



West

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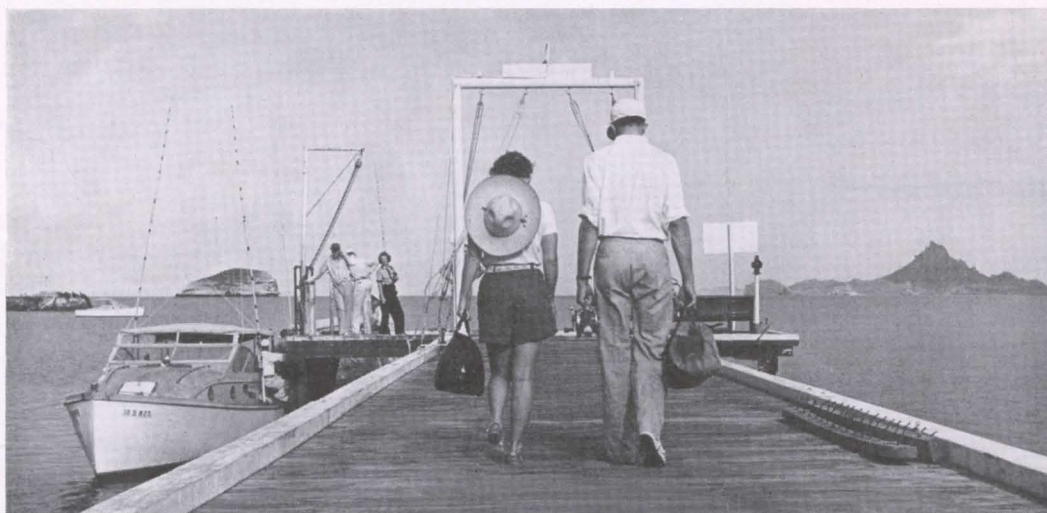
HOW TO CATCH A MARLIN

West GOES MARLIN FISHING AT GUAYMAS, MEXICO

BETWEEN Lower California and the West Coast of Mexico is a long, narrow body of water known in Spanish days as *Mar de Cortés* (Sea of Cortés) and now as the Gulf of California. It literally teems with fish—mackerel, sea bass, red snapper, dolphin, jewfish and the formidable giant ray (manta) that frequently attains a weight of 1,500 pounds. Most sought-after fish in these waters, however, belong to the tribe that ichthyologists call *Xiphiiformes*—long, rangy, fighting fish with a sword or spear on the upper jaw. Commonest varieties are the Pacific striped marlin (*Makaira mitsukurii*) and Pacific sailfish (*Istiophorus greyi*). They are taken in large numbers from the latter part of April to the middle of July.

To give sportsmen a comfortable headquarters for fishing trips into the Gulf of California, Southern Pacific built Hotel Playa de Cortés near Guaymas on the West Coast Route to Mexico City (see map on back page). The hotel offers every modern American comfort.

