



# TAG & RELEASE

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DNR

Volume 15, No. 2 April 2009



## GREYSTAR

JARRETT BAY  
BOATWORKS

### 21st Annual SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series 2009 Tournament Schedule...

#### May 13-16

#### Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament

Contact: Becca Smith  
3702 Docksite Road  
Edisto Beach, SC 29438  
(407) 463-2082, FAX (843) 869-3738  
[smithbecca@gmail.com](mailto:smithbecca@gmail.com)

#### May 27-30

#### 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament

Contact: Ricky Ferdon  
P. O. Box 1704  
Georgetown, SC 29442  
(843) 546-1776, FAX (843) 546-7832  
[glmarina@sc.rr.com](mailto:glmarina@sc.rr.com) [www.georgetownlandingmarina.com](http://www.georgetownlandingmarina.com)

#### July 8-11

#### HMY/Viking MEGADOCK Billfishing Tournament

Contact: McKenzie Estes  
P. O. Box 759  
Charleston, SC 29402  
(843) 278-4920, FAX (843) 577-7704  
[mestes@megadock.us](mailto:mestes@megadock.us)

#### July 22-25

#### Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament

Contact: Bryan Richardson  
1880 Andell Bluff Blvd.  
Johns Island, SC 29455  
(843) 768-1280 FAX (843) 768-3481  
[Dockmaster@Bohicket.com](mailto:Dockmaster@Bohicket.com)

#### For more information, contact:

Amy Dukes  
SC Governor's Cup Tournament Coordinator  
843-953-9365  
[dukesa@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:dukesa@dnr.sc.gov) <http://govcup.dnr.sc.gov/>

### Big Hole, Bent Pole!

That's right. It's hard to believe that our SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series season is right around the corner! Like many of you, I start to get that "fishing daze" this time of year. You know, when you start day dreaming of that big blue marlin in the spread (or the big one that got away!). So, it's time to start getting our sportfishermen spit-shined, tackle updated and plenty of fresh bait ready for another exciting year!

2009 marks the 21st year of our Series. It's been a great run and year after year it gets better and better. Last year, in a tough economy and \$5/gallon fuel, we had excellent participation both with anglers and sponsors resulting in an incredible year of fishing. With well over 200 billfish released (100% release), it was by far our best year ever. Other highlights included a state record dolphin catch, big big wahoos and some nice tunas. Let's make this year even better!

As we get ready to, literally, "crank it up," I would like to thank our sponsors, tournament directors, owners, captains, anglers and mates for making the SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series what it is today. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Lastly, I would like to thank Wally and Amy for their tireless effort they have put into making the SCGCBS the best it can be.

Good fishing,  
Graham Eubank  
Advisory Board Chairman

## Time to Fish...



First, I echo what Chairman Eubank had to say. Amy and I are very excited about the upcoming season. I am sure the boats that participate will be very excited about what we will have for them in their boat bags this year. Of course none of this would be possible without the marina and tournament organizers who assume all of the financial risk of hosting Governor's Cup Billfishing Series events, each year. Unfortunately, as we go to press we have been informed that the Charleston Harbor Resort and Marina (CHRM) Tournament will not be held this year. This is not unprecedented, as in 2003 we lost both the Isle of Palms Marina and Marlin Quay tournaments from the Series, only to be replaced a year later by the very popular Megadock Tournament. We will certainly miss the CHRM's excellent venue and the tournament and wish them success in the future. This decision by the tournament organizers, also points to how important it is that each of you participate in as many of the remaining events as you can. Register early so that the organizers can plan adequately to accommodate the fleet at each event.

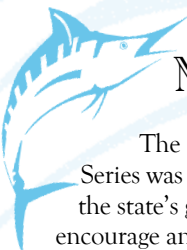
Second, as you are probably tired of hearing me say, DNR receives no appropriated money for our role in the Series. Without contributions from sponsors and donors you would not see our staff collecting the data associated with the catch in these events. As many of you know, this long-term data base is extremely valuable for determining trends in the fishery and among the populations of the fish you all love to pursue. Even in the tough economic times we have experienced in the past year we have still had donors step forward to underwrite the DNR portion of the 2009 Series. Many of last year's sponsors are back including HMY of the Carolinas, The Charleston Angler, Palmetto Ford Lincoln Mercury, Palmetto Props, Haddrell's Point Tackle and Supply, CCA of South Carolina, Blanchard Power Systems, Megadock Billfishing Tournament and the Greenville Saltwater Fishing Club. In addition, Jarrett Bay Boatworks and Greystar joined as Corporate sponsors, Southern Lumber and

Millwork as a Benefactor sponsor, while the Recreational Fishing Alliance, Bergen and Bergen Law Firm (Legal Holiday) and Citadel Enterprises also signed on to help. When you see the individuals behind these companies, please thank them for sponsoring the Series and better yet, do business with them for supporting what has become a great tradition of conservation.

