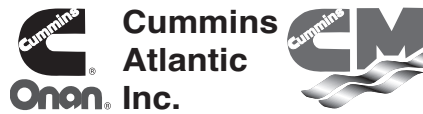




TAG & RELEASE

Volume 11, No. 1 April 2006



DEAR GOVERNOR'S CUP PARTICIPANTS,

The South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series has enjoyed 18 years of success in partnership with five of the most well managed tournaments on the east coast. Since the Series inception in 1988, the average length of the blue marlin brought to the dock is 100 inches. This average includes fish weighed during 2005 Series tournaments. These marlin averaged 116 inches, with one fish measuring 135 inches.

To continue the ongoing conservation efforts to protect the blue marlin, this year's Governor's Cup Series will only award points for landed blue marlin measuring 115 inches LJFL or greater. Four of the five Series tournaments have already notified the Advisory Board of Directors and SCDNR officials that they intend to adopt the 115-inch limit this year. They have plans to implement alternative scoring procedures to promote this change and guarantee winners without harvesting fish less than 115 inches. This is an enormous and significant step towards conservation.

Another change affecting the 2006 Series pertains to the tuna species. In past years, the outstanding tuna award applied only to yellowfin tuna. Beginning this year, all tuna species are eligible for consideration.

This year will be looked upon as a trial period. Your participation and comments are needed and welcomed to ensure a workable, long-term format for the successful future of the Series. Please feel free to share your thoughts with SCDNR representatives, the SC Governor's Cup Advisory Board of Directors, and Tournament Committee members.

All anglers and the tournaments are to be congratulated for their participation and willingness to protect these magnificent fish. We wish you a successful

19TH ANNUAL SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE...

- May 3-6** *Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- May 17-20** *39th Annual Georgetown Blue marlin Tournament*
Contact: Ricky Ferdon
P.O. Box 1704
Georgetown SC 29442
843-546-1776 FAX 843-546-7832
- May 31-June 3** *Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- June 14-17** *Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- June 28-
July 1** *HMY/Viking MegaDock Billfishing Tournament*
Contact: K.C. Rennie
P.O. Box 759
Charleston SC 29402
843-278-4914 FAX 843-577-7704

For more information contact:

Tom DuPré
Office of Fisheries Management
843-953-9365 email: dupret@dnr.sc.gov
<http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/govcup/govcup.html>

A RELEASE TODAY IS A FISH TOMORROW!
Fish Responsibly!

and safe fishing season and look forward to seeing you at this year's Governor's Cup Series tournaments.

With kindest regards,

John C. L. Darby, Chairman
South Carolina Governor's Cup
Billfishing Series Advisory Board
of Directors

Michael G. McShane, Chairman
South Carolina Department of
Natural Resources Board

BILLFISH NUMBERS AND SUCH

I thought you folks might be interested in some fish numbers we collected last year. Please bear in mind that these figures come from you. We talk to owners, captains, mates, anglers, marinas, dock hands, and just about anyone else who will talk to us. This is in addition to all the dockside interviews we conduct at the tournaments. I'll start out with data collected at the tournaments. Numbers in parenthesis are the previous year's totals.

A total of 137 (126) different boats fished the 2005 South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series, and 57 (41) caught billfish. 191 (83) eligible fish were hooked, and 127 (61) were successfully landed. 6 (3) were brought to the dock, 22 (11) were tagged, and 99 (47) were released without tagging.

Of 58 (40) blue marlin hooked, 32 (22) were successfully landed. 6 (3) were brought to the dock. Those were caught by "Legal Holiday" (388.2), "Game On" (409.4), and "No Problem" (439.8), "Chicora" (563.5), "Rookie IV" (581.0), and "Rascal" (881.8). 9 were tagged and released, and 17 were released without a tag. There were 32 (16) white marlin hooked and 18 (13) landed. 4 (2) were tagged and released and 14 (11) were released without tagging. 101 (27) sailfish were hooked and 77 (26) were landed. 9 (6) were tagged and 68 (20) were released without tagging. Crunching the numbers a little more shows that 55% of the blues hooked, 56% of the whites hooked, and 76% of the sails hooked were landed. The overall release rate for fish landed in the Series exceeded 95%.

During the 2005 Series the following data were collected for yellowfin tuna, dolphin, and wahoo:

17 (44) yellowfin tuna were reported caught, 10 of those were measured for length (33.7" avg.), and 6 were weighed (26.2 lbs. avg.). 1502 (2251) dolphin were reported, 588 measured (36.6" avg.), and 135 weighed (24.4 lbs. avg.). 91 (90) wahoo were reported, 59 measured (48.9" avg.), and 36 weighed (35.5 lbs. avg.).

Overall reported billfish catches for 2005, which include tournament and non-tournament fish, made it an above average year. This is largely due to the huge number of sailfish caught during November. Total blue marlin reported - 57 (56), white marlin - 58 (33), sailfish - 403 (148), and swordfish - 6 (2). Total - 527 (239). The 1996 to 2005 ten-year average is 339.

With 131 (99) boats reporting 527 (239) billfish, it works out to an average of 4.02 (2.41) per boat. Breaking this down further comes up with .44 (.57) blues, .44 (.33) whites, and 3.08 (1.50) sailfish per boat. 85 (43) boats reported multiple catches. The overall release rate for reported non-tournament billfish in SC was 97.3%.

