16TH ANNUAL SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR’S CUP TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE...

April 28- May 1  
**Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament**
*Contact:* Deidre Menefee  
19 Forde Row  
Charleston SC 29412  
843-345-0369  FAX 843-406-4813

May 5-8  
**Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament**
*Contact:* Bryan Richardson/Damien Zanetti  
1880 Andell Bluff Blvd.  
Johns Island SC 29455  
843-768-1280  FAX 843-768-3481

May 16-22  
**Charleston Harbor HMY Viking Billfish Tournament**
*Contact:* Deidre Menefee  
19 Forde Row  
Charleston SC 29412  
843-345-0369  FAX 843-406-4813

June 2-5  
**37th Annual Georgetown Landing Marina Tournament**
*Contact:* Ricky Ferdon  
P.O. Box 1704  
Georgetown SC 29442  
843-546-1776  FAX 843-546-7832

June 24-26  
**MegaDock Tournament**
*Contact:* Emily S. Arthur  
P.O. Box 759  
Charleston SC 29402  
843-577-7705

For more information contact:  
**Tom DuPre’**  
*Office of Fisheries Management*  
843-953-9365  
email: dupret@mrd.dnr.state.sc.us  
http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/govcup/govcup.html

**A RELEASE TODAY IS A FISH TOMORROW!**  
Fish Responsibly!

“LOCK N’ LOAD” WINS BOHICKET TOURNAMENT IN GOVERNOR’S CUP SERIES

During May 6-8, the 16th Annual South Carolina Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series wrapped up the second out of five tournaments, the Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament.

“The weather was beautiful, and Damien Zanetti and all of the marina staff did an excellent job coordinating the tournament,” said Tom DuPre of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, who coordinates the tournament series. “The food, which was catered by Marvin’s Meats, was delicious and there was a different band every night so the crowd had a great time.”

One billfish, a blue marlin, was released during the tournament. All of the 22 boats that participated in the tournament fished two out of the three days.

Points for Governor’s Cup tournaments are awarded as follows: 300 points for a tagged or released blue marlin, 200 points for a tagged or released white marlin, and 150 points for a tagged or released sailfish.

The Governor’s Cup Board of Directors took an unprecedented step this year by making “tagging” an optional part of the tournament series. Now points can be accumulated for properly catching and releasing billfish, so tagging is no longer required to receive release points. Anglers are still encouraged to tag tuna, dolphin and wahoo as part of the bluewater conservation endeavor, and to help support on-going studies of these species.

“Lock n’ Load,” owned by Skipper Jellison of Seabrook Island captured the Best Billfish Boat award. Angler Vince Boyer of Hollywood, SC released the only blue marlin of the tournament to earn “Lock n’ Load” 300 points.
INSIDE EDISTO 2004

The first event of the five tournament Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series (Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament) saw both excitement and controversy. Most of the 39 participating boats took to the waters on Thursday with light winds and seas in store. The fish du jour was dolphin. “Rapid Pace’s” Teddy Thornhill landed the biggest of the day at 40.7 lbs. Lady angler Eugenie Barrow of “Legal Holiday” had the biggest yellowfin of the day at 25.8 lbs. The youth angler of the day, Austin Wyatt of the “Laid Back” brought in a 22.6 lb. Yellowfin tuna. The most exciting and unfortunately controversial catch of the day was a 113 in., 506 lb. blue marlin brought in by the “Lady S”. After much discussion by both the tournament committee and Governor’s Cup staff the fish had to be disqualified. The fish had been hit by some portion of the boat as the crew were trying to get it into the boat and had a large gash on it’s right side just below the pectoral fin. IGFA rules are explicit when it comes to situations such as this saying “The following situations will disqualify a catch: 2. Mutilation to the fish prior to landing or boating the catch . . . . . . . .that removes or penetrates the flesh.” The tournament committee and the Governor’s Cup had no choice but to disqualify the fish. Our heartfelt condolences go out the crew of the “Lady S” for what would have been an excellent catch had it not been for an unfortunate mishap.