Finally, as we start a new year I would be remiss if I did not ask you to remember those we lost from our ranks last year. The untimely deaths of Tony Smoak in July 2008 and Robbie Johnson in February 2009 will leave a void in the billfishing community. They will be missed on the docks and at the banquets. I ask each of you to keep their memories with you as you fish this year's events and remember how fortunate we all are to have known each of them. Hope to see you on May 14 at the Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament.

Wally

## 2008 Billfish Numbers and Such



The Governor's Cup Billfishing Series was established to promote the state's great offshore fishing and encourage anglers to conserve the ocean's natural resources by promoting catch and release of both billfish and other game fish. Before the Series began in 1989, virtually all billfish caught were killed and brought back to the docks. The Series continues to actively encourage the conservation of marine resources. The partnership between the SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series and SCDNR has provided an important link to the sportfishing community, and allowed for an extremely efficient and cost effective means for gathering data. During the 2008 Series, all 224 billfish caught were released, which included 31 blue marlin, 8

white marlin, and 185 sailfish. This 100% release rate will significantly contribute to the future of billfish populations. By maintaining close relationships with the sportfishing community (boat owners, captains and anglers) data are also acquired for trips conducted not only at sanctioned tournaments but from fishing trips throughout the year. Including the SCGC billfish release numbers above, SC anglers released a total of 792 billfish, which included 90 blue marlin, 34 white marlin, 667 sailfish and one longbill spearfish. NOW that is some good fishing!

2008 was the first year that NOAA required the use of non-offset circle hooks when using natural or a combination of natural and artificial bait during billfish tournaments. In the beginning of the Series for the Edisto and Georgetown tournaments, just a handful of boats were pulling circle hooks in their spreads. This may have been due to lack of experience, knowledge of new laws, or more likely because SC was experiencing a great blue marlin bite. 39 billfish were released during these two tournaments, 25 off J hooks and 14 off circle hooks, and 20 of those 25 off J hooks were blue marlin. With most crews working 6 to 8 lines in the spread, there was an average of three J hooks for every one circle hook during these early tournaments. As the sailfish began to school in June, the fishing strategy started to change with close to a 50/50 ratio between circle hooks and J hooks during the Charleston Harbor Resort and Marina and Mega Dock tournaments. By the time Bohicket was underway, the spreads were thick with circle hooks, with an average of four circle hooks to every one J hook. During Bohicket, 52 billfish were released, with 51 of those fish caught on circle hooks. Overall, during the 2008 Series, anglers were more successful at actually landing billfish on circle hooks (66%) as compared to J hooks (53%).

## WANTED - Billfish Catch Reports

Attention SC Billfishing Anglers, please report released billfish caught in SC waters throughout the 2009 fishing season. Anglers who release a billfish will receive a SCDNR Billfish Release Certificate. Who will be named this year's **"TOP CONSERVATIONIST BOAT OF THE YEAR"** by reporting the most billfish releases...will it be you! To report billfish releases or to request billfish release cards, please contact Amy Dukes at 843-953-9365, or email [dukesa@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:dukesa@dnr.sc.gov). The winning boat will receive a special award to be presented at the end of the 2009 fishing season. *Good Fishing!*

# South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series

## 2009 Tournament Guidelines



\*Please note the highlighted rules have changed for the upcoming year.

