



TAG & RELEASE

Volume 22, No. 2



Hampton
Wildlife Fund

April 2017

<http://govcup.dnr.sc.gov>



29th Annual SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series 2017 Tournament Schedule

May 10-13 Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament

Contact: Bryan Richardson
1880 Andell Bluff Boulevard
Johns Island, SC 29455
(843) 786-1280, Fax (843) 768-3481
Dockmaster@Bohicket.com

May 24-27 50th Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament

Contact: Ed Keelin
P.O. Box 1704
Georgetown, SC 29442
(843) 546-1776, Fax (843) 546-7832
ed@georgetownlandingmarina.com

June 21-24 Carolina Billfish Classic

Contact: Deidre Menefee
20 Patriots Point Road
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 345-0369
dm@fishcbc.com

July 5-8 MEGADOCK Billfishing Tournament

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

July 19-22 Edisto Invitational Billfishing Tournament

Contact: Brian Bell
3702 Docksite Road
Edisto Beach, SC 29438
(843) 631-5055, Fax (843) 631-5065
BkBell1@bellsouth.net

For more information, contact:

Amy Dukes, SC Governor's Cup Tournament Coordinator
DukesA@dnr.sc.gov • <http://govcup.dnr.sc.gov/> • (843) 953-9365
PO Box 12559 • Charleston, SC 29422

Series Reflections

Our 29th season is about to get underway. I can't believe that this will be my tenth season of involvement with this great conservation program. For those of you who have been here from the start, my hat is off to you for your long-term support and participation. As you read in the last newsletter, we have had a very active winter, led primarily by the Advisory Board's approval to move forward on the addition of material to the SC Memorial Reef within the Charleston Deep Reef MPA. I am happy to report that today we have over \$ 110,000 in contributions committed to the project and we will be actively fundraising throughout the summer.

As stated in the last newsletter, you can donate in two ways. Firstly, you may make checks payable to Harry Hampton Fund – The SC Memorial Reef, C/O Amy Dukes, P.O. Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422-2559. Or for those of you who are computer savvy, the Harry Hampton Wildlife Fund has a PayPal donation button on their website at www.HamptonWildlifeFund.org in the lower left corner. You may use this to donate to the reef project, but after specifying the amount, be sure to fill out the box that says, "Instructions for your donation" with "SC Memorial Reef" to be sure it is credited to the project. Once you pay, a tax-deductible receipt pops up that you can fill out and print for your records.

There will soon be a third way to donate and keep up with activities related to the SC Memorial Reef. After two years of working through logistics, the Governor's Cup Billfishing Series has recently contracted to take over the management of the project, and is working on revamping the former SC Memorial Reef website. We are hoping it will be ready for unveiling in the very near future. We especially want to thank John DeStefano for his assistance with this transition, and the vast number of others that were instrumental in beginning this project,

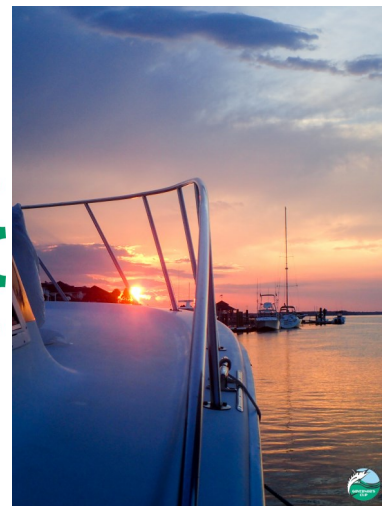
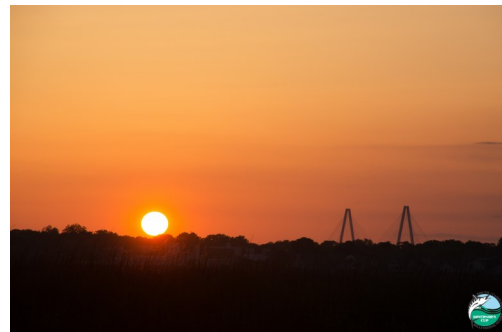
especially Stevie Leasure, Shannon Seabrook and Buddy Aimar. Going forward, the site will be updated regularly to acknowledge those who are being remembered as well as contributors to this ongoing effort.

