



TAG & RELEASE

Jim Goller, Editor Email: wildlife@sc.rr.com

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2001 13TH ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S CUP TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE...

- May 2-6** *Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Sara Travis
3702 Docksite Rd.
Edisto Beach SC 29438
843-869-3504 FAX 843-869-3738
- May 16-20** *Bohicket Invitational Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Damien Zanetti
1880 Andell Bluff Blvd.
Johns Island SC 29455
843-768-1280 FAX 843-768-3481
- May 22-27** *Georgetown Landing Blue Marlin Tournament*
Contact: Ricky Ferdon
P.O. Box 1704
Georgetown SC 29442
843-546-1776 FAX 843-546-7832
- June 6-10** *Marlin Quay Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Charles Stone
P.O. Box 549
Murrells Inlet SC 29576
843-651-4444 FAX 843-651-7795
- June 27-
July 1** *Isle Of Palms Marina Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Brian Berrigan
P.O. Box 550
Isle of Palms SC 29451
843-886-0209 FAX 843-886-0058
- July 11-15** *Charleston Harbor Marina Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Deidre Menefee
24 Patriots Point Road
Mt. Pleasant SC 29464
843-345-0369 843-856-9996
FAX 843-856-8540

For more information contact:

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Office of Fisheries Management
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**A RELEASE TODAY
IS A
FISH TOMORROW!**

HOME RUN STRIKES 1ST - WINS EDISTO...

For five days a year, the small island community of Edisto Beach is inundated with large sportfishing boats, numerous billfish enthusiasts and spectators. 2001 was no different. Forty boats entered the event that would kickoff the 13th annual South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series. Bill Hackett, tournament director for the past several years, surprised everyone by announcing his retirement just days before the tournament. However, Bill passed the torch into the capable hands of Sara Travis, who took charge without missing a beat.

The Captains' Meeting was a chance to get reacquainted with old friends and a chance to make new ones. "Bobo," of Southern Affairs Catering, prepared BBQ chicken and salad that was out of sight. Weather was the topic of conversation, with everyone asking each other if they'd heard the latest.

Thirty-nine boats ventured out Thursday morning. Chatter on the radio was minimal, so it was anyone's guess dockside as to what was happening offshore. As boats headed in after 3, we began to hear that one or two blue marlin had been tagged. As the first boats turned the bend into Big Bay Creek, we learned that *Holy Mackerel* had hooked something big just before three and was still fighting. Anglers began to tell their tales and display their fish, and said the weather offshore had been great; 10-15 knot S-SE winds and waves only 2-4 feet.

Overall on the first day, four blues and two whites were tagged by *Home Run*, *Fin-Addict*, *Mistress*, *Holy Mackerel*, *Rascal* and *Aut-Top-Sea*. *Home Run* was in the lead because it tagged its blue marlin first. Of all the fish tales, *Billistic's* was best; they found the motherload of tuna and in addition to the dozen they brought to the dock they caught and released at least that many more plus

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took the lead with a 38.6 lb. yellowfin. The biggest dolphin, 36 pounds, was caught by a youth angler aboard the *Gamecock*. The only wahoo entered the first day was a 69-pounder taken by Risky Business. What a great start for the Series!

With winds predicted to shift to the northeast on Friday, only *Pipelayer* ventured out to test the forecast. Although the winds had shifted, they remained about 10-15 knots. Seas were up around 6 feet, but they didn't stop *Pipelayer* from landing dolphin, tuna and wahoo. After another great meal under the tent of heavy and exotic hors d'oeuvres, anglers prepared for the final fishing day with good weather predicted.

