# SPORT FISHING *in Hawaii*

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# PREFACE

THIS HANDBOOK is written for sport fishermen, and because there are more shore fishermen than any others in Hawaii, the greatest emphasis of this volume is laid upon shore fishing. Deep sea angling is considered a field in itself and outside the scope of this book; however, that field has not been overlooked entirely. Various kinds of fishing tackle and bait are described, and the art of fishing with line, pole, net and spear is discussed. This account is a compilation of my own experiences and those of many other enthusiastic island fishermen.

In the technique of fishing there is much diversity of opinion as to what is the best equipment to use and in the fishing methods. There never will be a last word on how to fish in any manner, for fishes are too varied in kind, habit and temperament and are too clever to let one find out all of their tricks. As in any sport, it is a good rule to follow advice first, then let experience add to the knowledge of others.

The waters around the Hawaiian Islands are truly a paradise for fishermen. The species of fish are so numerous that not infrequently a new one surprises even the "old timer" (there are more than 20,000 known kinds of fish in the world). Here, such cumbersome equipment as rubber boots and oilskin coats are not necessary, and one can fish comfortably in bathing trunks only. Although the water is warm, there is no need of standing knee deep to waist high in the surf to fish. One can enjoy his fishing from a clean, sandy beach or from a safe, rocky ledge. Here a man can go fishing on almost every day in the year, for the weather is almost never too bad to permit venturing out.

Within these pages, 73 kinds of fish most commonly caught in the islands have been described and their shape, color and size noted. All of the common fish-names in general use in Hawaii are recorded. Notes on distribution, habits, food, fishing methods, and edible qualities have been added, for a good knowledge of the fish makes for a better and more successful fisherman. The species listed are those that are apt to be represented in an average run of luck. By consulting the illustrations and descriptions, and by learning to use the identification key, the fisherman should be able to identify the various fishes he may catch.

Although this book applies to fishing in the Hawaiian Islands, many of our fish are widely distributed and are found also along other tropical shores, especially in the south and western Pacific and Indian Oceans. Hence, this manual should be useful elsewhere.

Some technical words cannot be avoided in describing fish, but such terms are defined in the glossary on page 191. There is included also an outline drawing of a fish on which the important external structures are labeled. In the text, the words "pole" and "rod" are used interchangeably, for they mean the same thing—a long, slender instrument to which a fishing line is attached. They are usually of bamboo or a hard, flexible wood, such as hickory. The terms "light tackle" and "heavy tackle" refer to the rod and reel together.

**Acknowledgment**

I wish to take this opportunity to thank my many fishing friends who, through their good fellowship, have inspired me to write this book. I wish to thank Mr. Charles M. Cooke, III, for helpful suggestions and for reviewing the parts on big game fishing and World's Record Fish; Miss Marian Weaver for reviewing the chapter on Fish Cookery; Major Edwin H. Bryan, Jr., Mr. Y. Kondo, Mr. Herbert Leong and Mr. Ben Ono for reading parts of the manuscript and making suggestions; and Dr. Harold St. John, Miss Margaret Titcomb and Mr. Elwood C. Zimmerman for helpful advice and criticism of the manuscript, and the latter for preparing it for publication.

—E. Y. H.

Honolulu, T. H.

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## XXX. BIG GAME FISHING

Hawaii is becoming famous for world record fish. It holds the world's record for *mahimahi* (67½ pounds, caught by Fred McNamarra, fig. 61); and *ahi* (Allison tuna) (265 pounds, James Harvey, fig. 62). Until April 24, 1943, J. B. Stickney of Honolulu, held the record for *ono* (wahoo) with his 124¾ pounder (fig. 63). The lady anglers have their share of records. Mrs. Charles M. Cooke, III, holds the ladies' world's record with her 184½-pound *ahi* (Allison tuna) (fig. 64).

All of the off shore game fish, such as *aku, ono, ahi, mahimahi,* albacore, marlin, swordfish and *kawakawa* grow to enormous size, and commercial fishermen often better the world records by many pounds. There are great opportunities for amateur anglers to duplicate their feats and set up new world's record Hawaiian catches. For notes on these big game fishes, consult the second part of this volume.

One favorable feature about big game fishing in Hawaii is the excellent chance of bringing your fish to gaff without having it mutilated by sharks. Very rarely is a hooked fish attacked by sharks in our waters, no matter how long it takes to boat the fish.

There are several excellent fishing grounds less than 5 miles from shore around the islands (fig. 60) where chances of getting strikes are good. Another advantage is that the water is usually relatively calm, and one can really enjoy his fishing. The two major fishing grounds, recognized as outstanding by many anglers, are the Waianae and Kona coasts. In these waters, many trolling boats of all types may be seen in action.

