

► RIZZUTO: Local spearfisherman Lai closes in on mahimahi record

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Whaler, lying on our backs, side by side, with our legs up against the gunnel to keep from going over the side," John said. "And we were both cracking up."

The fish couldn't see the humor and still had a lot of fight left.

"It was still going nuts," John said. "It came up in another set of jumps. Very dangerous. We were lucky and happy to end it all without too many scars."

They eventually subdued the fish and then pulled it aboard the already crowded little skiff for the ride home.

"We thought about tagging and releasing it but we decided to bring it home because it was the first marlin for the boat," John said.

Good thing they did. Otherwise, who would have believed them?

Mahimahi spearing record

Spear fisherman Cal Lai Jr. dropped down next to UUU-ruoy, took one shot and then popped back up with what could be the new state record mahimahi.

Cal's adventure may dispel a lot of misconceptions you might have about the interaction between fish and divers.

You may, for example, believe that wary gamefish lead for safety whenever a diver enters the water.

In fact, the opposite is often true.

But let's not get ahead of the story.

Cal had left port before dawn in his family boat Chelsie Rose, a 25-foot Twin-Vee set up especially for diving.

His dad, Cal Lai Sr., does the driving and the two were accompanied by two friends.

The plan was to go reef diving near shore.

Cal Sr., however, had heard

Answer for your chances

If you come to Kona on a cruise ship for a brief stopover, do you really have a chance to catch a marlin?

Capt. Jeff Heintz, skipper of the Linda Sue III says he gets that question a lot.

He has the perfect response. "I tell them their chances are better here than any place in the world," Jeff said.

But I promised you the perfect response and so far Jeff's comment is really just a clever comeback.

Now for that perfect response.

Jeff took cruise ship visitors Mike Tunney and Pat Burke and their wives out Friday and boated a 468-pound blue marlin.

The couples are from Orland Park, Ill., near Chicago, Jeff said, and came in on the Pride of Hawaii cruise ship.

"They climbed aboard the boat at 8:30 a.m., and had to wait until about 1 p.m. before we hooked up," Jeff said. "They tag-teamed it, taking turns fighting it, and got it to the boat by 2 p.m. We hooked it in the Happy Hunting Grounds, 800 fathoms right off Kaiwi, and were back in the harbor about 15 minutes after we got the fish aboard."

Where else in the world can you do that? Jeff asks.

"In all of the other fishing places marlin live, you have a big long boat ride to get to the right spot and then no time to fish the good areas when you get there," Jeff said. "These folks caught their trophy just 15 minutes from the dock."

Jeff says the Kaiwi spot produces a lot of fish for Kona fishermen because it is heavily fished by boats going in and out of Honokohau as they head for other fishing spots along the Kona Coast.

He hooked the fish on a big custom lure homemade by his deckhand, Lael Wilson.

Born and raised on the Big Island, Lael makes lures in his

garage as a hobby.

This one had pink and black vinyl skirts — not the most natural-looking combo if you are trying to duplicate the look of a baitfish.

It suited Jeff just fine — and the 468-pounder, too.

"We put it in the short center position right behind the white wash," Jeff said. "A lot of guys don't like to run a lure there because it gets in the way when you hook a fish on a different pole. But it is a good spot that fish like so it is worth the hassle."

Over the years Jeff has usually had most of his luck on his old reliable purple and black Softhead® lures, made by Moldcraft.

But he likes Lael's custom-made lures so much he now runs three of them along with three other kinds in his six-lure spread.

At least one of those others is a Softhead, just to cover his bets.

And why not?

Why Knot, indeed. Skipper Billy Dorr's charter boat Why Knot checked in with the largest marlin tagged and released here last week.

And that one was hooked on the old reliable "Purple Softhead."

Phyllis and Clint Pack teamed up to bring the 650-pounder to the boat while it was still fresh and vital.

Billy fishes solo (no crew), which can make releases difficult. One person has to leader the fish, control it, remove the hooks and still operate the boat.

The Pack's 650-pounder was very cooperative, however.

As soon as Billy grabbed the marlin's bill, the hooks dropped free.

The only thing left was to let go of the hooter and watch the marlin swim off to fight another day.

Save a baitfish

BIG ISLAND INTEREST

- Results from the Peaman International Biathlon held Sunday in Kailua-Kona. Times unavailable for the 3/4 mile-swim, 4-mile run.
- PEAS**
- Bree Wee
 - Jeff Pfeifer
 - Aaron Mitchell
 - Jason Nixon
 - Matt Tierney
 - Cullen Burgess
 - David Valdes
 - Tanya Everts
 - Yarden Dankner
 - Stephanie Kozowyk
 - Dick Campbell
 - Harry Yoshida
 - Kelly Dunston
 - Peter Scott
 - Sam Brown
 - Lauren McAbee
 - Paul Carney
 - Paul Logan
 - LJ Lopaka
 - Brooks Myers
 - Bruce Stewart
 - Rob Van Geen
 - Christine Winn
 - Lisa Youngs
 - Ysabel Thomas
 - Chad McAbee
 - Caleb Kirn
 - Ashley Hauanio
 - Gabriel Thornton
 - Loke McMichael
 - Mary Sprears
 - Serena Chamberlain
 - Jeanette Vidgen
 - Ruben Ruiz
 - Dana Hamilton
 - Vicki Heines
 - David Estess
 - Stephanie Rutgers
 - Jade Morton
 - James Sakai
 - Janine Packett
 - Linda Greentree
 - Karen Hand
 - Susan Smith-Nixon
 - Bryon Trainor
 - Tom Finney
 - Pammer Kidani
 - Jane Dierenfield
 - Wendy DeWeese
 - Jane Patton
 - Vicki Pendergrass
 - Cicero Stutts
 - Don Armstutz
 - Mike Davey
- FINNED PEAS**
- Rani Tanimoto
 - Jon Jokiel
 - Kris Kiser
 - Lori Montgomery
 - Martin Brazen
- FINNED RELAY**
- Jon Kunitake and Tanimoto
 - Lisa Vos and Bret Mc
- PEA WEES**
- Madison Hauanio
 - Phoenix Hauanio
 - Sierra Sena

SCOREBOARD

TV SCHEDULE

- HORSE RACING**
Noon Trackside Live!
- MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL**
1 p.m. Chicago Cubs at Atlanta
4 p.m. Chicago White Sox at L.A. Angels
- NFL FOOTBALL**
1 p.m. Minnesota at Washington
4:15 p.m. San Diego at Oakland

TODAY IN SPORTS HISTORY

- 1886 — The Mayflower defends the America's Cup by beating Britain's Galatea in two straight heats.
- 1926 — The United States captures the Davis Cup for the seventh straight year as it beats France 4-1.
- 1935 — Helen Hull Jacobs wins the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association championships for the fourth straight year.
- 1976 — In the third race at Latonia, jockey John Oldham and his wife, Suzanne Picou, became the first husband-wife riding team to compete in a pari-mutuel race. Oldham finished second aboard Harvey's Hope and Picou rode My Girl Carla to an 11th-place finish.
- 1982 — In a 23-16 loss to Illinois, Rolf Mojsiejunko of Michigan State kicks a 61-yard field goal in his first collegiate attempt.
- 1985 — Pete Rose of the Cincinnati

U.S. OPEN

- Roger Federer and Andy Roddick 4-6, 7-5, 6-1.
- Nathalie Dechen Zvonareva, Rus Russia, and Kat Slovenia, 7-6 (5)

CANADIAN O

- Final round Jim Furyk