

# EPIC ADVENTURES

**BASED: WHITIANGA**  
**SKIPPER: OWEN WILLS**

*By Mathew Hewetson*

**E**pic Adventures have a very good name here in Godzone for providing quality fishing experiences, so we recently headed out with them and the trip lived up to their reputation.

It was the middle of winter and Scott Cushman from Digital Fish and I wanted to get out to test some gear and catch some fresh fish for our families.

Roy Veal from Epic Adventures had kindly offered us a trip to fish around Cuvier Island and when a good mid-week weather window came up to contact him. A few weeks later with a break in the weather and Roy had organised for Scott and I to go out with experienced skipper Owen Wills on board CoroKing, their Senator 690.

Epic offer several different boat and skipper options for anglers to fish from including; Auckland/Waiheke, Amodeo Bay, Whitianga and Tairua. We were leaving from Whitianga on a frosty morning with no wind and excellent sea conditions. Owen wanted to catch jack mackerel for live baits and then head out to the pinnacles off Cuvier Island. We had plenty of jigs on board, but Owen advised that live baits had been producing fish so we needed to stock the tanks.



With both live bait tanks stocked up on the big Senator, we raced out to Cuvier Island with Mad Max 2 joining us



**HE ALSO ADVISED THAT TO STOP THE BIGGER FISH FROM BUSTING OFF YOU NEED TO FISH WITH 37KG BRAID AND HEAVIER 100LB-130LB LEADERS.”**



Skipper Owen Wills with his 14kg puka that took a live mackerel

Tom Maxwell on board Mad Max 2, another Epic skipper had decided to join us and fish alongside us for the morning. After a couple of hours of looking for the bait fish, we finally had caught enough to head wide. Conditions were very good as we quickly got out past Cuvier and proceeded to fish around the many pinnacles and reefs that are scattered all around the island. Owen explained that these extensive areas of foul hold plenty of kings, puka and big snapper. He also advised that to stop the bigger fish from busting off you need to fish with 37kg braid and heavier 100lb-130lb leaders.

We had a ball catching plenty of kingfish throughout the day as the livies did indeed tempt them and with welcome bycatches of snapper and a solid 14kg hapuka that also couldn't resist the jacks. We returned all the kingfish except for one that Scott wanted to smoke and of course we took the puka and snapper home for our families to enjoy.

It was late afternoon as we headed in past the Mercury Islands when I noticed a whale only 60-70m away from the boat. Owen slowed the boat as Scott got out his video camera and just in time to record a huge humpback whale breach the water and put on a show for us! It was pretty amazing to see so close in to land and to capture it on video.

Owen then took us through a cave in one of the islands that was very tight and opened up into a stunning clear bay. It was a tight squeeze through for the boat, but he obviously has had good practice and not a touch on the Senator!

We ended back at the Whitianga wharf just as the sun had set and with tired bodies from the day fishing, we climbed into our cars to head home to see our happy families with fresh fish. It had truly been an epic day in Godzone.

Epic has quality top end Shimano fishing tackle on board and typically take four people per boat. Contact them to organise a trip.



Owen suggests using heavier 37kg braid, as spooled on this Stella to help stop fish quickly



Scott Cushman gets hit on the Accurate Mutant and Synit Downunda combo

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