



TAG & RELEASE

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DNR

Volume 20, No. 4 September 2015



Series Reflections

Well, another year of Series fishing is behind us. The four tournaments went by in a flash! Amy and I both attended the Marina at Edisto's qualifying event to collect catch and effort data and observe the festivities; but there is a drastic difference between observing and participating, and our time there seemed more like a mini vacation than actual work. With the exception of Georgetown, each event this summer morphed a little from previous years, trying to hit that sweet spot for participation. The Megadock made the most changes, including allowing boats to fish out of multiple locations and weigh in meat fish in Georgetown, like the CBC. This was a major change that put me on the road to various marinas to verify catches. While it was much more work for us, it is just an example of the extremes that we are willing to go to help each tournament succeed. One additional change we observed this summer was a significant increase in the amount of interactions with sharks. Here on shore, sharks were in the news all summer for their accidental biting of humans. Offshore, it was the "Year of the Shark," with outcomes of several tournaments determined, to some extent, by shark interactions. During the Megadock Tournament, Chasin' was hooked up on four tunas, all of which were taken, or partly taken, by sharks before the crew could get them to the boat. Shark bites on blue marlin either on the line or immediately after release were also way up from previous years. At least six boats had, what I would call, serious encounters with sharks biting fish either completely in half or taking a big chunk out of marlin they were fighting. In one extreme case of bad luck, during the CBC tournament, Houdini had two blue marlin taken in the same day. The first fish was an approximately 300 lb. fish that was bitten in half, and the second fish, presumed to be a keeper, was on the line and near the boat when it was

Stay Tuned for the upcoming 28th Annual SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series 2016 tournament schedule!

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**Save The Date For The
Annual Awards Reception
on September 25, 2015!**

also taken. These were not small sharks feeding in a group. However, in most of these cases, it was not possible to get enough information from the boats to determine exactly what species of sharks were involved. It is hard to completely explain what is happening, but what we are seeing is likely the result of increased abundance of oceanic sharks due to the management and protection measures for sharks that have put in place by the National Marine Fisheries Service over the last two decades. In addition, there has been a significant drop in swordfish fishing effort by pelagic long line boats in the North Atlantic. In part, this is due to increased regulations of by-catch, particularly as it relates to bluefin tuna. One of these new regulations is that permitted swordfish boats cannot leave the dock unless they possess or have purchased sufficient bluefin quota for the trip. Swordfish landings so far this year are over 100 metric tons dressed weight below what was landed during the same period in 2014. This is a 25% drop in one year alone, and is indicative of trends in the swordfish fishery over the last decade. Sharks have also historically been a big part of the by-catch of this fishery, so as the swordfish fishery faces increased regulation, the trend we are seeing in incidents of shark interactions is likely to increase going forward. The take-home message is that these management decisions are complicated, and have far-reaching and sometimes unanticipated effects down the line. The other take home message is stay in the boat!

During the remainder of the summer we will be frantically preparing for the Annual Awards Reception which is mentioned later in this newsletter. It will be another great celebration, and we hope to see all of you there.

Wallace Jenkins



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Awards Summary: MEGADOCK and Unofficial Series Winners

Georgetown, Bohicket and CBC winners were covered in the previous newsletter

AWARD	MEGADOCK	UNOFFICIAL SERIES WINNERS
Outstanding Billfish Boat - 1st Place	<i>Artemis</i> Owner: John Darby Captain: Legare Smith 2 Blue Marlin Released 1200 pts	<i>Reel Passion</i> Owner: Bill Ingram Captain: Gary Richardson 7 Blue Marlin and 3 White Marlin Released 5175 pts
Outstanding Billfish Boat - 2nd Place	<i>Sportin' Life</i> Owner: Manly & Graham Eubank Captain: Bobby Garmany 5 Sailfish Released Points: 1000	<i>Miss Wy</i> Owner: Ed Holder Captain: Matt Wilkinson 6 Blue Marlin Released Points: 3675
Outstanding Billfish Boat - 3rd Place	<i>Can't Complain</i> Owner: Mullins McLeod Captain: Buddy Aimar 5 Sailfish Released Points: 1000	<i>Caramba</i> Owner: Bob Faith Captain: Dale Lackey 3 Blue Marlin and 5 Sailfish Released Points: 2875
Outstanding Billfish (landed)	N/A	N/A
Outstanding Billfish Conservationist	<i>Artemis</i> Owner: John Darby Captain: Legare Smith 2 Blue Marlin Released 1200 pts	<i>Reel Passion</i> Owner: Bill Ingram Captain: Gary Richardson 7 Blue Marlin and 3 White Marlin Released 5175 pts
Blue Water Conservation	N/A	<i>Petrel</i> Owner: Harry Johnson, Jr Captain: Thomas Wynne Tag and Release of 4 Dolphin Points: 200
Outstanding Dolphin	<i>Mirage</i> Owner: Billy Monckton Captain: Homer Rachels Angler: Billy Monckton 27.9 Pounds	<i>Summer Girl</i> Owner: Mike Jackson/Stevie Leasure Captain: Stevie Leasure Angler: Kaleigh Leasure 50.4 Pounds
Outstanding Tuna	<i>Daymaker</i> Owner: Bobby Krivohlavek Captain: Bobby Krivohlavek Angler: Benny Maresca 15.4 Pound Blackfin	<i>Daymaker</i> Owner: Bobby Krivohlavek Captain: Bobby Krivohlavek Angler: Benny Maresca 15.4 Pound Blackfin
Outstanding Wahoo	<i>Daymaker</i> Owner: Bobby Krivohlavek Captain: Bobby Krivohlavek Angler: Joseph Maresca 37.6 Pounds	<i>Legal Holiday</i> Owner: Fred Bergen Captain: Shelby Myrick Angler: Fred Bergen, Jr. 55.6 Pounds