At their February meeting, the Advisory Board approved the nomination of Mr. John Hill, owner of *El Tejano*, to join the Board in July, and Chad Sanders, owner of *Electric Bill*, will be welcomed on in July of 2018. Mr. Bubba Roof, owner of *Game On*, agreed to serve another three-year term. Our fundraising efforts to support Series operations this spring have been very fruitful, and I want to thank those of you who stepped up to offer your support for the upcoming season. I am thankful that we will have the same team of people working and promoting the Series to our nearly 4,000 followers on social media this summer. We plan to continue to use the DeLorme devices to get nearly real-time updates during each tournament.

In subsequent pages of this newsletter you will find a summary of the rules (note a few updates **in bold**) for 2017, and a summary of applicable licenses and permits that may be required to

participate. Finally, I need to let you know that this is the first newsletter ever that has been put together completely by Governor's Cup staff. The objective is to make our communication more effective and timely, and I ask for your patience as we go through this new transition process. See you in two short weeks at Bohicket!!

Wally Jenkins





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Looking forward to seeing everyone on the docks for the 2017 Governor's Cup Series



SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES

2017 Fishing Guidelines

1. **All 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 S.C. Governor's Cup points/awards. **After a fish strikes, the rod may be passed to one angler one time as soon as possible. All anglers may have the rod passed one time to them. After the rod has been passed, only the angler is allowed to touch the rod/reel/mainline.** Once the leader is brought within the grasp of the crew member 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. **Violations of state or federal law will lead to the disqualification of all fish caught on that fishing day, and the day will be counted as an eligible fish day for the tournament.**
2. White marlin, sailfish, and **spearfish** 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: 635.21 (a) All Atlantic HMS fishing gears. (1) An Atlantic HMS harvested from its management unit that is not retained must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, but without removing the fish from the water. (2) If a billfish is caught by a hook and not retained, the fish must be released by cutting the line near the hook or by using a dehooking device, in either case without removing the fish from 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 S.C. 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 the edible tissue can be processed and the carcass disposed of. Boats landing blue marlin will have a maximum of three hours to complete this task after the fish is released by Series staff or Tournament officials.
6. Scoring for eligible blue marlin 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 blue marlin weighed in at each tournament. No points are awarded for additional blue marlin weighed in at any one tournament.
7. Only blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, and **spearfish** 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/ Spearfish	300 points
Sailfish	200 points

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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** of 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 to species through digital photography/videography (**if species cannot be determined yet it is identified as a billfish, 200 points will be awarded**); and 3) the fish is released in a healthy condition and the fish is no longer attached to the boat/line. Boats should attempt to remove the hook or to sever 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. **A penalty of 600 points will be assessed against a boat for each billfish if it is determined that the fish was boated and subsequently released.**
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 **in an attempt to land a blue marlin yet it 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 official Governor's Cup Released/Tagged and Released Billfish Affidavit or Landed Billfish 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 date and time stamp that corresponds to the date and time of release recorded by the designated tournament 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 official Governor's Cup Released/Tagged and Released Billfish Affidavit and email digital images to tournament headquarters or Series staff (DukesA@dnr.sc.gov) 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, except when a boat(s) makes a written request for special permission and the request is approved by the Advisory Board of Directors.**
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, Blue Water Conservation, Youth Angler, Lady Angler, and Outstanding Dolphin/Wahoo/Tuna Series awards.
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).
16. Tournament awards will be presented for the heaviest tuna (**eligible species include yellowfin, blackfin, bluefin, 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 (female 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.





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17. A Blue Water Conservation award will be presented to the boat accumulating the most points tagging dolphin (50 points), eligible tuna (100 points) and/or 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 Series staff working the tournament or the weighmaster on the same day the fish was tagged. **A minimum of 24 fish must be tagged in order to qualify for this award.**
18. Creel limits for dolphin are 10 per angler per day with a limit of 60 per boat per day, with a minimum legal size limit of 20 inches fork length. Creel limits for yellowfin tuna are 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 S.C. 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 the release of healthy billfish, therefore the use of 130 lb. class line is allowed.
21. **Series participants, at the completion of a tournament fishing day, are subject to a biological creel survey by SCDNR staff and/or an interview by SCDNR Law Enforcement.**
22. 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 Advisory Board of Directors within forty-eight (48) hours, excluding weekends 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 Advisory Board of Directors will recuse themselves from the decision if there is a conflict of interest. All rulings will focus solely on compliance with S.C. Governor's Cup Series rules, not individual tournament rules.

ARE YOU PROPERLY LICENSED FOR 2017?

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 owners, captains 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. 2017 Atlantic HMS permits cost \$20.00, and will be valid from the date of issuance through December 31, 2017. Visit the NMFS website at <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov/> to apply for your permit.