1. **Fish must be caught in accordance with all state and federal laws, and under IGFA regulations to qualify to earn SC Governor's Cup points or awards. All anglers, including Youth Anglers (under sixteen years of age on April 1 of current tournament year) and Lady Anglers (over sixteen years of age on April 1 of the current tournament year), must strike their fish in order to be eligible for series points or awards. After a fish strikes, only the angler is allowed to touch the rod.**  
Once the leader is brought within the grasp of the mate or is wound to the rod tip, then the angler may have assistance to catch and release or boat the fish. Series points will accrue towards Series awards for these fish. Vessels may provide assistance to other vessels for boating fish.
2. White marlin and sailfish are catch and release only. Tagging is optional and not required for points. The minimum size for Series points or awards consideration for landed blue marlin is 110 inches measured in a curved line along the body from the fork of the tail to the tip of the lower jaw (LJFL). **Federal regulation dictates that a boated billfish cannot be returned to the water.**  
  
Note: 110 inches exceeds the federally-mandated minimum size limit. Should the federal size limit be increased, the minimum size for blue marlin eligible for weighing in SC Governor's Cup Series tournaments will be increased automatically to exceed the new minimum size by two (2) inches if required.
3. A penalty of 600 points will be assessed against a boat for each blue marlin brought to the dock not meeting the minimum South Carolina Governor's Cup Series size requirements.
4. Boats guilty of wanton waste of fish taken in a Series event will be disqualified from earning points in that event.
5. Scoring for eligible billfish weighed-in is based solely on those points officially awarded each boat by each tournament. Boats earn one point per pound and fraction of a pound for their single heaviest billfish weighed in each tournament. No points are awarded for additional billfish weighed in any one tournament.
6. Only blue marlin, white marlin and sailfish are eligible for billfish catch and release points. Tagging is optional and not required for points. Billfish boated for any reason will not qualify for release points. Scoring for billfish caught and released in good condition is as follows:

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| Blue Marlin  | 600 points |
| White marlin | 300 points |
| Sailfish     | 200 points |
7. To qualify for catch and release points, a billfish must be fought to the boat according to program guidelines. A billfish is considered caught when: 1) the leader is grasped by the mate or the leader is wound to the rod tip. (A leader may be no longer than 30 feet.); 2) the billfish is positively identified; and 3) the fish is released in a healthy condition. Boats are encouraged to remove the hook or to cut the leader as close as possible to the hook.
8. **Billfish may not be brought into the boat unless it is to be brought to the dock for weighing.**
9. Any billfish gaffed, harpooned or otherwise injured in an attempt to boat the fish will not qualify for catch and release points. **Additionally, if the gaff crosses the vertical plane of the boat and the intent of the crew is to land the fish, yet the attempt is unsuccessful, the boat will not qualify for catch and release points.**
10. For a vessel to qualify any billfish for points, every person aboard the vessel 18 years of age or older must sign an affidavit swearing that all rules and regulations were observed in reference to the described fish. Failure of any person to sign, for any reason, disqualifies that fish.
11. Affidavits must be completed the day the catch and release or landing occurs, except when a medical emergency involving the boat's crew prohibits completion of the form or when a mechanically disabled boat cannot return within the prescribed weigh-in period. In these instances, the forms must be completed and returned within ten (10) days of the catch and release. Boats fishing out of other marinas or ports must fax or hand-deliver the completed catch and release affidavit to tournament headquarters prior to the close of the weighing scales on the day of catch with the exception as noted above.
12. Boats will be awarded 25 participation points for each Series tournament entered up to a maximum of three events. A boat's points total will include participation points as indicated along with points for landed or caught and released billfish from all tournaments fished. Points will count toward aggregate point totals for Outstanding Billfish Boat and Outstanding Billfish Conservationist. Points cannot be transferred from one boat to another.