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AWARD	MEGADOCK	UNOFFICIAL SERIES WINNERS
Outstanding Female Angler - 1st Place	<i>Artemis</i> Owner: John Darby Captain: Legare Smith Angler: Litsa Darby 5.4 Pound Dolphin	<i>Syked Out</i> Owner: David Sykes Captain: Dan Woody Angler: Holly McAlhany 1 Blue Marlin and 1 Sailfish Released Points: 800
Outstanding Female Angler - 2nd Place	N/A	<i>Game On</i> Owner: Bubba Roof Captain: Trey "Cricket" McMillan Angler: Kelli Ann Roof 1 Blue Marlin Released Points: 600
Outstanding Female Angler - 3rd Place	N/A	<i>Mutts & Jeff</i> Owner: Tom Stanek Captain: Tom Stanek Angler: Jenn Haugen 1 Blue Marlin Released Points: 600
Outstanding Youth Angler- 1st Place	N/A	<i>Sportsmann</i> Owner: Gary Wyatt Captain: Matt Key Angler: Bennett Wyatt, Age 15 1 Blue Marlin Released Points: 600
Outstanding Youth Angler - 2nd Place	N/A	<i>Summer Girl</i> Owner: Mike Jackson/Stevie Leasure Captain: Stevie Leasure Angler: Fisher Jackson, Age 15 1 Blue Marlin Released Points: 600
Outstanding Youth Angler - 3rd Place	N/A	<i>Rascal</i> Owner: Norman Pulliam/Foster McKissick Captain: Mark Rogers Angler: Graham Rogers, Age 12 1 Sailfish Released Points: 200



See you there!

For those of you who were able to attend our Annual Awards Reception at the Island House at Ross Marine last year, you know the fun and entertainment that awaits us in September! We will be continuing the tradition this year at this quite picturesque venue right on the Stono River. There will be great food, music, dancing and fun for the whole family. We cannot wait to send off another great year with the Island House staff delivering another wonderful celebration. We hope to see you on September 25th!





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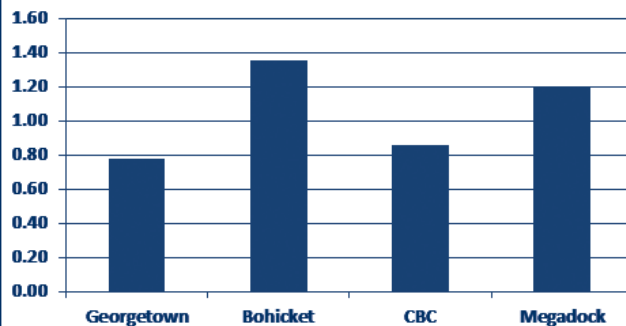
Billfish Release Numbers

Tournament Name	Number of Boats	Blue Marlin	White Marlin	Sailfish	Total Released
Georgetown	41	23	6	3	32
Bohicket	20	17	2	8	27
CBC	28	12	1	11	24
Megadock	25	12	1	17	30
Total Billfish					113

Top Series Boats

Reel Passion	5175
Miss Wy	3675
Caramba	2875
Sportin' Life	2775
My Three Sons	2475
Home Run	2275
Petrel	2250
Artemis	1875
Mirage	1875
Can't Complain	1675

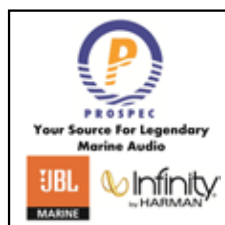
Average Number of Billfish Released Per Boat



WANTED · WANTED · WANTED · WANTED · WANTED · WANTED

Attention SC Billfish Anglers! Please report released billfish caught in SC waters throughout the 2015 fishing season. It's never too late to report a fish caught earlier this year! Anglers who release a billfish will receive a SCDNR Billfish Release Certificate. The boat reporting the most billfish releases will be named this year's "TOP CONSERVATIONIST BOAT OF THE YEAR"...will it be you? To report billfish releases or request billfish release cards, Please contact Amy Dukes at 843-953-9365, or email dukesa@dnr.sc.gov. The winning boat will receive a special award to be presented at the end of the 2015 fishing season. Good Fishing!

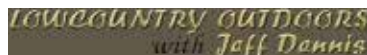
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The S.C. Department of Natural Resources' Law Enforcement Division reminds the public of Coast Watch, which was developed to better help citizens report violations of saltwater recreational and commercial fishing laws, as well as marine environmental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

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

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