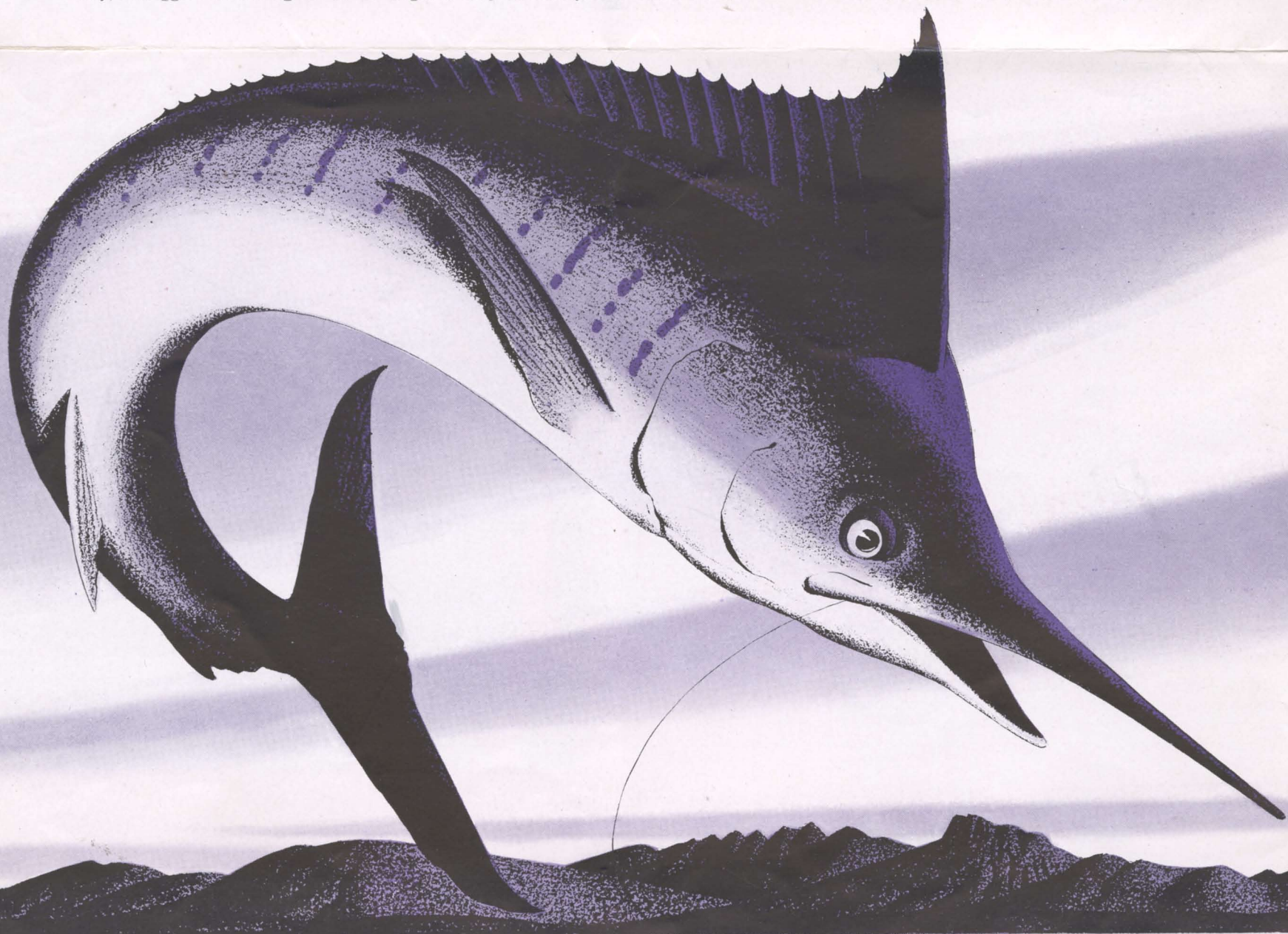
In search of marlin, Link Malmquist (illustrator of Lionel A. Walford's authoritative book, *Marine Game Fishes of the Pacific Coast*) accompanied William Edmands, a California sportsman, and Mrs. Eldred Tanner on a deep-sea fishing jaunt from Hotel Playa de Cortés to San Pedro Island in the Gulf of California. Following is Malmquist's photographic story of how to catch a marlin.

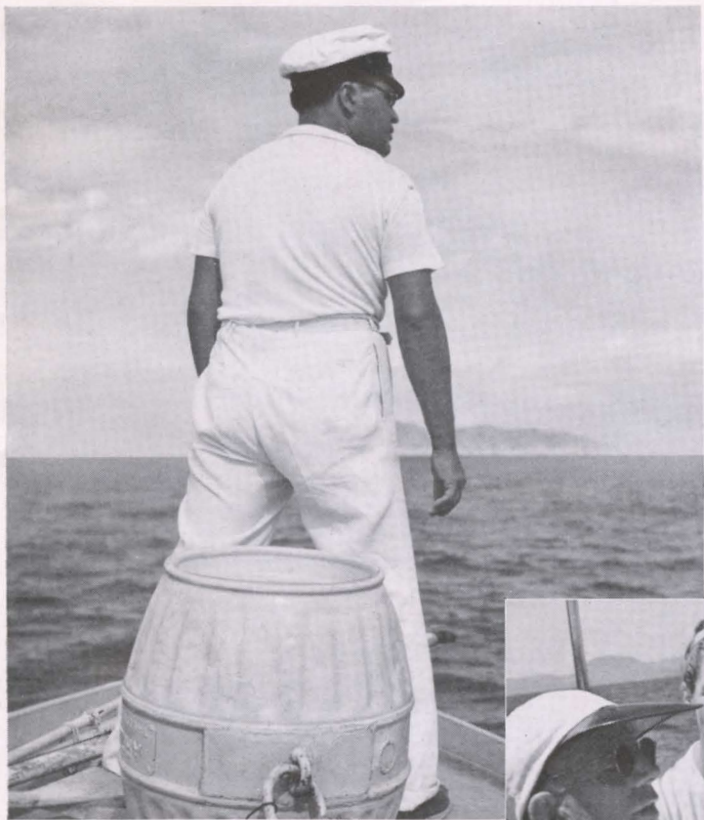


1. Edmands and Tanner on their way down the Hotel wharf to the boat. Hotel Playa de Cortés owns 10 modern fishing cruisers which are rented to guests. Each boat has a Mexican pilot and a boat boy. Upright bamboo poles on boat are outriggers, used in trolling. When boat is under way, outriggers are swung out at 45° angle to keep bait away from boat's wake.