Friday saw the weather turn from good to marginal, smaller boats had a rough outing. Again, the dolphin were there but none topping “Rapid Pace’s” entry from the previous day. “Ricochet” took over the wahoo category with a 47.4 pounder. A new lady angler, Joanie Macindzak of the “Size Matters”, brought in a 28.7 lb. wahoo. After day 2, a new competition began to emerge to see who could tag and release the most dolphin in quest of the Blue Water Conservation Award. Six boats, “Caramba”, “Summer Girl”, “Micabe”, “Houdini” “Laid Back” and...
INSIDE BOHICKET 2004

With the full moon beginning to wane, winds W/SW at 10kts, and seas 2 to 4 feet, the Bohicket Marina’s Annual Billfishing Tournament began its 22nd event. With fair weather predicted for the entire 3-day period, expectations were high as the 22 participating boats began their first fishing day. The dolphin were everywhere on day one. “Petrel’s” John Destefano took the lead with a 30.4 lb. fish. Lady and youth anglers Ann Brady-Moore of the “Rascal” and 9 year old Bobby Faith of the “Caramba” accounted for a 20.7 lb and 24.7 lb dolphin each. The biggest tuna (49.5 lb.) was caught on the “Second Love III” by Robbie Renken and just happened to be that last boat in and the last boat to weigh in fish. The only wahoo caught that day was tagged by the “Summer Girl”. In addition, “Summer Girl” tagged and released 17 dolphin putting them in the lead for the bluewater conservation award.

Friday, day 2, was another picture perfect day, however only 5 boats elected to fish that day with the rest waiting for a better bite to come on Saturday. This was fortunate for the “Legal Holiday” who managed to land a 26.9 lb. wahoo to take the lead in that unfilled slot.

The final fishing day, Saturday, produced the only billfish of the event. “Lock n’ Load” caught and released a 250 lb. Blue marlin in the morning to capture the win. “Petrel’s” youth angler, 13 year old Rob Johnson, landed a 45 lb. wahoo to take the lead in the youth and wahoo category. “Petrel” also hung on to the dolphin category, with Thursday’s 30.4-lb. catch. “Second Love III’s” 49.5 lb. yellowfin tuna also held up as did “Rascals” lead in the female angling category, Ms Ann Brady-Moore’s 20.7 lb dolphin. “Summer Girl” ended up tagging a total of 29 dolphin and 1 wahoo, while “Petrel” tagged five dolphin. Congratulations to “Lock n’ Load”, they are our new series leader.

The food and music were great. Thanks to Damien Zanetti, Brian Richardson, Julian Clark, and when he wasn’t fishing, Josh Kennedy, and all the staff at Bohicket for hosting a wonderful event.

Lock n’ Load wins at Bohicket

Tuna caught aboard the “Micabe” owned by Mike Larrow

Tom interviews Bohicket tournament participant Louie parrot
SOUTH CAROLINA DOLPHIN TAGGING STUDY

The SC Dolphin Tagging Study is now entering its third year of research into the movements and migrations of dolphin-fish found off the US East Coast and in the Northern Caribbean. With over 1,700 dolphin tagged and 34 tagged-fish recovered, the project has been an overwhelming success.

This research project is unique in several respects. Even though the subject of the research, dolphin, is managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the project receives no federal funds. It is paid for by grants from the SC Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series’ Pate Memorial Fund and the SC Saltwater Recreational Fishing License Fund along with donations from sportfishing clubs, individual anglers and businesses in the sportfishing industry. Another item that makes it unique is that the project relies on private fishermen along the entire eastern seaboard to serve as the primary work force to tag fish for the study.

Public support for this project that focuses on the most popular bluewater gamefish has been nothing short of phenomenal. Over 700 offshore anglers, most of them boat owners, have volunteered to tag dolphin for the program. Anglers and even sportfishing clubs from Nantucket, MA to Key West, FL have volunteered to aid the research into the dolphin’s life history. For the first time, dolphin were tagged and released from Key West to Nantucket and even in the eastern Bahamas.

