

Bonnie Marietta, Morro Bay, California

EXCERPTS FROM THE "FISH LIST" EMAIL UPDATES, 2001

May 03, 2001

The week started with lots of wind and large swells, in addition to mostly cold water, 49 to 50 degrees. Scattered groups of fish only gave up scores of single digit days, making for more fishing than catching.

June 28, 2001

When Captain Mark called me this afternoon, he was 35 miles west of Morro Bay with winds of 25 knots and gusts to well over 30. No place to be for the weak at heart!

July 05, 2001

Most of the catching has been within 20 miles of Morro Bay, which is a rare treat, as often the chase for albacore takes places much farther offshore. We fish these "tuna" with surface running artificial lures of assorted colors and shapes, at about 6 knots, never stopping when pulling them in.

July 12, 2001

Often I like to comment on interesting encounters while at sea, and this week was truly memorable. One evening, as the pace of fishing was at its peak, a large pod of killer whales appeared suddenly: 10 or 12 cows, adolescents, calves, and a dominant bull with a dorsal fin at least 6 feet tall and as rigid as a rock. The main pod was within 40 yards, but the massive bull repeatedly rolled alongside the boat within 20 yards. It was breathtaking, to say the least. Fishing continued, but I am sure there wasn't a sea lion within miles, at least not one that wasn't being digested.

July 19, 2001

There was "fire in the water" this morning at 0400 hours (4:00 a.m.), as Captain Mark pulled his anchor from his resting spot in Avila Beach. "Fire in the water" is an expression many fishermen use to describe the phosphorescence glow in the ocean which can be seen in a ship's wake. This glow is created by millions of tiny microorganisms that live in the ocean. For those of you who have never witnessed this phenomenon, visualize thousands of florescent green "glow in the dark sticks" all bursting beneath the water, creating a sparkling or glittering effect, as the Bonnie Marietta glides over them. Now add a few hundred flickering green streaks of light shooting side ways from both the starboard (right) and port (left) sides of the hull. These streaks are caused by small baitfish being startled as the boat passes over. Okay, now put these two pictures together, and you have "fire in the water!"

... In closing this week's update I have one more tale of the sea to share with you. Although most of you have only become acquainted with us over the past five years of our "Consumer Direct Sales," you might be interested to know that this is actually Captain Mark's 31st year on the ocean. So many of you have commented on how much you have enjoyed hearing about the Captain's fishing trips, and it has reminded him just how blessed he is to experience these things firsthand. Sometimes the Captain takes for granted how lucky he is, to be able to witness so many exciting events at sea, and he is absolutely delighted to be able to share these experiences with you. How easily we take things for granted that we experience on a daily basis, huh?

... Earlier in the week, Captain Mark encountered a school of approximately 200 dolphins. As the Bonnie Marietta pushed her way through the water, 20 to 30 of them began competing to ride the wave of the bow, splashing rhythmically through the sea. This was truly a sign of good luck, as they escorted her to the fishing grounds!

July 26, 2001

Most of us wake up to an alarm clock, but not so for Captain Mark. Around 3:00 a.m., he was awakened by a whale blowing alongside the Bonnie Marietta! This was not an unusual event for the crew, but it has only happened a couple of other times in the past, usually during the night while the Bonnie Marietta is drifting offshore. Captain Mark tells me that whales have a very distinctive odor (better put as BAD BREATH) and that once you have smelled it, you're likely to never forget it! Even when visibility is poor, if you were to get within 50 yards downwind of a whale, you'll know it's there.

August 02, 2001

Captain Mark had the opportunity to observe Flying Fish from aboard the Bonnie Marietta this week at only about 12 miles off Point Buchon. (For us land lovers, that would be approximately 12 miles west of Montana De Oro). This is probably the closest to Morro Bay that the Captain has seen these beautiful silvery fish, as they are usually found much farther offshore. Did you know that Flying Fish don't really fly? They actually build up speed in the water and then leap into the air, extending their large pectoral fins. Their fins (similar to those of an albacore) act like wings, which allow them to glide across the ocean while they rapidly fan their tails. Oftentimes, Flying Fish become airborne as a way of escaping a predator, such as an albacore. Flying Fish have even been known to glide so high that they land on the decks of passing vessels!

August 09, 2001

Windy and rough ocean conditions moderated on Wednesday, and the albacore started to cooperate better than they had for a few days, but I had already made the decision to take the week off and give my family, and myself a break after 6 weeks of nonstop production. The best catching this week is 40 miles to the west, or about 20 miles offshore of San Simeon, but this may change by the time we are ready to go fishing next week.

August 16, 2001

Last week the seas quieted, and the ocean produced a few days of good fishing, which of course we missed by taking a little time off. With those promising reports near the end of last week, we were eager to get back to work this week, and do what we do best, but Mother Nature had plans of her own. Day after day of wind and rough oceans has put the local albacore fleet, including the Bonnie Marietta, tied to the docks, waiting for improving conditions. We quickly realized how blessed we had been to have 1½ months of uninterrupted fishing and catching, so this week of forced inactivity is easier to accept.