Everyone except *Hines Farley*, a boat with engine problems from the start, fished Saturday with picture perfect weather. Chatter on the radio consisted of banter about boats with engine problems and a few fish being caught. When the boats began to roll in around 5:30 that afternoon, the docks were packed with spectators...one could barely get by to move from one end of the dock to the other. Two blues were tagged; one by *Big Game* and one by *Sportin' Life*. *Home Run* tied the 69-pound wahoo caught Thursday, but *Risky Business* ended up in first because it had the earlier catch. Youth angler Ward Mungo aboard *Home Run* landed a 39.8 lb. tuna. *Diamond II* came in with just minutes to spare, barely making the scales and unfortunately Mike Larrow's *Micabe* blew an engine, limping back long after dark.

The awards banquet was excellent with Bobo's prime rib highlighting the event. Calvert Huffines presented the awards as the crowd cheered for each Edisto boat that placed.

Home Run, owned by Steven Mungo of Columbia and home-ported at Edisto, tagged and released the first blue marlin of the first fishing day, hooking up at 8:10 a.m., and won the tournament because of the early catch. *Home Run's* early catch also earned it the tournament's Best Billfish Boat and Conservation awards.

A sixty-nine pound wahoo, caught by Richard Corbin fishing aboard *Risky Business*, owned by Ken Cannon of Johns Island, won the Largest Wahoo award. The Largest Dolphin award went to youth angler Thomas Plumb, age 9, for his 36.0-pound fish caught aboard *Gamecock*,

owned by Fisher Walter of Edisto Island. Ward Mungo, age 11, fishing aboard *Home Run*, took the tournament's Largest Tuna award with his 39.8 pound yellowfin. Ward also captured Edisto's Youth Angler award with his tuna and added a 29.2 pound dolphin for insurance. Edisto's Female Angler award went to Mary Brooke Sligh for her 36.0 pound yellowfin tuna caught aboard *Legal Holiday*, owned by Fred Bergen of Savannah, Georgia. In addition, a total of 2 tuna and 6 dolphin were tagged from 5 different boats as part of the Governor's Cup Bluewater Conservation award.

All in all it was a great kickoff for the 13th annual series. As the caterer began to clean up and the tent light's began to dim, you could still hear the music from dockside as the festivities continued late into the night. As I walked back to my car to begin the long trek home, content that all was well in the world, I noticed a yellow slip on the windshield. A parking ticket. Damn...

Charlie Boykin

LEGAL HOLIDAY WINS BOHICKET...

"The big story at Bohicket was a fight that lasted seven hours," said Wayne Waltz, director of the Series. "'Legal Holiday's' 428.5-pound blue marlin leapt out of the water several times and got the line wrapped around its tail, making the fight last unusually long." The catch, by owner Fred Bergen, earned "Legal Holiday" of Savannah the Best Billfish Boat award.

Finishing second for landing a 370-pound blue marlin was "Holy Mackerel," owned by Douglas Batchelor of Evans, GA. The angler was Chip Ivey of Augusta.

"Hidin' Out," owned by Emmette Reeder of Charleston, was close behind, landing a 369.5-pound blue marlin.

"Cookie Monster," snagged the conservation award by being first to tag and release a blue marlin. Other boats that tagged and released blue marlin were "Sportin' Life," and "Lucky Strike."

A 47.3-pound wahoo caught on "Hey Doc" owned by Alan Fogel earned angler Buddy Roth of Columbia the Biggest Wahoo Award. Anglers aboard Harry Scott's "Bill Collector" obtained both the Biggest Dolphin Award and the Biggest Tuna Award. Brad Wright of Hilton

Head Island caught the 61.4-pound dolphin, and Bryon Willingham of Savannah, GA caught the 34.9-pound yellowfin tuna.

The first place Outstanding Female Angler Award went to Bryson Hills of Mt. Pleasant for landing a 37.8-pound dolphin aboard "Mar Jen." Patty Rutland took second for landing a 32.8-pound yellowfin tuna from "Lucky Strike," and Nancy Ravenel captured third with her 22.3-pound dolphin she landed aboard "Cookie Monster."

For the Series, Holy Mackerel leads with 670 points.