2. Flying fish make best bait, are supplied free by Hotel. Leader is run through flying fish's mouth and hook is sewed into fish's belly with only a small portion of hook exposed. Boat boy does this.





3. Now in marlin waters, Jose Soto, Mexican boatman, keeps a sharp lookout for fins (San Pedro Island in distance). Some marlin are caught from a "blind strike" (when they come up from below and strike the bait). But about half the marlin caught are sighted first when their tail fin cuts the surface. Metal barrel behind Jose is a buoy, used when harpooning sharks or giant rays. It is attached to them and they tow it around till tired out.



4. Teaser, a bright-colored wooden lure, is dragged in the water 15 feet behind boat to attract marlin's attention and bring him up from deep water to surface.



5. Marlin! No sight is more thrilling to a fisherman than the tail fin of a marlin cutting through the water. Boat is maneuvered to trail bait in front of fish.

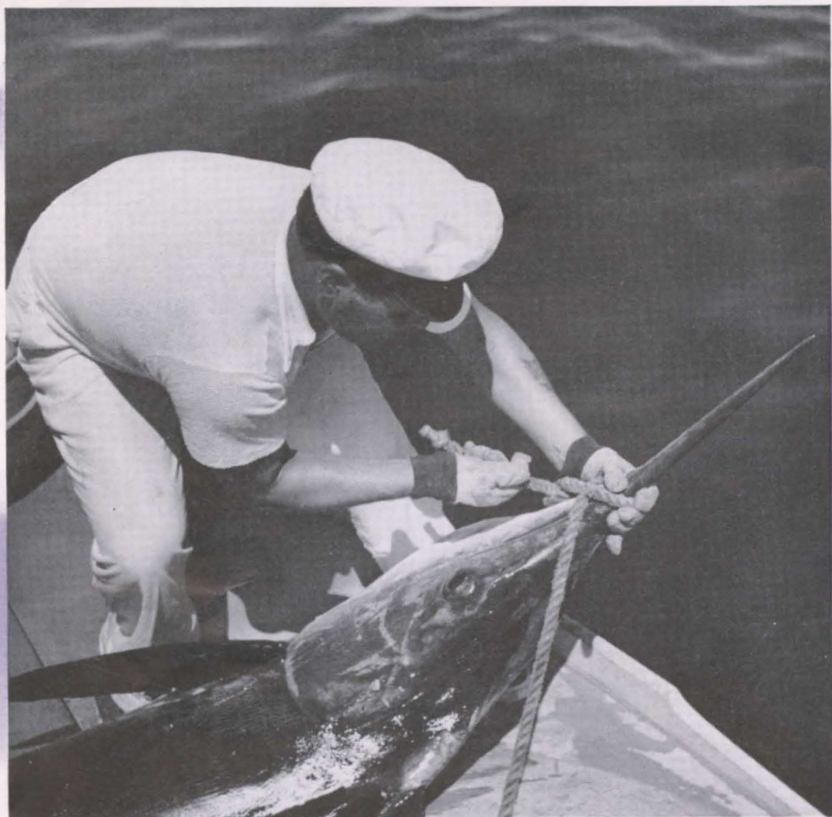


THE BATTLE

6. If the marlin is hungry, he will rush up and take the bait. You must not have any drag on your line at this point, for if the bait does not seem free, the marlin will spit it out. He fondles the bait in his mouth and takes a fast run before deciding the bait is the "McCoy." Thus you must wait from 7 to 10 seconds before putting on the drag and setting the hook in the marlin's jaw. Inexperienced anglers find it hard to wait.

Once the fish is hooked, you get the thrill of your life. Marlin leaps spectacularly out of the water, fights magnificently, seems to walk on his tail. He leaps again in 10 or 15 jumps, then starts "fighting deep." Eventually he tires (and so do you), and you start working him toward the boat. Marlin gets second wind as he is brought in and takes another run, usually accompanied by jumps. From 20 minutes to 5 hours after the strike, you may be lucky enough to boat your marlin.

