

Tiara 3900: Sleek, Rugged and Fishy ▶ When Fish ATTACK Your Boat

# Pacific Coast SPORTFISHING

The Saltwater Magazine for America's West Coast and Mexico

Taming the  
**Mighty  
Marlin**  
of Puerto Vallarta

Don't Get  
Caught with Your  
**Regs Down**

Hunting  
those Elusive  
**WHITE GHOSTS**

Behind the  
**EPIC** Tuna Bite  
of 2005

E-9 F28 \*\*\*\*\* SCH 5-DIGIT 92119  
JIM SAMMONS  
LA JOLLA KAYAK FISHING  
7625 MELOTTE ST  
SAN DIEGO CA 92119-1233



# kayak korner

BY JIM SAMMONS

## Take Your Kids Kayak Fishing

Scott Bixler enjoys a day on the water with his son Noah.

PHOTO BY PAUL LEBOWITZ



**One of my greatest pleasures as a guide is watching new kayak anglers land their first fish. That feeling is multiplied a hundred fold when it's one of my kids. I can't begin to tell you how many times, after a day**

**O**f hooking and handing off fish to my son, he has bragged to me that he out fished me and that he's a natural. I'll never forget the trip to Punta Colorada when my then eight-year-old son and I had a double hookup on dorado from the kayak. I told him he was on his own on this one, and he handled the task like a pro. Yes, I was one proud father that day.

If you want to get a youngster into kayak fishing, the first thing you want to do is make sure they're comfortable on the kayak and on the water. The best thing you can do for your child is to enroll them in swimming lessons. The ability to swim will take away much of the anxiety involved with sitting on a kayak, eliminating the worry of "what will I do if I fall in?"

Until the child is old enough to handle a kayak on his/her own (for most, between the ages 10 and 12)

kayak fishing with a child is best done from a tandem kayak like the Ocean Kayak Malibu II XL. These larger kayaks will give you plenty of stability for those times when the child suddenly wants to reach for

You should begin by simply taking children for a short paddle on flat water; the bay is a good place to start. Leave the rods at home; see if they enjoy being on the water. This first outing, if the water is warm enough, is also a good time to practice getting on and off the kayak in open water. Try this first in water that's just deep enough for you to touch the bottom. If your kids are like mine, they'll have a blast

You want your child to be **comfortable** while out on the water, a kid sitting in **wet clothes** is going to become cold and **miserable in a hurry.**

something floating in the water. In addition to the added stability, you'll have plenty of room and a dedicated place for the child to sit. When my kids were small, I turned the forward seat so that it was facing me. In this configuration, I could always see my child's face, making it much easier to judge how they were doing. This setup also makes it easier for me to help them with a hooked fish or retying a jig.

jumping off the kayak over and over. This will lessen any worries they have about getting back on the kayak should they fall in. The adult should get back on the kayak first, so they can balance the kayak and assist the child in getting back on. If available in your area, paddle by one of the haul out buoys with the sea lions on it – always a thrill for kids. Don't forget that kids get bored fast so keep this outing short and entertaining.

There are several reasons I recommend starting out in the bay: you'll get a better idea whether the child is comfortable on the kayak and there's a much lower chance of them getting seasick. Yes, you can get seasick on a kayak and a seasick child is a miserable child. The surf zone can also be very intimidating for kids – and adults. Unless you're very proficient in the surf, you risk dumping your kayak along with child and gear into the drink. Another nice thing about fishing the bays is the ability to get off the kayak for a break. When out with my kids, I try to break up the day by fishing for a couple of hours, then hitting the beach for lunch or just goofing off in the sand, then fishing another hour before heading home.

If the child is going to **help paddle** make the investment in the **appropriate** size paddle.

You want your child to be comfortable while out on the water, a kid sitting in wet clothes is going to become cold and miserable in a hurry. You need to dress your child (and yourself) appropriately for the conditions. Along with the required PFD (personal flotation device), putting your child in a small wetsuit will keep him warm all day. You can pick up a children's wetsuit from Costco for about \$24, and kids love wetsuits. I always carry some extra clothes in a drybag in case my kids get wet. A light windbreaker is always a good idea as even on the warmest days, the wind can chill your child down in a hurry. Don't forget a hat and sunglasses as well as a lathering of sunscreen before you head out. It's a good idea to also bring plenty of your kids' favorite snacks and juices, it'll make the day feel that much more special.

If the child is old enough to help paddle, they'll really enjoy it and it'll make them feel like they're helping with the work. If the child is going to help paddle, make the investment in the appropriate size paddle. A child will struggle with a larger paddle and will become discouraged very quickly.

Just as with any type of fishing with kids, the most important factor to remember is, this outing is about the kids catching fish – not you. Most kids that are just being introduced to fishing will be happier catching 10 mackerel than they would trolling around all day hoping for a yellowtail. Again, the bays are a great place to start; you'll have the opportunity to catch enough fish to keep a smile on your kid's face. Your child will have a chance to catch spotted bay bass, sand bass, halibut, bonita, mackerel, and many other species.

Bring light-tackle spinning or spincasting reels that are easy for children to master. Though you want to use gear that's easy for the child to handle and not too expensive, I steer away from the low-end kids rods. These rods can actually cause more problems than they solve. I think each child should have a rod of their own for which they feel responsible; I always make sure the kids take part in the cleaning of the gear after the trip.



