



TAG & RELEASE

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

Volume 6, No. 4 Summer 2001

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

- May 2-6** *Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Bill Hackett
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:

Wayne Waltz,
Office of Fisheries Management
843-762-5094 email: waltzw@mrd.dnr.state.sc.us
<http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/govcup/govcup.html>

FISH N' FOOL OUTSMARTS COMPETITION AT CHARLESTON HARBOR...

"Fish N' Fool," owned by Bruce Greene of Savannah, Ga., captured the Best Billfish Boat award in the Charleston Harbor Marina Resort Billfish Tournament July 11-15. The tournament was the final event in the 13th Annual Governor's Cup Billfishing Series.

Anglers Bruce Greene and Glenn Wood, both of Savannah, each tagged and released a blue marlin to earn "Fish N' Fool" 600 points and secure the Billfish Conservation Award for the event.

"We saved the biggest and best for last," said Wayne Waltz of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, director of the Governor's Cup Billfishing Series, of the Charleston Harbor Marina Resort Billfish Tournament. "This tournament was a wonderful ending to the 2001 Tournament Series. We congratulate all the winners and sincerely appreciate all the participants."

A total of 34 billfish were tagged and released during the Charleston tournament including 12 blue marlin, 22 sailfish and one spearfish. Each of the 102 boats that participated in the tournament had the opportunity to fish two out of three days. Unfortunately, Saturday's fishing was canceled due to a small craft advisory.

Finishing in second place at the Charleston Harbor Tournament for tagging and releasing one sailfish and one blue marlin was "Home Run," owned by angler Steven Mungo of Columbia. "Lazy Bonz," owned by James Dewberry of Savannah, placed third in the tournament when Sam Peters tagged and released a blue marlin and a sailfish. "Lazy Bonz" tagged its fish later in the tournament than "Home Run," putting it

A RELEASE TODAY IS A FISH TOMORROW!

Continued on page 2...

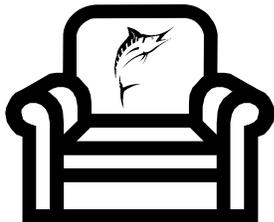
Continued from page 1...

in third place.

A 50.8-pound wahoo caught aboard "Part Time," owned by Rion McKissick of Laurens, won the tournament's Biggest Wahoo Award. The Biggest Tuna Award went to Mike Brown of Murrells Inlet who reeled in a 55.4-pound yellowfin tuna aboard "Skee Bo," owned by Gregg and Chris Lee of Myrtle Beach.

The first place Outstanding Female Angler Award went to Allison Lockwood of Mt. Pleasant, who tagged and released a sailfish for 100 points. Lockwood hooked the fish aboard "ALI-L," owned by Joe Gilchrist and Jerry Lockwood of Mt. Pleasant. First place Outstanding Youth Angler Award went to 13-year-old Wil Merriman of Summerville who caught a 43.2-pound wahoo. Merriman hooked the fish aboard "Laid Back," owned by Perry Bullard of Brunson.

Jennie Davis
SCDNR, Marine Resources



FROM THE CHAIR...

Sen. Hollings' Response...

Robert H. Hood, Chairman
South Carolina Governor's Cup
Billfishing Series Advisory Board

Dear Mr. Hood,

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the proposed rule published on March 30, 2001 to extend the closure of the Charleston Bump area to pelagic longline fishing through the end of May 2001. The intent of the proposed rule was to partially recover environmental benefits in terms of bycatch reduction that were lost due to a delay of the closure from February 1, 2001 to March 1, 2001. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) received a number of comments on this proposed closure extension, which included comments concerning the bycatch reduction potential as well as the economic implications of extend-

ing the closure. In the end, NMFS found that significant bycatch reductions would be achieved only in the short-term, whereas this one-time extension could pose significant economic impacts on the fisherman, particularly in light of the short notice of the extension. Thus, they withdrew the proposed rule on May 7, as explained in the attached letter from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

I share your interest in protecting South Carolina's marine fisheries, and have worked for more than forty years now to promote their conservation and balanced use. It is unfortunate that NMFS needed to delay the Charleston Bump closure this year and that we are unable to regain the bycatch reduction from this period. Yet I also understand the economic strain this may have posed for commercial fisherman. I have conveyed to NMFS my interest in protecting our highly migratory stocks and preventing bycatch of other over fished species in these fisheries. It is my hope that details of the closure process have been worked out this year and that the closure will proceed as anticipated from February 1 to April 30 of next year. I will continue to monitor this situation with NMFS as next year's closure approaches.

