

# BLUE WATER

## CURRENTS

### Another Fantasy Slam in Venezuela

For only the second time in sport fishing's history, a boat has managed to record the elusive fantasy slam — catching five species of billfish in a single day. While fishing in the very same Venezuelan waters where Hank and Gretchen Manley recorded their fantasy slam on *Escapade* on October 21, 1997, the 65-foot Rybovich *Coral C* made history yet again — this time on May 3, 2008,

with Capt. Erik Johansen at the helm and Venezuelan mates Ellezer Arteaga and Anthony Bracamonte in the cockpit.

The day started out with owner Chris Berian and friend Russ Wright releasing a couple of sailfish. Soon after, the pair accounted for another doubleheader, this time a spearfish and a blue, completing a grand slam with three species. Now the hunt was on for the cagey

white marlin to complete a super slam.

"AIA caught a white marlin the day before, so I got the captain, Mike, on the radio and he told me where to try. Once I got to the spot, I saw a frigate bird dive down to the surface and we raised another doubleheader — whites this time — and we ended up catching one of the two," says Johansen. The white completed a super slam for the crew, but the fleet wouldn't let them stop there.

*Coral C* went into swordfish mode hoping to achieve the slam of all slams, the fantasy slam. "One of the local boats, *Tropic King*, came over and gave us some rocks to use for weight with our swordfish baits, but we kicked around for a little bit because we were getting bites. I really didn't know how rare the whole thing was until Capt. Jimmy Grant on *Waterman* kept yelling at me to go and go now!" says Johansen.

"The first place we tried we didn't get a touch. But someone had caught five the day before in another place about a half-mile away, so we decided to move. We got a bite after about 30 minutes and

caught a 156-pound sword, and we headed home," says Johansen. That swordfish made species number five and cemented the second fantasy slam in history.

"Capt. Bubba Carter walked up to me that night with a bottle of rum in his hand and said, 'You have no idea what you just did, do you? We are going to drink this bottle of rum until it's gone.' And we did just that," says Johansen.

— Dave Ferrell



### Storm Sinks Fleet in Costa Rica

On May 29, a rush of water caused by Tropical Storm Alma flooded the rivers coming out of the mountains surrounding Quepos, Costa Rica. The surge of water chose to come out in the narrow estuary where a group of sport-fishing boats had moored together, hoping to protect one another from the rain and winds. The floodwaters broke the mooring lines, sending the ball of boats downriver. Ultimately, 12 boats were destroyed. No one was injured.

"While working in the Quepos area on the University of Miami/CABA/University of Costa Rica billfish socioeconomic study, a tropical storm formed in the area and we had to halt the work," says Nelson Ehrhardt.

The Billfish Foundation has set up the Quepos Sportfishing Community Survival Fund to help the captains and their families.



The team on *Coral C*, including Chris Berian, Capt. Erik Johansen, Anthony Bracamonte, Ellezer Arteaga and Russ Wright (left to right), became the second crew ever to score a fantasy slam.