos of your catch and we will post them in the next issue.
All photos welcome 😊
**In The Kitchen**

**Laro ni Naynay Malumi**

**LARANG**

*(Lah-rah-ng)*

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**INGREDIENTS:**

- Onions
- Ginger
- Peppers (sweet or spicy)
- Tomatoes
- Fish: Grouper
- Sinigang Mix
- - or -
- Hunts Pork and Beans
- Knorr cubes
- Water
- Magic Sarap

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*Sinigang*, or Tamarind Soup is a dish well known and loved throughout the Philippines. Its Visayan counterpart *Larang* is not known as well except in its place of origin. For seafood lovers this memorable dish is a must try.

Like most authentic Filipino dishes, *Larang* can be cooked many different ways. Nanay Malumi’s *Larang* is first class. She actually has two variations of the dish herself. One has a sweeter taste that goes very well with *Pugapo* (Grouper) and the other is sour like *sinigang* that works well fish that have a stronger fishy taste.

The basic ingredients for *Larang* are Fish, tomatoes, onions and ginger. First decide which variation you want to try. Next, sauté the onions, ginger, and tomatoes with a little vegetable oil in a pot. Then add the fish and lightly brown the sides. Continue to sauté the veggies and fish for a few minutes. Next add the peppers, magic sarap, knorr cubes and either pork and beans or *sinigang* mix. Let simmer for 15 to 20 mins and serve with a side of rice.
A Spotted Bobtail cuttlefish munches away on a tiny shrimp. The brilliant colors on these little guys are awe inspiring. Thanks to angler and dive photographer Adrian Dan for capturing this moment under the sea!
“It is you oh Lord who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them”

Acts 4:24