There are several boat owners who take out fishing parties for a reasonable consideration, and any one interested in the sport may easily contact them at Kona, Hawaii; Waianae, Waialua, and Kewalo Basin, Oahu.

As stated in the preface, I have written this book principally for shore fishermen. I feel that big game fishing in Hawaii is a field in itself—a field to which an entire volume could be devoted. There-

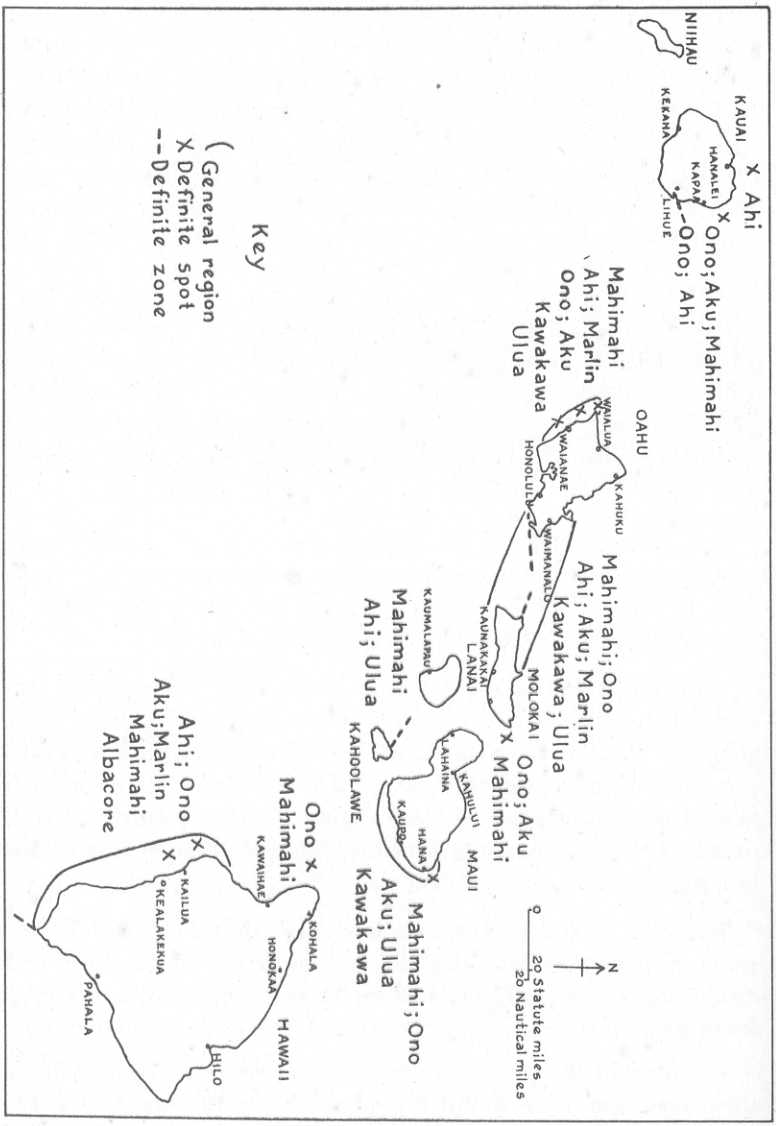


Fig. 60 Good trolling grounds around the islands.

TABLE 1. WORLD'S RECORDS OF SOME GAME FISH FOUND IN HAWAII (CAUGHT WITH ROD AND REEL)

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Weight in pounds | Length | Girth | Where caught | Date caught | By whom caught |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Albacore | *Gerrio alalunga* | 66¼ | ------ | ------ | Santa Catalina, Calif. | 1912 | Frank Kelly |
| Barracuda (*Kaku*) | *Sphyraena barracuda* | 103¼ | 5½′ | 31¼″ | Bahama Islands | 1932 | Chester E. Benet |
| Bonefish (*'O'io*) | *Albula vulpes* | 13¾ | 31″ | 17″ | Bimini Bahamas | March 9, 1919 | B. F. Peek |
| Dolphin (*Mahimahi*) | *Coryphaena hippurus* | 67½ | 68½″ | 37½″ | Waianae, Oahu, T. H. | Aug. 19, 1940 | Fred McNamarra |
| Marlin (Pacific Black) | *Makaira nigricans marlina* | 976 | 12′8″ | 6′2″ | Bay of Islands, N. Z. | Feb. 25, 1926 | Capt. Laurie Mitchell |
| Marlin (Striped) | *Makaira mitsukurii* | 692 | 13′5″ | ------ | Balboa, Calif. | Aug. 18, 1931 | A. Hamann |
| Shark (Man-eater) | *Carcharodon carcharias* | 1,919 | 14′8″ | 8′½″ | Kangaroo Island Australia | May 12, 1941 | G. R. Cowell |
| Swordfish | *Xiphias gladius* | 860 | 13′9″ | 5′10″ | Tocopilla, Chile | Apr. 28, 1940 | W. E. S. Tuker |
| Tuna (Allison, Yellow Fin, *Ahi*) | *Neothunnus macropterus* | 265 | ------ | ------ | Waianae, Oahu, T. H. | 1937 | James W. Harvey |
| Women's record | | 184½ | ------ | ------ | Waianae, Oahu, T. H. | Oct. 21, 1939 | Mrs. C. M. Cooke, III |
| Wahoo (*Ono*) | *Acanthocybium solandri* | 133½ | 6′11″ | ------ | Nassau, Bahamas | Apr. 24, 1943 | K. L. Ames, Jr. |

