

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR NELSON EHRHARDT
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Between your visits in 2013 and 2015, have you observed changes on the Cabo Blanco fishing community?

There have been significant advances, especially regarding the arrival of electric power and potable water, two main elements for the development of every coastal community. On the other hand, it was evident a greater perception of opportunities regarding what Inkaterra has created in the area for the benefit of its community. It is also worth mentioning that community leaders understand Inkaterra's efforts to develop a community based in sustainable schemes.

Do you think that sport fishing in Cabo Blanco could return to the golden age of the 1950s?

I believe this might not be feasible for a simple reason: living and exploitable resources from the Humboldt Current have been rudely overexploited throughout almost six decades. This effect is irreversible if long-line vessels keep fishing sport species incidentally during tuna fishing.

How urgent is the Marine Reserve to recover Cabo Blanco as a sport fishing hotspot?

Without doubt, a marine reserve is extremely important for the long-term sustainability of marine species that have a key role in the marine ecosystem. The Cabo Blanco marine reserve is no exception. It is an oasis in a zone where fishing resources are being intensely exploited by Peruvian and foreign vessels that fish illegally in this region.

What are the key marine resources in a sustainable model for the development of the Cabo Blanco community?

Resources as the yellow-fin tuna and other tuna species have an important appeal to game fishing, even more when the specimens caught in the region have a considerable size that generates an evident attention. In this sense, Cabo Blanco also has world records in tuna. For having a shorter life, tuna can sustain a greater intensity in fishing than billfish (marlins), which have can live for about 20 to 25 years. On the other hand (even if it sounds curious), when the Humboldt Squid is found offshore Cabo Blanco, sport fishing can be developed for this resource. It is very typical from this region and offers the kind of sporting excitement that attracts game fishermen. It can also be considered for experiential travel sponsored by local fishermen.



El Niño has been forewarned for 2015. Will this phenomenon bring any problems or benefits to sport fishing?

Apart for the existence or not of the atmospheric-oceanic process of El Niño this year, the presence of billfish will depend from the exploitation status. If the sea presents a higher temperature during this phenomenon, it is expected that billfish resources in the North (surrounding areas of Galapagos Islands and offshore Ecuador) can travel down to Southern areas as Cabo Blanco. Under these higher temperatures, the kind of habitat these species prefer is may be found. But once again, the availability of billfish will depend to the level of exploitation by tuna-fishing vessels.