



TAG & RELEASE

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DNR

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Series Reflections

During my youth, fads were all the rage! We had Silly Putty, Super Balls, Mood Rings, and Pet Rocks along with many others. I can remember people collecting "RARE" Bennie Baby's, thinking they would one day receive a huge payoff for their collection. I often wonder how well that worked out for them. FADS are on my radar once again, except this time it's an acronym for Fish Aggregating Devices. Articles appeared this winter in both Marlin and In the Bite related to this subject. The Marlin article focused on the federal and state permitted deployment of floating FADS in Hawaii, 2 to 26 miles offshore, for the purpose of concentrating pelagic species. The In the Bite article, written by former Billfish Foundation Policy and Science Advisor Elliot Stark, was even more in depth outlining proliferation of FADS deployed in the Caribbean and use in the commercial tuna fishery. So, you might ask what does this have to do with SC? The answer is somewhat complicated but I will attempt to present what I know. In recent years, it has become apparent that private, anchored, mid-water FADS have been deployed with some frequency in Federal waters. It is my understanding that these structures have been placed there as a "go to" fishing spot primarily by captains in the event that they need a "day maker" on slow fishing days. The first question that comes to mind is, "Are these deployments legal"? Well, if someone had asked me that question prior to 2012 the answer would have definitely been NO. However, in March 2012, the Army Corps of Engineers issue a policy statement which said the following:

"Nationwide Permit (NWP) 4 authorizes placement of fish and wildlife harvesting devices and activities such as pound nets, crab traps, crab dredging, eel pots, lobster traps, duck blinds, clam and oyster digging, and small fish attraction devices such as open water fish concentrators (sea kites, etc.) into waters of the United States. This NWP does not authorize the construction of artificial reefs." They went on to say. "Before these devices (FADS), commercial fishing used purse seining to target surface-visible aggregations

26th Annual SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series 2014 Tournament Schedule...

May 21 - 24 47th Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament

Contact: John Horton
P. O. Box 1704
Georgetown, SC 29442
(843) 546-1776, FAX (843) 546-7832
jhorton@georgetownlandingmarina.com

June 4 - 7 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

June 18 - 21

Contact: Deidre Menefee
1625 Savannah Highway
Charleston, SC 29407
(843) 345-0369, FAX (888) 758-3950
dm@fishcbc.com

Carolina Billfish Classic

July 9 - 12

Contact: McKenzie Hutaff
P. O. Box 759
Charleston, SC, 29402
(843) 278-4920, FAX (843) 577-7704
mhutaff@megadock.us

MEGADOCK Billfishing Tournament

July 23 - 26

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

Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament

For more information, contact:

Amy Dukés
SC Governor's Cup Tournament Coordinator
843-953-9365
dukesa@dnr.sc.gov <http://govcup.dnr.sc.gov/>

of birds and dolphins, which were used as a signal of the presence of tuna schools below. However, the by-catch of dolphins became a significant issue. The demand for dolphin-safe tuna was a driving force for approving fish aggregating devices.”

Thus, these devices, in this case, drifting, marked and tracked surface structures were approved to address concerns in the US Pacific as it relates to commercial harvest of tuna. In the Atlantic, the harvest of tuna, sharks and

billfish is controlled by the Atlantic Tunas Act. While similar floating structures are approved for commercial fisheries in the US Atlantic, neither they nor anchored mid-water structures are listed as approved gear for HMS permitted recreational or charter vessels. Thus, it is ILLEGAL for any HMS permitted vessel to deploy them or fish on them in US waters. Hopefully this clears up any uncertainty as to whether these devices can be fished on in future tournaments. Just for clarification this does not include natural

fish attracting materials, e.g. weed lines, trash, or other floating materials that one may encounter during a normal day of fishing. It has taken me almost a year of research and repeated discussions with NMFS Headquarters and Law Enforcement personnel to reach this conclusion. If anyone would like further clarification I would be happy to discuss it in more detail.

Wallace Jenkins



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Governor’s Cup*

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SEE YOU
THERE...



May 21 - 24



June 4 - 7



June 18 - 21

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Getting Prepared for your 2014 Fishing Season:

It's that time again, and we thought we would provide everyone with a brief list of some of the permits, licenses and documentation that you will/may need to have in your possession so that the boat owner's, captain's and crew are ready for a successful fishing season. **Please Double Check Your Expiration Dates!!!**

1) Purchase your Atlantic HMS Angling Permit (Recreational) or Charter/Headboat Permit- All owners/operators of vessels fishing recreationally, or owners/operators of charter/headboat vessels fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish and billfish) in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, must obtain an Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit. 2014 Atlantic HMS permits cost \$20.00, and will be valid from the date of issuance through December 31, 2014. Visit the NMFS website at <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov/> to

apply for your permit.