Continued on page 4



13. Boats must fish a minimum of two Series tournaments to qualify for Outstanding Billfish Boat and Outstanding Billfish Conservationist. Vessels fishing only one tournament qualify for Outstanding Billfish, Youth Angler awards, Lady Angler awards, and Outstanding Dolphin/Wahoo/Tuna.
14. In the event of a tie, the boat accumulating their points the earliest shall be the winner. If a tie still remains, the boat fishing in the most Series events will be declared the winner.
15. **Tournament awards will be presented for the heaviest tuna, dolphin and wahoo caught by boats participating in the Series and for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place Youth Anglers (under sixteen years of age) and Outstanding Lady Anglers (over sixteen years of age).** The tournament awards for Youth and Lady Anglers will be awarded for the heaviest tuna, dolphin or wahoo if no Youth or Lady Angler has landed or caught and released a legal billfish. Billfish caught by Youth or Lady Anglers will earn regular Series points for the species. Series awards for non-billfish species will be awarded for largest tuna, dolphin and wahoo.
16. A Blue Water Conservation Award will be presented to the boat accumulating the most points tagging dolphin (50 points), yellowfin tuna (100 points) and wahoo (150 points). All fish must be caught on legal Series tournament fishing days and tagged using official tags supplied by the Marine Resources Division's Marine Gamefish Tagging Program. Completed tagging reports will serve as official entry forms and must be submitted to Marine Resources Division personnel working the tournament or the weigh-master on the same day the fish was tagged.
17. Creel limits for dolphin are 10 per angler per day with a limit of 60 per boat per day, with no minimum size restriction. Creel limit for yellowfin tuna is 3 per angler per day with a minimum legal size of 27 inches curved body fork length. Creel limit for wahoo is 2 per person per day.  
Note: Size or creel limits will automatically be changed in SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series tournaments to reflect changes in federal or state laws.
18. All awards are presented to the boat. Invitations to the annual Governor's Cup awards reception are limited to winning boat crews and to boat owners whose boats fish two or more yearly Series events.
19. It is the intent of the S.C. Governor's Cup to encourage release of healthy billfish, therefore the use of 130 lb. class line is allowed.
20. A boat owner may request an official ruling from the Governor's Cup Series. The request for a ruling must be submitted in writing to a member of the Tournament Committee. The Tournament Committee shall rule on the request within seven (7) days. Any ruling of the Tournament Committee may be appealed by writing to the Board of Directors within forty-eight (48) hours, excluding weekend days and holidays. The Board shall render results of an appeal, in writing, to the appellant within thirty (30) days. All decisions of the Board are final. All rulings will focus solely on compliance with Governor's Cup Series rules, not individual tournament rules.

## TOURNAMENT • MANAGEMENT • GROUP • LLC

**Dear Anglers, Captains, and Crew:**

**Due to factors beyond our control, Tournament Management Group, LLC regrettably has decided to not hold The Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina Billfish Tournament for 2009. For the past ten years, we have remained committed to hosting a premier event, featuring the best in quality from the docks to our landside events and look forward to doing so in the future.**

**Our decision was extraordinarily difficult; however we collectively agree that with the downturn in the overall marine industry, financial pressures on anglers and sponsors alike, we cannot deliver the quality tournament we've all come to enjoy.**

**We hope that the result of this decision will be increased participation in the other South Carolina Governors Cup Billfish Series Tournaments. Again, thank you for your support and we'll see you on the docks! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Deidre at 843.345.0369.**

**Sincerely,**

**TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP LLC**

**Mike Altine**

**Bill Barnwell**

**William Hiott**

**Deidre Menefee**



## SAVE THE DATE...

The South Carolina Memorial Reef will host a Silent and Live Auction in conjunction with the HMY-Viking Megadock Tournament under the "MegaTent" at the Charleston City Marina on July 10, 2009. Happy Hour begins at 5:00 PM, followed by dinner and a Silent Auction at 7:00 PM, with the Live Auction to begin at 8:00 PM. Please come join us for a great evening! All funds raised for the SC Memorial Reef will be dedicated to the memory of Robert "Robbie" C. Johnson.

For more information or to purchase tickets please contact Shannon Seabrook at 843-270-0003 [ss@scmemorialreef.org](mailto:ss@scmemorialreef.org) or McKenzie Estes at 843-278-4920 [me@scmemorialreef.org](mailto:me@scmemorialreef.org)

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## How to Join the Billfishing Team South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series

**Fill out Donor Form below and forward to:**

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After receiving your pledge, an invoice will be sent to you for payment. When payment has been received, we will forward the appropriate promotional items for the donor level you have chosen and request an electronic copy of your business logo for use in the Governor's Cup Newsletter, website Sponsor list and other publications as appropriate.

## Major Sponsors



**GREYSTAR**



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### What's New...

The SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Website has a New Look!  
Go check out the new and improved SCGC website at <http://govcup.dnr.sc.gov/>.  
While you are there...visit the newsletter sign-up page to provide us with your e-mail address to receive future newsletters electronically, <http://govcup.dnr.sc.gov/Newsletter/>.

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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.**

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, gender, religion or age. Direct all inquiries to the Office of Human Resources, PO Box 167, Columbia, South Carolina, 29202.

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