Not included in the above totals are 5 fish tagged by 3 boats in non-SC waters.

If you caught billfish in SC waters in 2005 and have not received a state billfish certificate, please get in touch with me at (843) 953-9365 or at dupret@dnr.sc.gov. Certificates are issued for landed, tagged, or released billfish. Postage paid release cards are available. If you tag billfish outside of SC waters using SCDNR tags, you are also eligible for a certificate. If you tag billfish in SC waters using tags from another program, you are still eligible for a SC certificate, but only if you report it to the SCDNR.

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2005 WAS WONDERFUL FISHING YEAR

How about November? I documented close to 300 sailfish but feel certain that I missed quite a few. Please look over the boat totals list (pg. 3) to see if fish you caught were counted. If not, *please* give me a call or email. I would like to send all the anglers a certificate. The current reported total for 2005 of 527 billfish is tied with 1999's total. I think that there are at least 50-60 more fish that haven't been counted. If some of them are yours, please contact me. Thanks, Tom

BILLFISH REPORTED LANDED IN SC WATERS IN 2004 - AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2005

Boat	Blue Marlin	White Marlin	Sailfish	Swordfish	Boat	Blue Marlin	White Marlin	Sailfish	Swordfish
Achilles Heel			1		Major Motion			2	
Adam's Eve			4		Mama Tried			1	
Addie Mae			4		Manitu		1		
Aggressor	1		15		Marlin Luhr		1		
Ali L			5		Marlin Mojo			1	
Anticipation	1	3	2		Meredy-Lou			1	
Aquaholic			3		Mindset			2	
Beaufort Blue			3		Miss Roxanne			1	
Billfisher			27		My Three Sons	1		3	
Billistic			1		My Time Out			3	
Bill Fishin'			1		Navicula			1	
Bite Me II			2		No Problem	47	2		
Black Magic			3		Nothing Like It	1			
Blue Boy	3	5	12	1	Olde Hatt		1		
Blue Endeavor			3		Overspray	1		2	
Blue Heaven			2		Petrel	2	1	13	
Blue Sky		2			Polly Grip			1	
Bout Time	1				Prowess	1	3	10	
Bottom Line			2		Rapid Pace		1	11	
Can't Complain			2		Rascal	2		2	
Caramba	1	1	17		Rebel Yell		2		
Carolina Blues		1			Red Bull	1			
Chasin			2		Reel Fun II			1	
Chicora	3	1			Reel Hooker			8	
Compromise IV			4		Reesea		2	1	
Cookie Monster		1	1		Right Rx			2	
Cotton Picker	1				Risky Business			4	
Current Address		1	1		Rock Doc			2	
C-Time			2		Rookie IV	1	1	10	
Data Point			1		Sand Shark	1			
Dawg Due		6	4		Sea Fix			1	
Dickel Daze			1		Sea Fox			2	
Double Billed			1		Sea J's			1	
Dough Boy	1				Seasonal Affair		2	7	
Dr. Feelgood	1				Sea Trace			1	
Due Course			12		Seven			7	
Duncan's Trophy Hunter		1			Seven G's			1	
Earl-E-Bird			1		Short People	1		1	
Entropy	1		4		Simple Interest			2	
Far Side				2	Sling Shot		1		
Fishful Thinking			1		Special Lady		1	1	
Fishwhistle			2		Sportin' Life	1	1	1	
Fishwrapper		1	9		Suite Forty Eight	1			
Flybouy	1	1			Summer Girl		2	25	2
Gamecock	2	1	1		Summer Session	1			
Game On	3	1	10		Syked Out			3	
Grapevine	1		2		Tag Team			2	
Great Escape			1		Therapy IV	1			
Gusto IV			2		Top Billing	1	2	19	
Hattitude	1	2			Triple Play			6	
Hat Trick	1				Tuista			7	
Hatteras 54C		1	2		Twin Tigers			1	
Heartbreaker			2		Water Witch			2	
Heavy Weight			1		Wet Therapy		1	2	
High Maintenance		1	2		White Cap	1			
HMY Fishing Team			3		Wild Cat II	2		1	
Hoy Boy			2		Yo Yo	1		4	
Hold Fast	1				Unknown			1	
Holy Mackerel			1						
Hot Rod Blue	2	1	4		Totals	57	58	403	9
Hot Shot	1	2	13		<u>Overall</u>	527			
Houdini	3		4						
Hydrenaline			1						
Jabez	2		1						
Jubilee	1		2						
Juncanewt		1	3						
Katatak			1						
Kriv O Cain		1	5						
Laura's Davis				3					
Legal Holiday	1	1	1						
L'il Bit				1					
Lowcountry			2						
Lure Me			1						

Billfish Reported Tagged And Released Outside SC Waters - 2005

Boat	Blue Marlin	White Marlin	Sailfish
Anticipation		1	
Micabe	3		
Ron Rincones			1

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The S.C. Department of Natural Resources' Law Enforcement Division reminds the public of Coast Watch, which was developed to better help citizens report violations of saltwater recreational and commercial fishing laws, as well as marine environmental laws.

The Coast Watch hotline number (1-800-922-5431) is toll-free and available 24 hours a day.