



TAG & RELEASE

Volume 23, No. 2

April 2018

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



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Series Reflections

Well, spring has sprung and fishing is just around the corner! We've had a great start to fundraising, and we appreciate those of you who have committed to supporting the Series for our 30th Anniversary season! For the first time in my memory, we have four Corporate Sponsors, and many others are also stepping up! Please take a moment to review all the Series Sponsors highlighted throughout the newsletter; we thank them all for their generous contributions and support. On the conservation front, there are some exciting things happening; one of which is an initiative being explored by Senator Chip Campsen in conjunction with SCDOT about obtaining old bridges to deploy as offshore reefs. While still in the early stages, this could provide more material to enhance the Charleston Deep Reef MPA/SC Memorial Reef Project, and all of the state's federally permitted artificial reefs. Also on this focus, one of our Series sponsors, Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) of SC has partnered with the Agency to fund the addition of materials to several nearshore reefs. CCA is funding a \$300,000 project that involves sinking three 100-foot tugboats on reef sites. First, the tugboat General Oglethorpe will be heading to the site of the Comanche Reef, 30 nautical miles off Charleston in 100 feet of water. Also, a 98-foot tug is at the dock in Georgetown, and most likely will be heading out to the Vermilion Reef, 30 miles off Georgetown in 120 feet of water. Finally, they are trying to locate a third tug to be deployed at the Betsy Ross Reef, 20 miles off Port Royal Sound in 90 feet of water.

As mentioned earlier, the Governor's Cup season is almost upon us. I hope you all saw the feature article on the Series in the April/May issue of Marlin Magazine, which

30th Annual SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series 2018 Tournament Schedule

May 9 - 12 Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament

Contact: Suyin Schenck-George Suyin@Bohicket.com
1880 Andell Bluff Boulevard (843) 786-1280
Johns Island, SC 29455

May 23 - 26 51st Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament

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

June 20 - 23 Carolina Billfish Classic

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

July 11 - 14 Megadock Billfishing Tournament

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

July 18 - 21 Edisto Invitational Billfishing Tournament

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

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

included photos by our own Cameron Rhodes. We are very grateful to Editor in Chief Sam White for giving us this opportunity to showcase what we believe is among the premier billfishing events in the country. Of note was a sidebar summary of our wanton waste policy and the philosophy that if you are going to harvest a fish, it is imperative that the fish be respected and utilized. I presume it remains to be seen how this will be received by the rest of the country's billfishing communities, but it is a discussion worth having, and we are proud of the many conservation successes the Series has led over these past 29 years.

As I sit here putting this column together, I feel it's important to let prospective participants know that the 30th Anniversary season is setting up to be a return to the pre-recession days as it relates to the number of participating boats. Bohicket has already fielded inquiries from ~40 boats, and Georgetown has had about the same if not more with just over a month to go. If you want to have slip space available, I would suggest you lock down your plans as soon as possible. This applies to all the tournaments, and will help greatly with planning and organizing.

We are looking forward to a fantastic 30th season, and I'll see you on the docks!

-Wally Jenkins



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Looking forward to seeing everyone on the docks for the 2018 Governor's Cup Series



Edisto



Artemis crew, 2007



Micabe, 2009



The *Second Lady*, owned by late Gov. Carroll A. Campbell, founder of the Series



The SC Memorial Reef

With three structures in the Charleston Deep Reef MPA, we have our sights set on the next sinking! Fundraising efforts are always underway, and we encourage you to continue to spread support and awareness to our offshore constituents! While we holdfast to the confidence of continued success in the future, it is with heavy hearts that we share this news with you: the last ROV footage of the Reef showed evidence of bottom fishing on these structures, and that the diversity and density of snapper grouper species has diminished from what we saw two years ago. We implore each of you to advocate for the conservation and enforcement of this project and the laws set in place to protect it. While we are still reaping the benefits of increased abundance of pelagics in the area, there is still major concern for the imperiled deepwater species whose critical spawning habitat is not safe from irresponsible humans. If you see illegal bottom fishing activity in the Charleston Deep Reef MPA, call NOAA's Fisheries' Enforcement Hotline at (800) 853-1964. We will not be deterred from progress, and our fisheries will continue to thrive with your help! To learn more about this project, visit <https://scmemorialreef.com/> and see the info to the right on how you can donate today!