When the wind moderates, it looks as if the main body of albacore may be 60 miles or more west of Morro Bay. Not far, but still an 8 to 10 hours one-way steam. We hope for kinder seas this next week, and will do our best to harvest some more albacore before they leave.

August 23, 2001

Another disappointing week as the northwest winds continue to batter our offshore waters. Once in a while it looks as if we will get a reprieve, but the improved weather windows only last for a few hours. I just looked at my favorite weather site, which includes real time conditions from offshore buoys. For example, as of 9 o'clock this evening, the Port San Luis Buoy has sustained winds of 20 knots, with gusts to 25, and a 9-foot swell at 14 seconds. Not a nice place to be, so we are not.

A couple of boats ventured out this past week, but rough seas, and a lack of any commercial production of albacore returned them quickly to the harbor.

Other than a small finger of good water locally, the best sign is 90 to 100 miles west of Morro Bay. When the wind finally backs down, the water should warm up, and we will be able to look around. We haven't figured out how to control the weather or make fish materialize, but we remain optimistic.

August 30, 2001

As long a stretch of rough and windy conditions for this time of year, as I can remember, but it may have finally broken. The winds and swells started to moderate yesterday, and seem to be continuing this morning. Too late for us to act on the improving seas for this week, as last reports put fish at least 10 to 12 hours one-way travel time for us. This of course, makes it logistically impossible to attempt a delivery for this weekend.

However, if the oceans continue to cooperate, and the local fleet gets out and about once again, we may find fish closer to home. We still remain committed to a few more trips, before the season is over.

August 31, 2001

There must have been a “Red Sky” last night as the weather has finally given us a break. Taking full advantage of this, Captain Mark cast off early this morning aboard the Bonnie Marietta. After having traveled some 9-10 hours to the fishing grounds, he was successful in finding a small spot of fish. I heard from him around 7:00 p.m., and he reported having approximately 1500 pounds of albacore on board! The fish are all on the large size, so there are not a lot, and he plans to continue fishing again tomorrow.

September 01, 2001

At about 1:00 p.m., Captain Mark reported having another 600-700 pounds of fish on board and will be heading for home shortly. And if he leaves now, the Bonnie Marietta’s estimated time of arrival back to Morro Bay will be midnight.

September 07, 2001

We were blessed to have made a dash out and back last week, as the ocean's nasty side reared its head again this week. In addition, the main body of albacore may be another 25 miles to the west, increasing the Bonnie Marietta's transit time to at least 24 hours roundtrip. Eighty or ninety miles isn't an issue, but the heavy weather only moderated yesterday (Thursday), making it impossible to attempt to have albacore this weekend. The forecast is good for the next couple of days, but as well as it being too late for this week, it is still too early to leave for next. So we wait, hoping for the calmer seas to continue. As you can imagine, the farther offshore the albacore get, the more ocean conditions control our efforts.

September 13, 2001

The Bonnie Marietta will soon be homeward bound with fresh albacore on board. Captain Mark tells me the bulk of the fish have moved to about 100 miles offshore now. Considering we are approaching the end of the season, and all that is involved in traveling that distance, this more than likely might be our last fishing trip for the year.

October 11, 2001

Final albacore update, 2001 “season (in its entirety)

Friends,

It seems that light line and live bait of the party boats are taking the majority of albacore at this time. This is typical of fall fishing, as the water cools, and the fish become more cautious feeders. There continues to be sporadic scores on the jigs, but there is much more fishing than catching going on, and one must have the horseshoe in order to produce.

For those of you who have been aboard for some time now, you know that our consumer-direct sales starts with salmon in May, and ends with albacore around the last of September. As much fun as the albacore fishing has been, we reluctantly will be closing shop for the balance of the

2001 season. We have absolutely enjoyed the opportunity of serving you this season, and we truly appreciate your patronage. We hope you have enjoyed the bounty the ocean has provided, and we look forward with great anticipation to the 2002 season.

After we complete a couple of research commitments, our plans for the Bonnie Marietta this winter include a major retrofit, including new engine, transmission, generator, and fuel tanks. So starting with our haul-out next week, we will be busy breathing another 20 years of life into her. Feel free to stop by anytime you're in Morro Bay, and check out our progress. Without a knife in my hand, I will have a chance to visit, and keep my fingers intact.

For those of you who didn't pick up one of our albacore brochures, please forward us your snail mail address and we will be glad to mail you one (for free of course). Finally, as soon as our website is completed, we will let you know. Be thinking of your favorite salmon or albacore recipe, as we will attempt to produce a Bonnie Marietta FISH LIST recipe handout, for fish lovers by fish lovers.

Once again, please accept our sincere thanks for your continued support! Call or write if we can be of assistance!

Warmest Regards,

Mark M. Tognazzini, and family

805-772-1560 home, 805-441-1451 cell