2) Purchase your Dolphin Wahoo Permit- All owners/operators of charter/headboat vessels, are required to obtain an Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permit for Dolphin/Wahoo. The permit is \$25.00, and will be valid for one calendar year. Visit the NOAA Southeast Region website (http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/operations_management_information_services/constituency_services_branch/permits/permit_apps/index.html) Application #1 to apply for your permit.

3) Purchase your Operator Card- All owners/operators of charter/headboat vessels, are required to obtain an operator card when fishing for Dolphin and/ or Wahoo. The Operator Card fee is \$50.00, and is valid for three years. Visit the NOAA Southeast Region website ([http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/operations_management_information_services/constituency_services_branch/permits/permit](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/operations_management_information_services/constituency_services_branch/permits/permit_apps/index.html)

[apps/index.html](#)) Application #2 to apply for your operator card.

4) Purchase your SC Saltwater Fishing License - All anglers (over age 16) must obtain a SCDNR Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License. SC Saltwater Recreational Fisheries License can be purchased at <https://dnrlicensing.sc.gov/DNRLicensing/EntryPage.aspx> or call 1-866-714-3611. Be reminded that now, SC Saltwater Recreational Fishing Licenses are issued 365 day basis, and will expire one-year from the issue date.

** Charter/headboat vessels are exempt from having anglers purchase individual saltwater fishing licenses, as long as the fishing trip is documented in accordance to SC law under the vessels Charter License. The vessel can only have six anglers, captain and crew on board. **

FISH WILL
BE BITING...



July 9 - 12



July 23 - 26

Back to Basics...Back to Fishing...Study Time...2014 SCGC Fishing Guidelines!

1) Fish must be caught in accordance with all state and federal laws, and under IGFA Rules with the exception of passing rod to qualify to earn SC Governor's Cup points/awards. **After a fish strikes, the rod may be passed to one angler one time immediately. 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), may have the rod passed one time to them. After the rod has been passed, only the angler is allowed to touch the rod.** Once the leader is brought within the grasp of the crew 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. **Any deviation from these guidelines will lead to disqualification.**

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 105 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: 105 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) All landed fish are to be iced or refrigerated until such time as they are released by tournament officials to the boat after which the edible tissue is to be processed and the carcass disposed of. Boats landing Blue Marlin will have a maximum of three hours to complete this task.

6) 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.

7) 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

8) To qualify for catch and release points, a billfish must be fought to the boat according to program guidelines. A billfish is considered caught and points will be awarded when **all** the following has occurred: 1) the leader is grasped by the crew or the leader is wound to the rod tip (a leader may be no longer than 30 feet); 2) the billfish is positively identified through digital photography/videography; 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.

9) Billfish may not be brought into the boat unless it is to be brought to the dock for weighing.

10) 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.

11) 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 the affidavit, for any reason, disqualifies that fish. In addition, all released billfish must be clearly digitally photographed or videoed (preferable image would include a visible dorsal fin) at time of release by each vessel using a digital/video camera provided by the vessel. The image must include a time and date stamp that corresponds to the time of release recorded by the tournament designated committee boats. Photos/videos must be provided on a removable storage device, and will be used to confirm species identification and release information, and will be used to resolve potential conflicts or formal protests.

12) 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. If applicable by the individual tournaments, boats fishing out of other marinas or ports must fax or hand-deliver the completed catch and release affidavit and email digital





images to tournament headquarters or SCGC personnel prior to the close of the weighing scales on the day of catch with the exception as noted above.

13) 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.

14) 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.

15) Boat points are awarded at the time of release or landing (boated). Ties between points are broken by the time of release/landing. The date of the release/landing is based on the boat's fishing day (day 1 or 2) as opposed to the tournament fishing day (day 1-2-3). If a tie still remains, the boat fishing in the most Series events will be declared the winner.

16) Tournament awards will be presented for the heaviest tuna (**eligible species include Yellowfin, Bluefin, Blackfin and Bigeye**

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.

17) 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 weighmaster on the same day the fish was tagged.

18) Creel limits for dolphin are 10 per angler per day with a limit of 60 per boat per day, with a minimum size limit of 20 inches fork length. Creel limit for yellowfin tuna is 3 per angler per day with a minimum legal size of 27 inches curved body fork length, see current federal size and creel limits for other tuna species. 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.

19) 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.

20) 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.

21) A boat owner may request an official ruling from the S.C. 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. Voting individuals representing either the Tournament Committee or the Board of Directors will recuse themselves from the decision if there is a conflict of interest. All rulings will focus solely on compliance with Governor's Cup Series rules, not individual tournament rules.



SAVE THE DATE!

"Save the Date...The Harry Hampton 20th Annual Lowcountry Marine Conservation Banquet...Friday June 20th, 2014... In conjunction with the Carolina Billfish Classic... Gold Bug Island...www.HamptonWildlifeFund.org"

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