**Hook up! Remember that kids get bored easily and regular hook ups and other activities to keep them occupied are necessary. Taking your child fishing means having patience and a willingness to sacrifice some of your fishing time.**

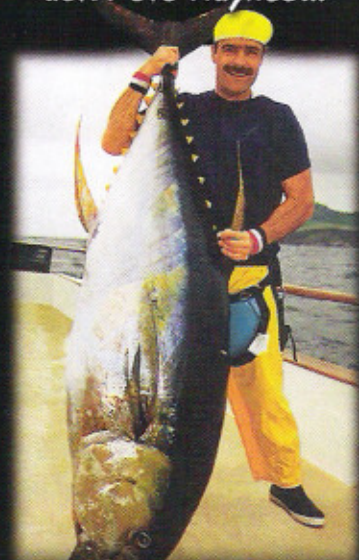
I generally load the reels with six- to eight-pound test to entice more bites. Fishing the drift on the moving tide, with a small grub just bouncing on the bottom, keeps the casting to a minimum and ensures many bites. You can add a small piece of squid to help entice even more interest. Another good option is to setup near one of the bait barges. There are usually a good number of smelt, mackerel or small barracuda willing to bite and give your kid a fight. For smelt or

Please see **Kayak** on page 124

**ROUNDER  
SMOOTHER  
THINNER  
STRONGER**



ask Pete Haynes...



**"I've been using and promoting Spectra® braids from the very beginning. It's my reputation and PowerPro 100% Spectra® works!"**

Pete Haynes, Long Range Tuna, Wahoo and Fishing Knot Expert. Shimano Promotions.

Spectra  
100% SPECTRA FIBER

Prove it to yourself  
today and  
**CATCH MORE!**  
Proven Power.



ON-LINE  
powerpro.com  
**800-650-8003**

## Specializing in Buyers and Sellers of Fine Sportfishers.

## 44' PACIFICA SPORTFISHER

REDUCED \$25,000

MAJOR OVERHAUL on twin DD 8V-71TTs completed July, 2005!



Entire hull & house repainted with IP paint, new 9.0KW GenSet, new refrig/freezer, new canvas/carpet, all in 2003. Vessel is now fully renovated in all major aspects. A renowned and respected sportfisher/cruiser with full electronics, fish-rigged and rugged construction. \$249,500

## 60' HATTERAS LONG RANGE SF '80



D.D. 12V-71TTs, w/ 800 hours since major rebuild, carries 2200 gallons of fuel. Stabilizers, bow & stern thrusters, full electronics, dual watermakers, 3 staterooms. Fitted for serious fishing, custom tower, 3 custom bait tanks, outriggers, etc. etc. \$1,500,000 invested.

## 46' BERTRAM SF 1974



8V-71TTs (one rebuilt), fish ready, good elects, \$60K on recent improvements.

\$179K

## 34' TOLLYCRAFT SF '73/98



Complete refit! Yanmars, 23k cruise, tronics, cockpit controls, New interior, appliances, gen-set. Fish Rigged & Ready. \$89,900

## 48' OFFSHORE YACHTFISHER



Twin Cummins, 700G fuel, 15' 6" beam, water maker, good electronics, dinghy/davit, and much more! \$239,000



Jon Wierks, Broker  
949-673-1669  
Cell: 714-323-4022



Sell It!  
List with Us  
Quality Listings  
Always Welcome!

www.CoastalYachtExchange.com

Central Valley Marine Northern California's Premier Grady White Dealer  
Located In San Jose, CA



## Sportfishing Designed

• Maximum Cockpit Space • Hume Insulated Fish Boxes • Livewells & Washdown System • Solid Fiberglass Transom Doors • Handholds & Tackle Storage Everywhere • Nonskid Toerails For Grip

- ▶ New Boats
- ▶ Used Boats
- ▶ Boating & Watersport
- ▶ Accessories
- ▶ Outboards
- ▶ Service

2355 South Bascom Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008  
www.cvmarine.com

408-371-6681  
800-974-4286

**SHORT CASTS** from page 17 | taking place in May 2006. It will be held once again at the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach, with the specific date TBD. For more information about the efforts and activities of United Anglers of Southern California, call 714-840-0227 or visit them online at UnitedAnglers.com.

## San Diego's Day at the Docks...

is a great family event that has kicked off the Spring saltwater season in San Diego and for much of the south coast. This year, it's scheduled for Sunday, April 23 in the parking lot of San Diego's municipal pier.

There are activities for all including casting contests, prizes, boat rides around the bay, open house aboard fleet vessels, displays of fishing tackle, boats and art. There are also fishing seminars, marine retailers, a stocked fishing area for children, music, food and entertainment. It's open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and the best part is it's free. Parking is typically hard to find near the landing but there is free parking on Shelter Island with frequent shuttles to and from the festival. For more info, go to Sportfishing.org. ■

**KAYAK** from page 87 | macs, a small sabiki or bait-catching rig will work great, cut it down to two hooks to avoid problems and your child will have a blast catching fish all day. Keep another rod with a small crankbait, such as a Berkley Frenzy, handy. When you make a move, let the child hold the rod while you troll to the next spot. You'll be amazed how many fish you can pick up this way.

Teaching a child to fish can be frustrating at times, I know that I've had times when it was announced, "it's time to go home," just as the fish were starting to bite. Remembering that the day is about hanging out with your son or daughter. Introducing them to the sport you love means patience and sometimes sacrificing what would like to do – like staying on the water all day. Sometimes a shortened trip means less hesitation the next time you want to take them out. The rewards will be well worth it in the end when you find you have a fishing partner for life. ■

You can learn more about kayak fishing at [Kayak4Fish.com](http://Kayak4Fish.com)