Thank you again for contacting me concerning this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me further on this issue.

With kindest regards, I am
Sincerely,
ERNEST F. HOLLINGS
Ranking Democrat

Bobby Hood, Chairman
SCGCBS, Charleston

Turn In Those Tag Cards TODAY!!

Don't delay...if you've tagged marlin, sailfish, dolphin, tunas, wahoo, etc. and have been putting off mailing in your tagging cards...*Now's the time!* Search your boats, boat bags, tackle lockers and sock drawers...find those cards and send them in! Nothing's more discouraging than having someone catch a tagged fish and report it then we discover we don't have

the initial tagging information. Tagging cards are the ONLY way to know the where, when, how, whatever...about the fish. *Please Don't Delay!* Thanks!




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**2001
SOUTH CAROLINA
GOVERNOR'S CUP
BILLFISHING SERIES LEADER BOARD
Final Results...**



Sportin' Life, owned by Manly Eubanks, Charleston, is the current Series leader. SCDNR photo by Jennie Davis.

TOP TEN BOATS	TOTAL
<i>SPORTIN' LIFE</i>	1150
<i>HOLYMACKEREL</i>	1070.0
<i>COOKIE MONSTER</i>	850
<i>HOMERUN</i>	800
<i>BULLDOG</i>	775
<i>OVERSPRAY</i>	700*
<i>RISKY BUSINESS</i>	700*
<i>SKEE BO</i>	700*
<i>BIG GAME</i>	700*
<i>CLEAR CUT</i>	675

**Listed in order of points earned the earliest in the Series.*

TOP BILLFISH BOAT
POINTS: 1150
BOAT: *SPORTIN' LIFE*
OWNER: MANLY EUBANK
CAPTAIN: MIKE GLAESNER

LARGEST BILLFISH
FISH: 428.5 lbs. Blue Marlin
BOAT: *LEGAL HOLIDAY*
OWNER: FRED BERGEN
ANGLER: FRED BERGEN

BILLFISH CONSERVATIONIST

POINTS: 1150
BOAT: *SPORTIN' LIFE*
OWNER: MANLY EUBANK

BLUE WATER CONSERVATION

POINTS: 2450
BOAT: *PETREL IV*
OWNER: HARRY JOHNSON

LARGEST WAHOO

WEIGHT: 113.6 lbs.
BOAT: *CHASIN'*
ANGLER: ROY ALLSHORE
OWNER: TARHEEL SPORTFISHING

LARGEST TUNA

WEIGHT: 86.6 lbs.
BOAT: *GOOD BUDDY*
ANGLER: JAMES BIGBY
OWNER: TOMMY GOODSON

LARGEST DOLPHIN

WEIGHT: 67.7 lbs.
BOAT: *MARJEN*
ANGLER: WIL THORNHILL
OWNER: ROMO, Inc.

1st PLACE LADY ANGLER
FISH: WHITE MARLIN T&R
BOAT: *COOKIE MONSTER*
ANGLER: NANCY RAVENEL
OWNER: CHRIS RAVENEL

2nd PLACE LADY ANGLER
FISH: SAILFISH T&R
BOAT: *SUMMER GIRL*
ANGLER: KIMBERLY SMITH
OWNERS: STEVEN LEASURE/
JOHN SMITH

3rd PLACE LADY ANGLER

FISH: SAILFISH T&R
BOAT: *ALI L*
ANGLER: ALLISON LOCKWOOD
OWNER: JERRY LOCKWOOD

1st PLACE YOUTH ANGLER

FISH: WHITE MARLIN T&R
BOAT: *HOT SHOT*
ANGLER: J.C. DARBY
OWNER: ERIC BURN

2nd PLACE YOUTH ANGLER

FISH: 113.6 lb. WAHOO
BOAT: *CHASIN'*
ANGLER: ROY ALLSHORE
OWNER: TARHEEL SPORTFISHING

3rd PLACE YOUTH ANGLER

FISH: 67.7 lb. DOLPHIN
BOAT: *MARJEN*
ANGLER: WIL THORNHILL
OWNER: ROMO, Inc.

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Special Insert By Charlie Boykin

Paradise...

