



# TAG & RELEASE

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## Series Reflections

If you are like me, you spent much of the late winter and early spring following updates from our friends being posted on various social media apps from locations like Cabo San Lucas, Los Sueños, Quepos, Piñas Bay, Isla Mujeres, Grand Cayman, Casa de Campo, Chub Cay, Bimini and West Palm Beach, just to name a few. I must say, it was great to live vicariously monitoring these exotic locales and how good the fishing was on both the Pacific and Caribbean sides of Central America and the western Atlantic. Maybe one day I'll get lucky enough to make a winter sojourn to these warmer climes. Now with the kick off for the 31<sup>st</sup>

season of the South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series only a couple weeks away, and as many of the boats we followed during the winter start making their way back, it is time to get ready for fishing here in South Carolina. Just like fishing in all these exotic places, you need to take the time you have left to get all your documents in order for fishing in US waters. The last thing we want to be doing on Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> after the Bohicket Captains' meeting is trying to get a SC fishing license, an afterhours HMS permit or even worse, vessel documentation from the Coast Guard or SCDNR. In the previous issue, we outlined all the items you would need based on what type of fishing you are doing (recreational or charter). Please do us all a favor and stop what you are doing RIGHT NOW and go through and cross check the list with your captain and crew.

As I write this column, it is my understanding that there are approximately 30 boats registered already for Bohicket and nearly 60 for Georgetown! Be prepared for some long

## 31<sup>st</sup> Annual SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series 2019 Tournament Schedule

### **May 8 - 11 Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament**

Contact: Beau Anderson [marinamanager@bohicket.com](mailto:marinamanager@bohicket.com)  
 1880 Andell Bluff Boulevard (843) 768-1280  
 Johns Island, SC 29455

### **May 22 - 25 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament**

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

### **June 19 - 22 Carolina Billfish Classic**

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

### **July 17 - 20 Edisto Invitational Billfishing Tournament**

Contact: Brian Bell [bkbell1@bellsouth.net](mailto:bkbell1@bellsouth.net)  
 3702 Docksite Road (843) 631-5055  
 Edisto Beach, SC 29438

\*The Megadock will be under construction during the summer of 2019 and will be unable to host a tournament, yet will return in 2020.\*

### **For more information, contact:**

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

walks, especially at Bohicket; both Marinas are doing everything they can to accommodate everyone. The way things are shaping up, the Carolina Billfish Classic and Edisto will also have record numbers. I have also learned that the additional dock space, new electrical supply and fuel pumps at Edisto have been completed and should improve your experience there later this summer. It is hard to believe this will be my and Amy's 12<sup>th</sup> season managing the Series; many things have changed, but the original spirit of sportsmanship, civility, conservation and fair competition remain the same as when the Series started 31 years ago. On that note, the SCGCBS Advisory Board voted unanimously at their February 2019 meeting to PROHIBIT fishing on FADs during Series tournaments. The exact language is as follows: "**Series participants shall not knowingly fish on a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD), as it is contrary to principles of honor, sportsmanship and fair chase in the Series; therefore, fishing on a FAD during a Series**

**tournament is prohibited, and doing so may lead to disqualification.**" I hope that language is clear enough for everyone to understand as it will be restated at every captains' meeting this summer. Amy, Kayla, Cameron, Willie and I will be back again working to make this the best year ever. I even heard a rumor that Jesse has returned to the mainland from New Zealand, and may make an appearance at an upcoming Series event. Finally, after my appeal for

sponsors in the last newsletter, we have had quite a good response, however, we can always use more and I encourage you to make your tax-deductible donations to Harry Hampton Fund - SCGC and mail to: SCDNR, Attn: Wally Jenkins/Amy Dukes, PO Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422. For more information, visit our website: <http://govcup.dnr.sc.gov/>. Thanks for your continued support, and we will see you May 8<sup>th</sup>!

~Wally Jenkins

A large advertisement for SDI Superior Diesel, Inc. The background is a dramatic image of a boat's wake on the ocean. In the top left, the "sdi" logo is in large grey letters with "SUPERIOR DIESEL, INC." in red below it. In the top right, the "VOLVO PENTA" logo is in bold black letters. In the center, the text "SALES - PARTS - SERVICE" is written in large, bold, black letters. Below that, the phone number "843-553-8331" is displayed in large, bold, white letters with a black outline. At the bottom, the website addresses "superiordieselnengines.com" and "superiordiesel.net" are listed in white. A small circular logo for the "SOUTH CAROLINA GOV. CUP" is in the bottom right corner.

**Looking forward to seeing everyone on the docks for the 2019 Governor's Cup Series**

# SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES

## 2019 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 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.

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.





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Visit SCDNR's boating safety site at <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/boating/safety.html>



 You can also have the USCG perform a complimentary vessel safety check! Visit <http://cgaux.org> to learn more!

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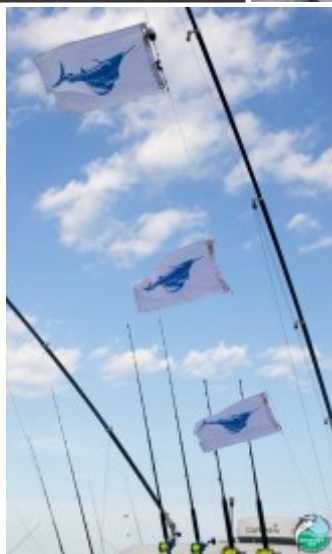
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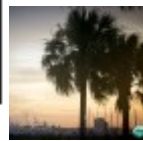
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## 2019 TOURNAMENTS



MAY 8 - 11



MAY 22 - 25



JUNE 19 - 22



\*Under construction 2019\*



JULY 17 - 20

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.