2) 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/DNRLicensingSales/SalesCategories.aspx> or call 1-866-714-3611. Be reminded that now, SC Saltwater Recreational Fishing Licenses are issued on a 365 day basis, and will expire one year from the issue date.

** All Series participating vessels and recreational fishermen will at minimum need the two above mentioned permits/licenses. If you are operating a Charter/Headboat vessel during a tournament, then the vessel must possess a current SCDNR Charter/Headboat license. These 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. In addition, the owners/operators of these vessels must also possess the following two permits/licenses: **

3) 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.

4) 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_apps/index.html). Application #2 to apply for your operator card.



Photo credit: Flybuoy IV



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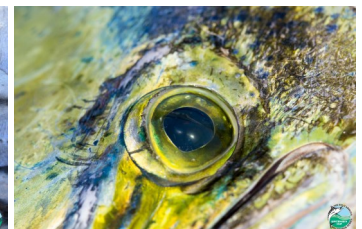
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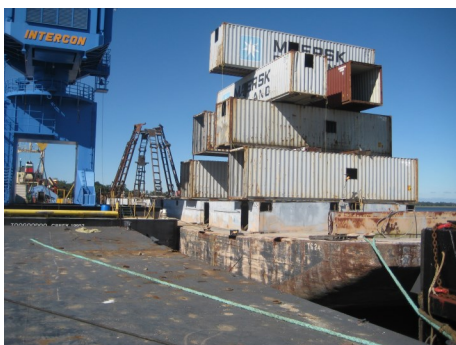
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The South Carolina Memorial Reef



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The SC Memorial Reef is a part of the Charleston Deep Reef Marine Protected Area (MPA) to create a special place of honor and reflection for the sportfishing community, while creating critical habitat for baitfish, upwelling and spawning grounds for imperiled snapper/grouper species. Designated as a Type II MPA, bottom fishing is prohibited, but trolling over the reef is allowed, resulting in better pelagic fishing opportunities for our offshore community. We've already seen many snapper/grouper species using this habitat, such as snowy, warsaw, misty and yellowedge grouper, scamp and red snapper...see the pictures above from NOAA ROV footage on the Reef!

OUR COMMITMENT FOR A STRONGER FUTURE

The SCGC Advisory Board has approved moving forward with the acquisition and placement of additional material within the Charleston Deep Reef MPA. This material includes the US Hwy 41 steel swing bridge placed on top of a barge, which will provide 44' of vertical relief (see pictures below). This will be a joint project between the SCGC Billfishing Series and the SC Department of Natural Resources - both of whom have already made significant contributions to jumpstart this project, but to complete it, we still need to raise about \$80,000 by our tentative deployment date set for this **August**! The addition of this structure will profoundly increase the many benefits of habitat growth we're already seeing. We are now soliciting tax-deductible contributions to this cause within the Harry Hampton Wildlife Fund. Please see below, and check our social media accounts and website for further updates on how you can donate to this crucial cause! As Wally stated above in the "Reflections," be on the lookout for the new SC Memorial Reef website to make its debut soon!

DONATE TODAY!

There's more than one way you can make a charitable contribution to the SC Memorial Reef fund. Please see below to find out how you can help! Remember, the Harry Hampton Wildlife fund is a 501 (c)-3 organization, and your donation is tax-deductible!



Make checks payable to:
Harry Hampton Fund - The SC Memorial Reef, C/O
Amy Dukes, PO Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422

Or:

Visit www.HamptonWildlifeFund.org and click the "DONATE NOW" button (via PayPal) on the left side of the page. After specifying donation amount, please write "SC Memorial Reef" in the instructions box to make sure it is accredited to the appropriate project. A tax-deductible receipt will be provided for your records.



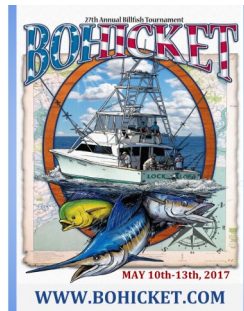
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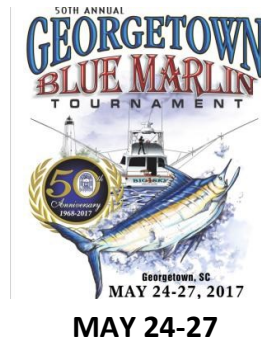
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2017 TOURNAMENTS



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MAY 24-27



JUNE 21-24



JULY 5-8



JULY 19-22

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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.