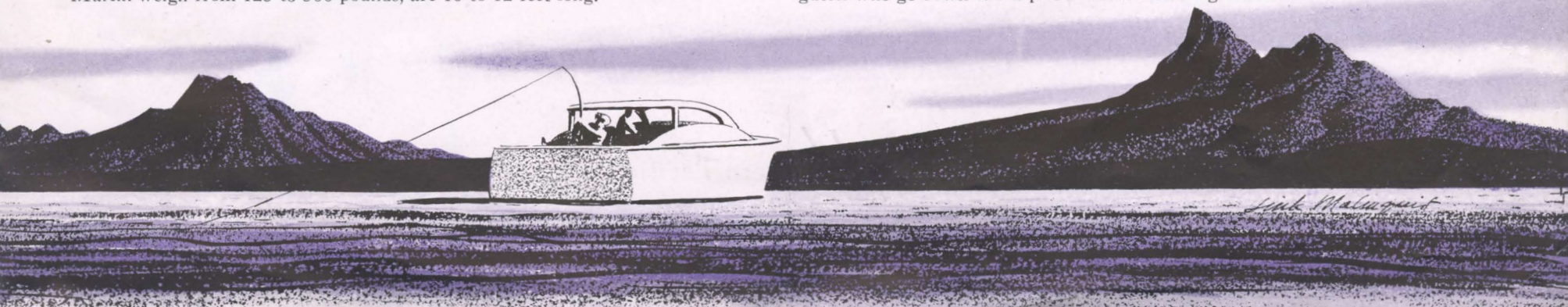
Edmands (shown here), landed his in 1 hour and 13 minutes, using Yerxa rod with 11 oz. tip, 9/0 Coxe reel, 500 yards of 24 thread line, 10/0 hook, 15 foot-.037 inch wire leader.



7. After lifting fish from water by his bill (see cover) instead of gaff, boatman Soto lashes him to deck. Marlin are magnificent fish, with beautiful stripes of a purplish blue color. (Bright color fades out as soon as fish dies). Marlin weigh from 125 to 500 pounds, are 10 to 12 feet long.



8. Marlin flag is run up on outrigger for each marlin caught. Flag is rectangular blue. For sailfish, a triangular red flag is displayed. Flags spread good news of the catch to other boats, are eagerly counted by Hotel Playa de Cortés guests who go down to the pier to meet returning boats.



Weighing the fish



9. Every fish is caught twice—once in the water and again in the cozy bar of Hotel Playa de Cortés. Here Edmands recounts his day's experiences. Though he has caught dozens of marlin, he never tires of the thrill.

10. Every fisherman has his picture taken with his first marlin. This shot is old stuff for Edmands. This marlin weighed 204 pounds. Largest Pacific striped marlin ever caught weighed 573 pounds.



Three guests of Hotel Playa de Cortés set out for a ride through the mountains. Hotel, in background, gets its nickname, "The Desert Resort by the Sea," from its location at the desert's edge on Bacochibampo Bay.



This is the luxurious swimming pool of Hotel Playa de Cortés, in a sunny patio surrounded by gardens. Though the Hotel makes no claim to luxury, it offers all the comforts anyone could wish. All furniture, fixtures and textiles were handmade by Mexican craftsmen. Plumbing, however, is modern American. Besides fishing, sports include riding, across the desert and along the seashore, tennis, swimming, badminton, loafing. Hotel Playa de Cortés is closed between July 1 and December 1.



Fiesta de las Pescas at Guaymas celebrates the opening of the summer deep-sea fishing season. This year it will take place May 10, 11 and 12. A strictly home-made festival, it is delightfully informal, delightfully Mexican. Parties at the Hotel are followed by a parade, fireworks and the *Baile en Pangos* (dancing on illuminated barges in Bacochibampo Bay.)

HOW TO GET TO HOTEL PLAYA DE CORTES

Hotel Playa de Cortés is four miles north of Guaymas, on Southern Pacific's West Coast Route to Mexico City. Take Southern Pacific's

Sunset Route (New Orleans-Los Angeles-San Francisco) or Golden State Route (Chicago-Los Angeles) to Tucson, Arizona, where you board an air-conditioned Pullman for Guaymas. Trip from Tucson to Guaymas takes half a day and night. Taxis meet train at Guaymas, take you to Hotel Playa de Cortés (10 min.). If you plan a trip to Mexico City on Southern Pacific's West Coast Route, Hotel Playa de Cortés makes an ideal stopover.



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