Fig. 61 Fred McNamarra with his world's record 67½-pound *mahimahi,* caught off Waianae, Oahu (courtesy of Fred McNamarra).

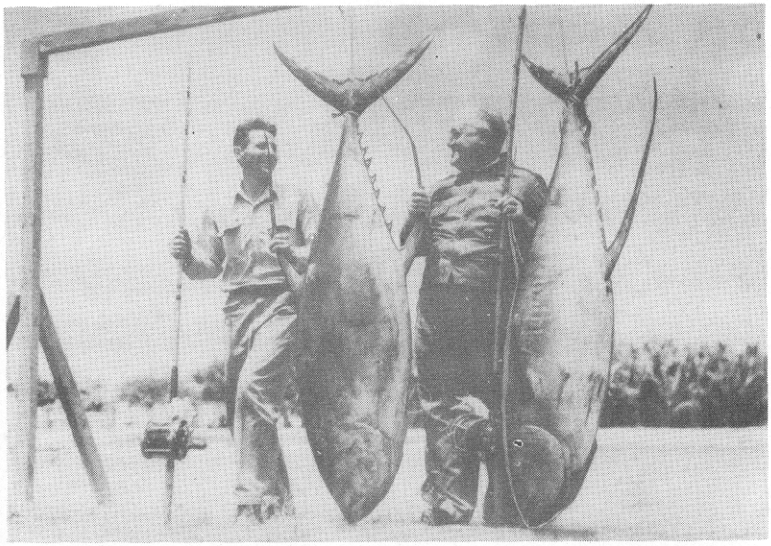

Fig. 62 J. W. Harvey (right) with his 265-pound world's record *ahi* (courtesy of J. W. Harvey).

fore, I have but briefly touched upon deep sea angling here, but the game fishes commonly caught in deep water are illustrated, described and discussed in Part Two.

## XXXI. THE MALIHINI FISHING TOURNAMENT

Every year, during the month of August, a Malihini Fishing Tournament is sponsored for the visitors in Hawaii. The visitor who catches the largest game fish in Hawaiian waters during this month receives a handsome trophy from the Hawaii Tourist Bureau, the sponsor of the tournament since 1935. During August many large game fish come close to the shores of the islands, and almost every day somebody lands a big one.

In addition to this tournament for the visitors, many fishing clubs, such as the Oahu Casting Club, Atlapac Fishing Club, Thom's Casting Club, etc., hold fishing contests several times a year. These local club events are all shore casting tournaments.