Originally occupied by Seewee Indians and visited by pirates who reportedly buried treasure there, the Isle of Palms was an ideal setting for the fifth Governor's Cup event. Hosted by the Isle of Palms Marina, the event began on a somber note. Long time fishing enthusiast and regular to the tournament, Mr. Walt Miller (Cadillac Style) passed unexpectedly two weeks prior to the event. Walt will be remembered for his comradeship and sense of humor. Walt will also be remembered for the Road Runner song rendition sung by Microwave Dave and the Nukes he used to play over the loud speakers as he pulled back into his slip. The tournament was dedicated in his honor and a special sportsmanship award given in his memory.

The fishing, however, was anything but somber. Of the 44 participants, 39 took to the seas on Thursday. Major Motion grabbed an early lead with a tagged blue and a sail, Haphazard followed closely with an 11 a.m. hook up and tagged blue, then Palmetto Pride took third with a 1p.m. tagged blue. In all, four blues, two sails and a white were tagged and released on day one. If that wasn't exciting enough, youth angler Royall Shore on the Chasin', brought in a 6 foot long, 113.6-pound wahoo. The current state record is 130.5 lbs and the previous record was 109 pounds, therefore this was the second largest wahoo officially recorded in the state.

Friday was a layover day for most boats. However, youth angler J.C. Darby



made his presence known by tagging a white aboard the Hot Shot to take the youth lead and Petrel IV tagged a sail.

Saturday was another awesome day. Four blues, three sails and a white were tagged. Youth angler Wil Thornhill on the Mar Jen brought in the winning dolphin at 67.7 pounds. Aut-Top-Sea's Chris Smock took the tuna category with a 59-pound yellowfin. Female angler Kimberly Smith took that category with a tagged white marlin aboard Summer Girl. Petrel IV calmly came back with tag cards for 4 yellowfin tuna and 24 dolphin.

The awards dinner was excellent and the ceremony a hit. Bryan Berrigan, Jen Allison and all the staff at IOP Marina did a great job. Major Motion held on to the lead to take the winning billfish boat. Youth anglers Wil Thornhill, J.C. Darby and Royall Shore took the dolphin, youth and wahoo categories; not only for the tournament but also the series. The Hardluck "Crunch" award was given to the Mar Jen for a slightly embarrassing re-entry into the slip on Thursday. And no, Tom Murphy was not at the helm. The Walt Miller sportsmanship award was presented to Harry Johnson of the Petrel IV, an award IOP intends to give each year in memory of one of their own. A total of eight blues, three whites and five sails were tagged, making this the best fishing to date in the Series.

Awesome...

The 2001 HMY Viking Billfish Tournament at Charleston Harbor Marina was not only the biggest of the 2001 Series, but also the most elaborate. Managed by a four-person management team led by Tournament Director Deidre Menefee and supported by a 12-member tournament committee, this event exceeded everyone's expectations. A host of sponsors plus artists Ed Pang and John Doyle were involved, and prizes such as a one-year BMW X5 lease were awarded. Activities such as a fighting chair competition added to the tournament fun.

The captains' meeting was abuzz with excitement and anticipation and 102 boats were officially entered. It was great to see some familiar faces. Mike Larrow's *Micabe* was back in action following the

blown engine at Edisto. Outside, a mob of people talked, strolled and celebrated on the sandy beach behind the hotel. Vendors, all under covered tents, hawked their wares; The Billfish Foundation and CCA pushed their causes and sold raffle tickets. The Series' last event was shaping up for a showdown. First place *Sportin' Life* led *Holy Mackerel* by only 80 points, while the 3rd, 4th and 5th place boats were separated by just 150 points.

Thursday's fishing started with a bang. *Chicora*, *Peacemaker* and *Second Love III* all had mechanical problems and never got their lines wet, putting them temporarily tied for the hard luck award. Fishing was good...7 blues and 12 sails were tagged and released and one spearfish was caught and released by the *Compromise IV*. The *Gato II* spent 30-45 minutes trying to revive a tagged blue marlin they found struggling. It was a valiant but unsuccessful attempt and congratulations are due the captain and crew for their efforts.



On another note, *Petrel IV* had taken Carolina Camera's Michael Trouche out to document the event. No sooner than they put lines in, Michael became sick...thinking he was having a heart attack. Captain and crew rushed him back, only to discover it was an anxiety attack, and lost a day of fishing.

Stormy weather greeted participants as they returned from their day of fishing, putting a bit of a damper on the evening's planned festivities.