With a Shimano Tiagra 50 on a Star Standup Rod as incentive awards going to the individual angler, private boat and charter boat tagging the most dolphin in 2003, the tagging activity was very serious among participants. The top five individual anglers tagged over 400 fish collectively while the top five private boats were responsible for tagging more than 500 dolphin. Chester Kalb of Key West won the top private boat award having tagged 177 dolphin. Justin Brown of Pembroke Pines, FL captured the top angler award by tagging and releasing 105 fish. Fish tagged by these two individuals accounted for 33 percent of the recaptures in 2003. Top charter boat honors went to Grady Williams’ boat Plumb Krazy out of Charleston for tagging 29 dolphin. It was the Hightower brother’s boat, Triple Play out of Charleston that was the top SC boat in tagging dolphin having marked 74 fish during the 2003 season.

The studies’ recoveries have answered many questions about dolphin behavior. Three recoveries clearly show that some fish will linger in an area for at least three weeks during their spring migration northward. Five recoveries have shown that fish found off our coast do move into the Mid-Atlantic Bight traveling at least as far north as Long Island, NY. Other recoveries have confirmed that the dolphin found off Hatteras in June were the same ones found in the Florida Straits and off South Florida four to six weeks earlier. The most remarkable movement was a fish tagged in the Florida Keys and recovered 93 days later off the New Jersey shore, 995 miles to the north. This is the longest movement ever noted for a dolphin. It is particularly impressive when you learn that it started the trip as a 10-inch fork length schoolie. Fish recaptured in 2002 averaged being free for 38 days during which time they traveled 266 miles to the north. Recoveries in 2003 were more abbreviated with the average liberty period being 25 days with the fish traveling 233 miles northward. The longest liberty period, 152 days, was a fish marked off Charleston, SC that traveled to the waters off Long Island, NY being recovered near the end of October. Speed of travel varied widely among the recoveries. The fastest traveler logged in 43.6 miles per day during a six-day sprint northward. In the opposite corner, a rather laid-back individual cruised along at only 0.6 miles per day over a three-week period.

Looking at the pool of dolphin recoveries, we see an interesting harvest pattern developing. Anglers off the Florida coast have been responsible for the recapture of 48% of the tagged-fish recoveries. The second highest recovery rate was found off North Carolina where 30% of the recaptures have come from. Only 3% of the recoveries have come from the Georgia coast while South Carolina has accounted for 9% of the tagged-dolphin recaptured. Only 10 percent of the recoveries have been reported from the Mid-Atlantic Bight.

Tagging results in 2002 and 2003 provided much insight into the life of dolphin-fish, but the study is raising as many new questions as it is answering about this magnificent gamefish. With the support of all the volunteers, the project hopes to see a record number of dolphin tagged in 2004 with the resulting recoveries providing that so-important information that will contribute to better management of the stocks.

For more information on the South Carolina Dolphin Tagging Study visit the project’s website at www.dolphin tagging.homestead.com or call Don Hammond at (843) 953-9847.

Written by Don Hammond
SC GOVERNOR’S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES LEADERS (AFTER BOHICKET, 2004)

Outstanding Billfish Boat
Points: 1 Blue released, 325 pts
Boat: Lock n’ Load
Owner: Skipper Jellison
Captain: Skipper Jellison

Outstanding Dolphin
Weight: 40.7 lbs.
Boat: Rapid Pace
Owner: SHSR Enterprises
Angler: Teddy Thornhill

Outstanding Yellowfin Tuna
Weight: 49.5 lbs
Boat: Second Love III
Owner: Swygert Shipyards
Angler: Robbie Renken

Outstanding Wahoo
Weight: 47.4 lbs
Boat: Ricochet
Owner: East Bay Charters
Angler: Lee Anderson

Outstanding Youth Angler
Fish: 45 lb. Wahoo
Boat: Petrel
Owner: Harry Johnson
Angler: Rob Johnson

Outstanding Lady Angler
Fish: 34 lb Dolphin
Boat: Hot Rod Blue
Owner: Steve Wallace
Angler: Kathie Hunter

Blue Water Conservation
Points: 1 Tuna, 43 Dolphin and 1 wahoo (tagged), 2400 pts
Boat: Summer Girl
Owner: Smith, Leasure, & Kelly
Captain: Charles Aimar

Outstanding Billfish - open

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 S.C. Department of Natural Resources’ Law Enforcement Division is responsible for enforcing coastal recreational and commercial boating/fishing regulations.