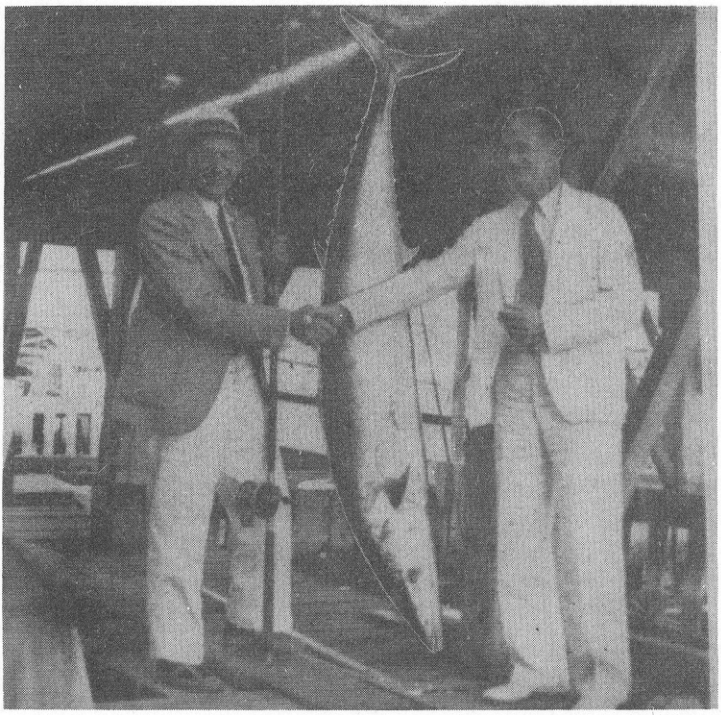

Fig. 63 H. E. Savage of Seattle, Washington, congratulating J. B. Stickney (right) for catching a world's record 124¾-pound *ono* (wahoo), Oahu. This record has since been broken by K. L. Ames, Jr., of Nassau, Bahamas (courtesy of J. B. Stickney).

## XXXII. WORLD'S RECORD FISH

The International Game Fish Association is the pool for records of big fish caught. Anyone who tops the previous record for size should send in a report of his catch and have it registered. The Honolulu representative of the Association is Mr. Charles M. Cooke, III, from whom a pamphlet of rules may be obtained.

Among the rules are some concerning lines and rods. Salt water fishing lines are graded according to the number of threads in the twist, and are made in 6-, 9-, 12-, 15-, 18-, 21-, 24-, 27-, 30-, 36-, 39-,

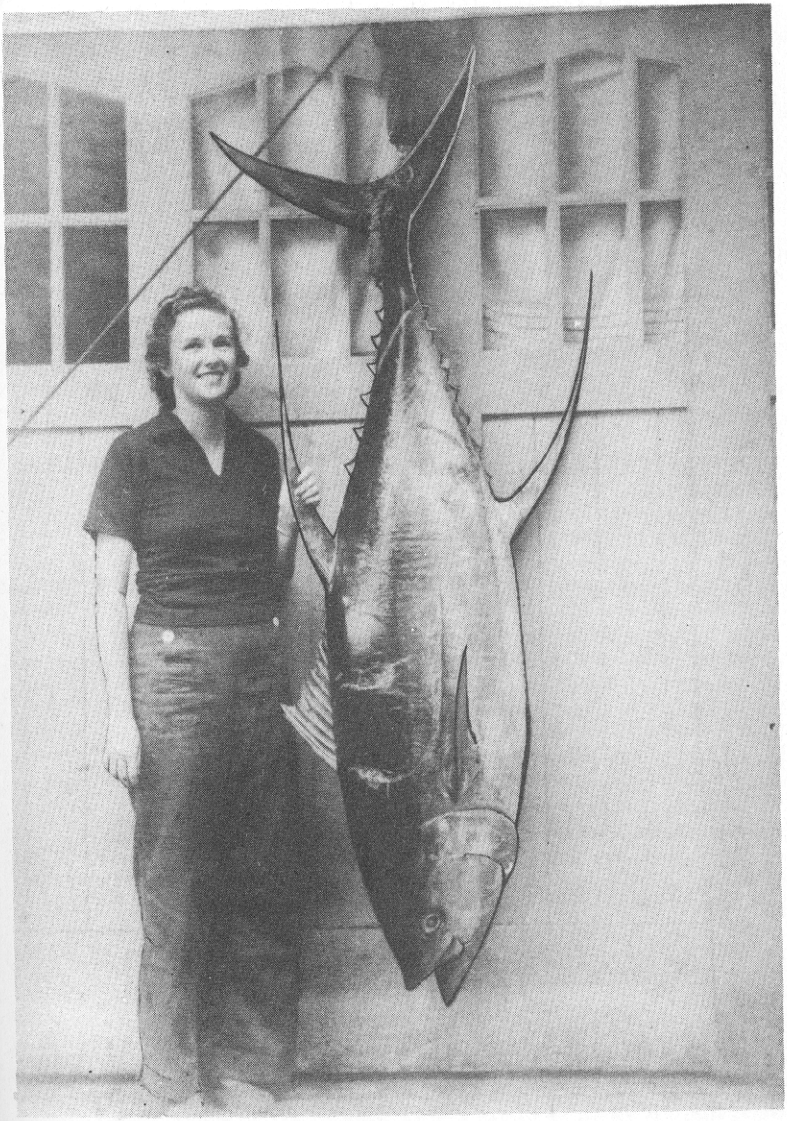

**Fig. 64** Mrs. C. M. Cooke, III, with her 184½-pound ladies' world's record *ahi*, caught off Waianae, Oahu (courtesy of C. M. Cooke, III).

