SAC Spotter Plane Report

Flight #7 – Monday June 13, 2016

The SAC spotter plane recently begun flying for the 2016 season. There was plenty of kelp. This past week saw generous schools of bluefin tuna all within range of the San Diego SAC fleet. These fish range from big to huge. The fleet is dialed into the zone by the plane-generated information and saving a lot of time searching. The SAC fleet was provided accurate information today detailing where the fish were present - this will keep the Captains focused on areas of high probability. These schools are vast, with hundreds of tons of fish in a single school. One area located was seven miles wide of jumping fish in many schools. When fishing, come prepared, as this is ‘trophy’ style fishing. This past week, there were fish over 200 pounds landed. Every knot and piece of gear must be ready for intense action. Surface iron has worked well on some of the breezers. Keep in mind, a 40 pound fish is a ‘schoolie’ and will fight. And, to top it off, the weather today was great in the area.

Good luck. We will be back in the air in a few days and will be calling into “Lets Talk Hook-up” next week.

Flight #6 – Tuesday August 18, 2015

The SAC spotter plane has been searching offshore for signs of tuna movement - the largest area was about 7 miles wide with large bluefin tuna present (see two photos below). There was no consistent direction observed. Quality bait is essential when targeting large fish. The SAC fleet is also monitoring this area and further south for schools of yellowfin tuna. The water temperature in the area is currently over 70 degrees, which promotes more warm water species in the region. There was not much visible on the kelp this week, but the northern push of current may change that quickly. The pilot will fly again as soon as weather permits (flat water and sun are optimal conditions for flying).
Flight #5 – Saturday May 30, 2015

The SAC spotter plane completed its first flight of the 2015 season on Saturday, May 30th. The pilot covered US waters out to 60 miles. Substantial schools of bluefin tuna of varying sizes were located – these schools measured 50 to 150 tons. The size of the fish varied from 20 pounds to 150 pounds. The SAC plane took numerous photographs of the schools. The weather was calm, which made viewing the schools relatively easy. The SAC fleet was provided detailed information on the location of the fish and will be pursuing them throughout the week. The spotter plane pilot called into the radio show “Let’s Talk Hook Up” on Saturday, and will make another report next Saturday with the most current information. Due to the size of fish, anglers are highly encouraged to have heavier fishing tackle available – many of the fish are trophy sized.
Flight #4 – Saturday July 26, 2014

The SAC spotter plane had a successful flight this week. The water is gorgeous with warm conditions reported offshore. There were some kelps observed with bluefin tuna and yellowtail on them - there were also scattered schools of bluefin tuna throughout much of the flight path. The schools were individual pockets of three to four fish up to several tones of fish. The fish size was approximately 30-60 pounds - this corresponds to what the boats are catching in the same area. The pilot provided accurate information of the observations to the fleet - the fleet is continuing to have a spectacular season with yellowfin tuna, bluefin tuna, dorado, and yellowtail. The water visibility was consistently excellent as you can see in the photo below. Remember, if you are fishing near kelp, take the time to fish deep in case there are large fish hovering below the sight layer. We recommend that you contact the crew of the boat before you board to get the right hook size for the trip. We have primarily had anchovies as bait, and occasionally sardine. Number one and number two hooks are often the best size for anchovy. Come prepared with a 25-pound test set-up and a 40-60 pound test set-up for the larger fish.
Flight #3 – Friday July 4, 2014

The SAC Spotter plane has located schools of yellowfin tuna and yellowtail this past week. Some of the schools were breezers while others were on kelps. The fleet has been searching these areas for biters and has come up with good scores of both species. The pilot reported flat weather and had great visibility looking down into the water. Some of the photos are below. The plane will be back up shortly to monitor the fish movements. With good sunlight and calm seas we should have a good flight. All of the information from the pilot has been sent to the SAC fleet and this should help your trips be successful.

Flight #2 – Monday June 10, 2014

The SAC spotter plane was up today searching the offshore areas. He reported in mid morning having sighted jumping tuna and kelp within 1.5 day range. The water conditions were excellent for spotting - clear blue water and some sun to show the kelps. Light winds helped. There were several areas spotted with jumping tuna with a number of kelp that were holding yellowtail. Late in the afternoon the plane encountered a nice area of fish a bit closer to home with several kelp and big tuna scattered and on the feed. The information was delivered to the SAC boats for planning the next trip. This flight removed a lot of guesswork and looking from the table. Boats will be charging down to the areas located over the next few days to go on the hunt.
The water temperature is climbing. This warm water push will help move things close to home in short order. Make sure to come equipped with 25#, and 40-60# gear in case the bruisers show up for dinner! Make sure to get the right hook size before you leave the dock. There have been both sardine and anchovy lately. Check with the boat crew before you leave. Make sure to tie those hooks very carefully!

**Flight #1 – Sunday May 25, 2014**

The SAC spotter plane completed its first flight of the season Sunday, May 25th. The pilot covered hundreds of square miles of ocean as he looked for fish. On Sunday, the SAC fleet had about seven boats in the area on multi-day trips. They worked with the plane to hunt for the schools of tuna in the area. The spotting conditions were difficult due to the cloud cover. The boats in the area did make catches of bluefin tuna, yellowfin tuna, and yellowtail. The plane worked up into the one day and three quarter day zone toward the end of his airtime. The pilot found areas of kelp with one spot that held yellowtail. All of this information was sent real-time to the boats by radio and later the Captains received Emailed specifics with current break locations and exact coordinates of the sightings. An important aspect of his route is to identify where there were no signs of life - this saves a lot of time trolling. The plane travels at about 130 miles per hour and then throttles back to about 90 miles an hour to hover over areas with fish. We will provide more detailed information and photos as the season kicks off.

The water temperature is heating up and we should see some good schools moving up in the warm water band. There will be another flight this week when appropriate flying conditions are determined. The pilot likes calm ocean conditions, with no white caps to ensure fish can be recognized and the species identified.