Jennie R. Davis

CIO, Marine Resources, SCDNR

FROM THE CHAIR...

To All Governor's Cup Participants...

Welcome to the 13th Annual South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series. This Series has done more to promote conservation of our bluewater resources than any other event of its kind in the nation. We are proud of the accomplishments we have made in the past and look forward to even bigger and better things for the future.

None of this could be done without the help of our numerous sponsors; especially Williams Detroit Diesel - Allison, Carolina First Bank and Cummins Atlantic and Marine. Their sponsorships help made this one of the premier fishing events in the South Atlantic. If possible, utilize the services of our sponsors whenever possible and thank them for their continued support of this program

On behalf of the Board of Directors, may your lines remain tight, tag and release whenever possible and most of all have fun. Good Fishing and Good Luck.

Bobby Hood, Chairman
SCGCBS, Charleston



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DIRECT LINES...

MeHg...

In mythology he was the messenger of the gods (a.k.a. quicksilver); also the planet nearest the sun; on the periodic table it's letter designation is Hg and its number is 80. It's in the air we breathe, the water we drink and unfortunately a more toxic form, methylmercury, is in the fish we eat. I recently attended a conference on methylmercury held in Charleston and sponsored in part by the Governor's Cup, Saltwater License program and others. The conference brought together fisheries biologists, scientists, health experts and fishermen for two days on the impacts of methylmercury on wildlife and human health.

According to one participant, forty-one states are now issuing health advisories regarding consumption of fish that may have high levels of methylmercury. In the past, most of these dealt with freshwater species. Now, as we learn more and more about this problem and are analyzing more data, we are finding out that some common saltwater species such as king mackerel, tilefish, swordfish and sharks may also be problematic, especially to certain high risk groups.

Mercury, as well as occurring naturally, is emitted into the air by waste incinerators, power plants, manufacturing and other sources. Once airborne, it can be transported globally before falling back out in rain. Once deposited in the soil, naturally occurring bacteria convert it to its more toxic form, methylmercury. From there it travels up the food web and bioaccumulates in fish and other wildlife and is then passed to humans who eat these species.

The mercury issue is extremely complex. Methylmercury is a potent neurotoxin and can cause death. Severe mer-

cury poisoning has been documented in Japan from fish consumption and Iraq from consuming fungicide-coated grain. However, most concern in the U.S. is with sub-lethal effects of low level doses, especially as it pertains to the developing nervous system of unborn and small children, where it can show up later in life in the form of learning disabilities, reduced IQ, ADA, and other developmental problems. Part of the complexity of this issue and one aspect that makes this issue especially intriguing is that different studies that have looked at small island communities in New Zealand where the villages consume large quantities of mercury laden fish have shown differing, even conflicting results regarding the it's effect on children reared in these communities. In addition, there are substantial nutritional benefits from consuming fish. A great source of protein, fish are also rich in omega-3 fatty acids which help improve ratios of good to bad cholesterol and may help prevent heart attacks.

The FDA now warns pregnant women, women who intend to have children, nursing mothers and young children not to eat any king mackerel, tilefish, swordfish or sharks. In addition, several private environmental groups recommend avoiding tuna, sea bass, marlin, white croaker, halibut, pike, walleye, large-mouth bass and Gulf oysters.

What's an angler to do?? Unfortunately, methylmercury ends up residing in the edible muscle tissue of the fish. There are no preparatory or cooking techniques that will remove it. If you are in the "high risk" group you should probably heed FDA/Health Department warnings and steer clear of the high level species. If you are a fairly healthy adult, eat a variety of fish, limit your intake of high-

level species and don't over indulge or "binge" on any particular species. It is the long-lived apex predators like sharks that seem to accumulate the most mercury. From a health standpoint it's safer to eat the smaller, younger fish, than large older ones. Moderation appears to be the key to safe seafood consumption.

Wayne Waltz

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