

Punalu'u Hawaii - The Black Sand Beach

Written by Paul Belmudes
Monday, 04 October 2010 03:16

Kayak Fishing and Being a Tourist at the Same Time

On Wednesday, I fished with Shawn Zenor, aka "DriftingSon" who has been knocking down some respectable pelagics in his first year of kayak fishing. Shawn asked me to join him fishing Punalu'u, also known for its famous "black sand beach." The black sand beach was the video shoot site for Chris Issac and his 1989 "Wicked Game" video, featuring model Helena Christensen. It was also used in the 1953 film, "From Here to Eternity." Now I've only been to this location once when I first moved to the Big Island in 2004. I took the circle island bus tour to get familiar with the Island of Hawaii. Being in the sales/marketing division for the largest hotel on the Big Island, everyday I help guests plan there vacation and activities for their stay. For some reason, I did not understand the beauty of what the black sand beach had to offer. Often I tell our guests that the 2.5 hour drive from our hotel to Punalu'u would really not be worth it... all they would see is black sand, take a few pictures of palm trees and honu turtles basking in the sun. Then leave after 5 minutes. Really not worth the drive with more popular choices while on the island.

Boy was I wrong! I saw visitors enjoying the beach like it was a white sand beach. Turtles were everywhere... the coconut palm trees were swaying and the wind was so lite... a perfect day on the beach with the smell of suntan lotion filling the air. The cascade of the island from the south side was beautiful. I thought of how it must have been when King Kamehameha was ruling Hawaii. How the Hawaiians fished for food and how they lived back then in the 1700's. Well anyways... my opinion changed immediately after rediscovering this black beach gem... and now... I really believe it is a recommended "must see" when visiting the Big Island of Hawaii.

We were on the water at 10:00 a.m. and we headed west to an area where Shawn plotted that had drop off points. About an hour and a half into the pedal, I approached the lava shoreline staying out 40 fathoms... and to be honest, we were very close to shore where the waves were breaking large that day. All of a sudden, my reel starts screaming. Wow... the new rig setup I used for day has penetrated the jaw bone of the fish and I had a solid hook up. Quickly I reeled in my second line, turned on both my video cameras, and started the battle. The fish streamlined out and down taking my trolling line of 200 feet out another 100. My kayak turned around and I was enjoying the kayak ride. What a solid hookup as I had no fear of loosing this one. To my amazement, The fish came at me and I was able to bring the line closer to 80 feet. Then it stayed down below my kayak and I brought it up closer. About 35 feet, I was able to identify as an ono (wahoo) and smiles crossed my face. Oh the sweet taste of ono crossed my mind... how was I going to prepare it that night and who was I going to share my catch with?

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It took 11 minutes to bring it in. I wish I took the time to direct a camera angle to face the fish... but my concentration was solely on bringing it in. Being rusty on my last mahi catch last week and taking 4 kage attempts to gaff the mahi, this time it only took one in which I hoisted the fish across the deck. Making sure the ono was secured, I silenced its last breath with my knife and shoved it into my "v" shape 36-inch fish bag on my bow. With 2.5 feet of tail hanging out of my bag, I covered it with a towel and told Shawn that I would need to take the fish in and put it in my cooler. So Shawn stayed out and I headed back in. It's so funny when you reach shore with a catch, you know are now hounded by the tourist paparazzi curious to see what you have, especially their comments, "you fish fish on a kayak and you caught that... you're crazy... aren't you scared of sharks!" They might be right... but I truly enjoy the sport. What a rush to land an ono.

After taking photos and weighing the fish, I noticed the beached turtles on the black sand. I quickly became a tourist and started taking pictures myself so I could share with my readers.

Heading out and joining Shawn as he headed west this time, we tried trolling on the opposite side of the launch. With no luck, we headed back to where I hooked the ono. Spent a considerable time there but was not able to make another hook up. So we called it a day and headed back in with our lines out. Shawn was able to take an ulua strike at about 15 fathoms. He managed his fish and brought it in for photos and he now succeeded in bringing in his 4th different fish species in a row. I was able to capture the ulua catch on video, so I have included it in my current edited video. Again, a real pleasure to fish with DriftingSon. Enjoy the video and the website... Aloha! {mos_fb_discuss:5}