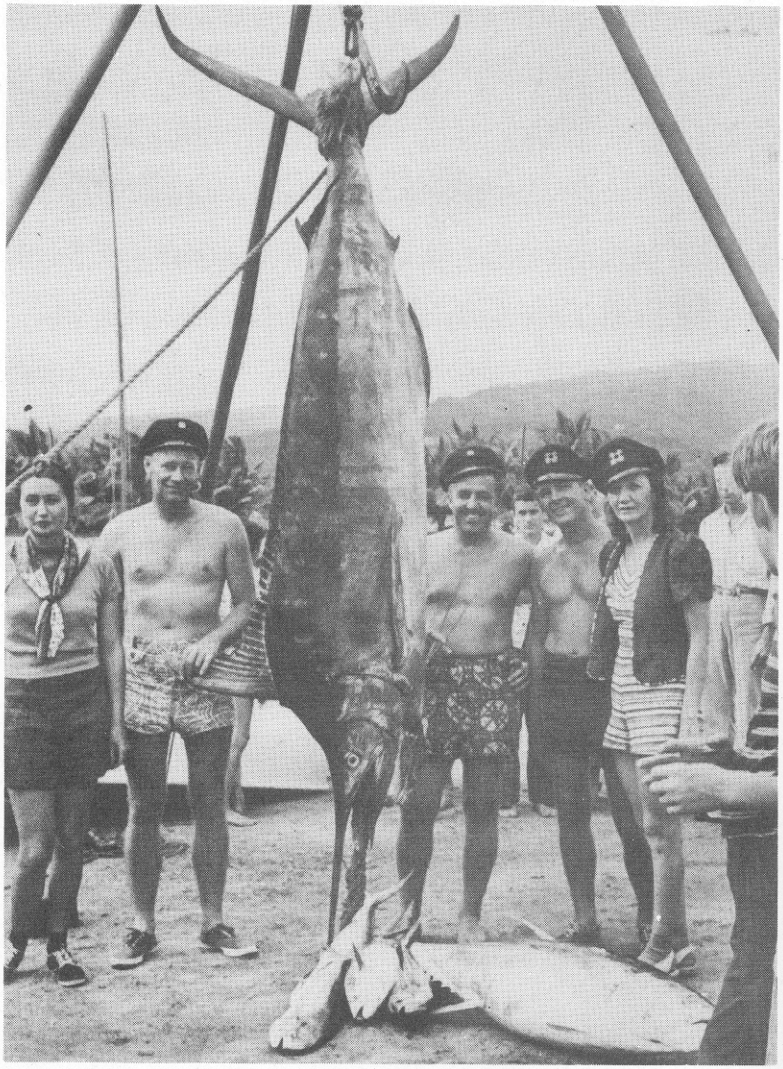

**Fig. 65** A 385-pound marlin caught by Bob Rice near Oahu (courtesy of Hats Mairs).

54-, and 72-thread sizes. But in recording a fish caught, only 6-, 9-, 15-, 24-, 39, and 54-thread lines are recognized, and if a different size has been used, the record falls into the next class above. For example, if a catch has been made with an 18-thread line, it is recorded in the 24-thread class.

Some sportsmen double the line next to the leader. The association permits this with 6-, 9-, and 15-thread lines for a length of 15 feet above the leader. For 24-, 39-, and 54-thread lines, 30 feet of doubling is allowed. Another specification has to do with the weight of the rod. The weight includes only the tip of the rod with all its guides, wrapping, grip and other accessories it may have attached to it. To have the record of a catch accepted and published, the fish must have been hooked, fought, and brought to gaff by the sportsman himself, without collaboration. If the rod breaks, the catch is disqualified.

Table 1 gives records for some game fish found in Hawaiian waters.

## XXXIII. KEEPING FISH FRESH

Every fisherman wants to get his fish home in as fresh a condition as possible, and freshness depends principally upon keeping the fish cool. In cool weather that is no problem, but in warm weather something must be done to save the fish. Most sport fishing boats are equipped with iced fish boxes, and it is an easy matter to bring back a well preserved catch, but the shore fisherman is faced with a more difficult problem. Usually the shore fisherman takes a small, home-made icebox with him in which to keep his bait and his catch. A large fish, such as an *ulua* may be kept fairly fresh by burying it in a hole dug in the sand just above the high water line. Shading the area with leaves, a bag, or a box will help considerably in keeping the temperature down. If ice is available, put a few pieces over the fish before it is covered. Before placing a large fish in a hole, it is advisable to kill it by stabbing the brain with a pointed implement such as that shown in figure 68. Quick killing seems to be an advantage in keeping fish fresh. Another method often used to keep the quality