



# Tag & Release

A newsletter following the South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series



## Series Reflections:

**May 2025  
Vol. 30 No. 2**

The 2025 Series is here, and we hope everyone is excited for five tournaments this season! None of this would be possible without the support of our generous sponsors. We are so thankful for the many business and individuals who have contributed to ensure each year is a success. Please note our many sponsors, highlighted throughout the newsletter. We truly appreciate the support, commitment, and dedication.

We are looking forward to kicking off the season with the Charleston Billfish Invitational, which will be hosted out of Seabreeze Marina. The 57th Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament, hosted by Georgetown Landing Marina, will follow, and then the HMY Lowcountry Cup will take place out of Toler's Cove at the end of May. In June, Charleston Harbor Resort and Marina will host the Carolina Billfish Classic as the fourth Series tournament. In July, we'll head down to the Marina at Edisto Beach for the Edisto Invitational Billfish Tournament. Additional details regarding these events can be found on the following page of the newsletter. Be sure to register early to ensure docking space at the marinas, as most have limited slips available!

**RULES!** Please review the changes to the Series 2025 Fishing Guidelines [here](#).

Additional information can be found on page 3 of the newsletter.

We're looking forward to seeing you on the docks!

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# 37<sup>th</sup> Annual SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series 2025 Tournament Schedule

**May 7 - 10, 2025**

**Charleston Billfish Invitational**

[Charleston Billfish Invitational](#)

Contact: Stan Jones

49 Immigration Street Charleston, SC 29403

(843) 790-4001

[billfish@seabreezemarina.com](mailto:billfish@seabreezemarina.com)



**May 21 - 24, 2025**

**57<sup>th</sup> Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament**

[57<sup>th</sup> Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament](#)

Contact: David Black

P. O. Box 1704 Georgetown, SC 29442

(843) 546-1776, Fax: (843) 546-7832

[dblack@georgetownlandingmarina.com](mailto:dblack@georgetownlandingmarina.com)



**May 28 - 31, 2025**

**HMY Lowcountry Cup**

[HMY Lowcountry Cup](#)

Contact: Deidre Menefee

6119 Bears Bluff Road Wadmalaw Island, SC 29487

(843) 345-0369

[LCC@HMY.com](mailto:LCC@HMY.com)



**June 18 - 21, 2025**

**Carolina Billfish Classic**

[Carolina Billfish Classic](#)

Contact: Loyd Weston

20 Patriots Point Road Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

(843) 568-5230

[td@fishcbc.com](mailto:td@fishcbc.com)



**July 16 - 19, 2025**

**Edisto Invitational Billfish Tournament**

[Edisto Invitational Billfish Tournament](#)

Contact: Charles Yoemans

P. O. Box 598 Edisto Beach, SC 29464

(843) 631-5055, Fax: (843) 631-5065

[themarinaeb@gmail.com](mailto:themarinaeb@gmail.com)



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# **37<sup>th</sup> Annual SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series 2025 Fishing Guidelines**

The GCBS Advisory Board of Directors and Tournament Committee members collaborated to review and revise several Fishing Guidelines regarding billfish release points and required documentation to qualify fish. The official 2025 Fishing Guidelines can be found [here](#). A subset of the Fishing Guidelines outlining these changes are below:

**8. 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 is as follows:**

**Blue Marlin 600 points**

**White Marlin/Spearfish/Sailfish 200 points**

**9. For a vessel to qualify any billfish for points, a billfish must be fought to the boat in accordance with the GCBS Fishing Guidelines. Every person aboard the vessel 18 years of age or older must sign an official GCBS 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 all billfish on the affidavit.**

**White marlin, spearfish, and sailfish will qualify as caught and released when the following three conditions have been met: 1) the fish has been identified as a billfish, 2) the leader (which may be no longer than 30 ft) is grasped by the crew or wound to the rod tip, and 3) the fish is no longer attached to the rod. Official time of release is when the fish is no longer attached to the rod. The official time of release must be the time relayed to the designated tournament committee boat and recorded on the affidavit. Points will be awarded if the fish was caught in accordance with the GCBS Fishing Guidelines and all three of the above listed conditions are met. No photo/video documentation is required for white marlin, spearfish, or sailfish.**

**Blue marlin will qualify as caught and released when video documentation of the following is provided: 1) species identification, 2) the leader (which may be no longer than 30 ft) being grasped by the crew or wound to the rod tip, and 3) the fish no longer attached to the rod. Official time of release is when the fish is no longer attached to the rod. The official time of release must be the time relayed to the designated tournament committee boat and recorded on the affidavit. All video documentation must include an accurate date and time stamp. Photos with corresponding date and time stamp can supplement the video for species identification purposes only. Points will be awarded at the time of release if all three of the documentation requirements are met. If the fish was caught in accordance with the GCBS Fishing Guidelines but these documentation requirements are not met, the fish will be awarded 200 points.**

**Boats should attempt to remove the hook or cut the leader as close as possible to the hook.**

**22. A boat owner may request an official ruling from the S.C. GCBS Series within 48 hours of lines out on the last day of the tournament. The request for a ruling must be submitted in writing to the S.C GCBS Advisory Board chair to GovCupBoard@dnr.sc.gov. The ruling committee will consist of the Advisory Board chair, Advisory Board vice chair, Tournament Committee chair, two Advisory Board members, and two Tournament Committee members. The ruling committee shall rule on the request within 30 days. All decisions of the ruling committee are final. Members of the ruling committee will recuse themselves from the decision if there is a conflict of interest. All rulings will focus solely on compliance with S.C. GCBS Series rules, not individual tournament rules.**







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An aerial photograph of a waterfront park. In the foreground, there's a paved area with some structures. Beyond that is a green golf course. In the background, there's a body of water and an industrial area with cranes and ships. The sky is blue with some clouds.

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# Get Ready for the 2025 Fishing Season!

Below is a list of some of the permits, licenses, and documentation that you will need to have in your possession so that boat owners, captains, and crew are ready for a successful fishing season.

**\*\*Double check expiration dates!\*\***



**1) SC Saltwater Fishing License** – Every individual (age 16 and above) aboard the vessel must have a valid, official SC Saltwater Recreational Fishing License in their possession. These licenses can be purchased at <https://license.gooutdoorssouthcarolina.com/Licensing/CustomerLookup.aspx>.

**2) Current vessel documentation or state registration** – All vessels must possess current and valid state registration or US Coast Guard documentation in addition to being titled in the owner's name/business. For vessel registration information, please visit <https://vessel.gooutdoorssouthcarolina.com/Vessel/CustomerLookup.aspx>.

**3) Atlantic HMS [Angling (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 (HMS; 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 permit. To obtain an HMS permit, please visit <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov/>.





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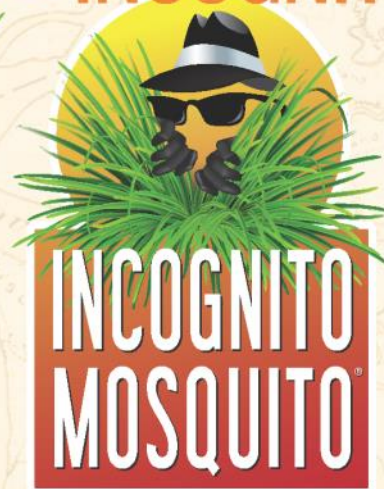


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The S.C. Department of Natural Resources' Law Enforcement Division reminds the public of Coast Watch, which was developed to better help citizens report violations of saltwater recreational and commercial fishing laws, as well as marine environmental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