Most boats took to the waters again on Friday, suspecting a weak cold front would drop in Saturday. Fishing was marvelous. Five blues and 10 sails tagged. *Bulldog* lost their controls as they hooked up on what they thought might be the winning blue...but after a great

GOVERNOR'S CUP MUSINGS...Page 2

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fight the 99-incher was released. *Hatterascal* fought a big blue for five hours only to lose it at the boat. Lady angler Allison Lockwood of the *Ali-L* tagged a sail.

Seas started getting rough while the boats headed back in as the cold front moved through and winds shifted to the northeast. Friday evening's festivities were a blast. The fighting chair competition drew a big crowd as the testosterone flowed. The festivities later moved to B-dock and lasted well into the night.

Crews woke Saturday morning to small craft warnings and a no fishing day. The awards ceremony started at 6:00 p.m. with steak and twice-baked potatoes the main fare. Top place went to *Fish n Fool* for tagging two blues, followed by *Home Run* and *Lazy Bonz* for a blue and a sail each. The awards were given, the band played on and fun was had by all.

Little changed in the overall series standings; *Sportin' Life*, *Holy Mack-erel*, and *Cookie Monster* maintained their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place positions. *Home Run* took over 4th and *Bulldog* secured 5th in the overall standings. Final figures will be forthcoming, but by my account, 2001 Series anglers hooked 67 blues, tagged 38, released one and landed three; hooked eight whites and tagged seven, hooked 36 sails and tagged 31 plus released one spearfish. Of the 84 fish that were brought to the boat, all but three were released and all but seven tagged. The unofficial release rate totals 96%. 2001 is significant in that it may mark the first time in Series history the winning boat did not land a single billfish, relying solely on tagging points for the victory. Awesome. It's been fun and this will be my last "Musings" for awhile.

Hope to see you next year!
Chuck.

About the author...

Charlie Boykin is employed by the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston and a self-professed "tournament groupie" who loves to fish, hang around the docks and tell stories. Charlie volunteered to assist DNR staff at each tournament.

TO BOAT OR NOT TO BOAT... A LEGAL DILEMMA...

EDITORS NOTE:

The following article by Don Hammond originally appeared in the first issue of *Tag & Release* back in 1999. It is reprinted here to help anglers avoid potential disqualifications when undersized fish are boated for measurement or photos, illegal under the current Federal Billfish Management Plan. The plan also directed anglers to cut the line near the hook, which also made it illegal to remove hooks from undersized billfish. *Luckily, federal officials recognized their error and removed the hook clause in 2000.

IT'S THE LAW...

Under the Federal Billfish Management Plan there is a clause that reads, "A billfish under the minimum size caught shoreward of the outer boundary of the EEZ must be released (by cutting the line near the hook) without removing the fish from the water."

On the surface this seems okay, even proper. But this clause renders those anglers who would bring a small sailfish or white marlin aboard their boat for a quick Kodak moment into fisheries law violators. It would also classify any undersized billfish brought aboard for measuring as an illegal fish even when the fish is returned to the water.

The problem is not in the potential for a sizable fine from fisheries' enforcement officers, but in the fact that it brands such fish illegal. The Governor's Cup Series, as well as all participating tournaments, require entries to be caught in accordance with all state and federal fisheries laws. Sadly, this means any billfish boated for measurement, found to be undersized by federal law and tagged and released would not qualify for points. However, those fish that fell below the 101-inch Governor's Cup minimum, but above the federal minimum, would qualify to earn tag and release points.

It is obvious that only the individual(s) who physically measure the fish would know the actual length. The only way a

fish could be determined to be an illegal catch would be if the undersize length was announced to the crew or all participants over the radio. So this is not something that law enforcement will be looking to enforce. However, it is a technicality that a competitor could effectively use to have a fish disqualified.

From a fisheries management perspective, this clause is counter productive. Knowing the size frequency distribution of a stock of fish is very important in determining the condition of that stock. With only a projected landing of 175 billfish along the entire U.S. East and Gulf coasts under the new federal guidelines, there is no way for scientists to acquire this needed information.

The S.C. Marine Gamefish Tagging Program has always encouraged anglers to measure their billfish prior to release and a large proportion have been measured. The recovery rate for billfish tagged in the program is equal to that of national programs. While it certainly does not do the fish any good, this appears to refute the idea that more fish are dying as a result of the boating.

While we are on the issue of technicalities, if you were awake, this same clause makes it illegal to remove the hooks from an undersized billfish as well.*

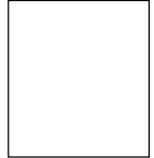
Right or wrong, it is the law and we will have to abide by it while it is law. The only alternative is to work to have the law changed.

Don Hammond





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