Make checks payable to:

Harry Hampton Fund - The SC Memorial Reef, C/O Amy Dukes, PO Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422

Or:

Donate online:

- <https://scmemorialreef.com/> - Blue Donate button on top right and fill out the form.
- <http://www.hamptonwildlifefund.org/> - 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 for both online sources.

**See a marine violation?
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SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES

2018 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
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

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- 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.
 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.
 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.

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.



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1997 Risky Business	2012 Caramba
1998 Rookie IV	2013 Showtime
1999 Rookie IV	2014 Rascal
2000 Big Kahuna	2015 Reel Passion
2001 Sportin' Life	2016 Sportin' Life
2002 Major Motion	2017 Gryphon
2003 Summer Girl	2018 ???



Georgetown, ca. 1970's

99% kill rate

The Perpetual Trophy



Megadock, 2016

99% release rate



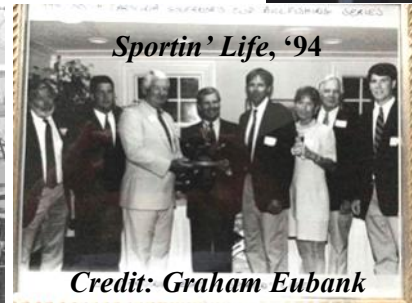
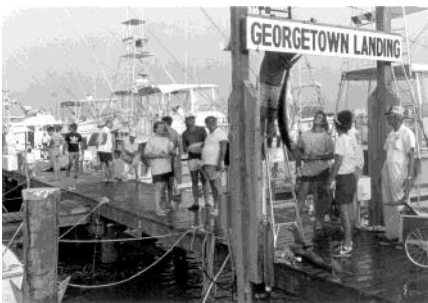
SC Mem. Reef deploy #1



SC Mem. Reef deploy #2



SC Mem. Reef deploy #3
Hwy. 41 Swing Bridge



Sportin' Life, '94

Credit: Graham Eubank



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Cummins Marine
crew, 1996

Credit: Dale Lackey



Summer Girl
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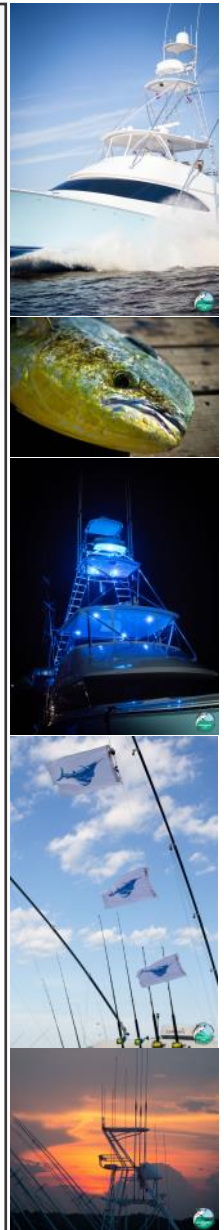


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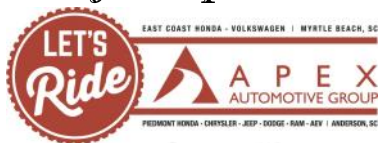
You can thank the committee boats who are out there each fishing day sending us news from the water. Without the services of these volunteers, we would not be able to keep you in the loop of all the exciting fishing action live!

Attention participating vessels:

There will be a new system to ID committee boats this year to help the captains' meetings run smoothly. Volunteers are welcome, but if there are none, boat names will be drawn from a pot to be designated as committee boats. Once your boat has successfully performed this duty, you will not be called upon for the remainder of the season!



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JULY 18 - 21

This Newsletter is brought to you by:



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.