



TAG & RELEASE

Volume 10, No. 4 October 2005

18TH ANNUAL SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE...

- April 20-23** *Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- May 17-20** *39th Annual Georgetown Landing Marina Tournament*
Contact: Ricky Ferdon
P.O. Box 1704
Georgetown SC 29442
843-546-1776 FAX 843-546-7832
- May 31-June 3** *Charleston Harbor Boater's World Marine Centers
Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- June 14-17** *Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Bryan Richardson OR Deidre Menefee - see above
1880 Andell Bluff Blvd.
Johns Island SC 29455
843-768-1280 FAX 843-768-3481
- June 28-30** *HMY/Viking MegaDock Tournament*
July 1 *Contact:* K.C. Rennie
P.O. Box 759
Charleston SC 29402
843-577-7702 FAX 843-577-7704

For more information contact:

Tom DuPré
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!

MEGADOCK 2005

Billed as the only event in the Series to offer the "MegaMillion Dollar" prize for a new state record The HMY-Viking MegaDock Billfishing Tournament got off to a great start under cloudy, humid, but calm conditions. Over the previous two weeks, the bite had been on and there were numerous reports of billfish being released. What remained to be seen was if the fish were still going to be there at tournament time.

As we entered this final event, "Chicora" was the overall Series leader with 1064 pts. "Rascal" trailed by 298 points, needing a blue on the line to overtake the leader. The spread for 3rd through 7th was a lot closer. A blue for "Game On" would put them in second; however a white marlin or better by any of the 4th through 7th place boats would rapidly move them into contention. The other category to keep an eye on was for outstanding yellowfin tuna. All of the tuna landed so far had been small with the leader at only 35 lbs. This was certainly a vulnerable category. In addition, any youth angler releasing a white or blue could take over in that category.

The 18 boats that went out on Day One saw plenty of fish. One blue and 9 sails were caught. One of the sails was released with a satellite tag. "Syked Out", "My Time Out" and "Rookie IV" came back with double headers in



"A lot of bull"



One of many at the MegaDock.

the sailfish category. “My Three Sons” released a blue and “Caramba”, “High Maintenance”, “Hot Rod Blue” each released sails.

Day Two will probably set some type of record if someone has the time to go back and look at the historical catch data. “Incredible”, “unbelievable”, “never seen such a bite” were common expressions on the dock that afternoon. Forty-five boats fished on Friday and they caught and released 34 sailfish, 8 blue and 3 white marlin and missed many more! Some of the noteworthy catches that day were: “Blue Boy” fishing their first tournament and catching 2 blues and a sail for 700 points; “Houdini” with 1 blue and 3 sails for 600 points; and “Petrel” with 1 blue and 2 sails for 500 points. With almost everyone catching and releasing fish, the Series leader board took some big hits. “Rascal”, capturing a blue and a sail to give them 1357 points, pulled ahead of “Chicora”. Unfortunately “Chicora” with 1089 points failed to land a bill. “Houdini”, “Top Billing” and “Petrel”, who were in the 14th, 13th and 15th slots in the Series, now jumped into 3rd, 4th, and 5th place.

Every boat that could, fished on Satur-

day. It was hot and humid on the docks as the boats rolled back in with catch and release flags flying. It had been another exceptional day. Another 19 sails, 3 blues and 5 whites were released. “Chicora”, with lady angler Linda Foster, took over in that category with a released blue marlin and racked up 300 more points (1389 total), but a sailfish kept “Rascal” in the lead (1457 points) making them the overall Series winner and Best Billfishing Boat for 2005. “Petrel” caught another sail and a white putting them in third place for the Series and giving them the MegaDock tournament win. They also took the Billfish Conservation Award for releasing 2 blue marlin, 3 sails and 1 white. Not settling for those, they took the Blue Water Conservation award for tagging and releasing 34 dolphin. Shannon Seabrook, fishing aboard “Hot Shot” caught the tournament’s top dolphin at 55.8 pounds. “Hot Rod Blue” and Benjamin Boyd took top wahoo with a 57.0 pound fish. Hew King, aboard “My Three Sons”, won for a 23.4 pound yellowfin. The outstanding lady angler was Linda Foster, on “Chicora” for her blue marlin release. “Chicora” won the lady angler category in three straight tournaments. First place youth angler Blake Shannon on “Houdini”, second place Dixon Pearce III on “Blue Heaven”, and third place Pat Turbeville on “Bill Fishin’” all released sailfish.

The MegaDock was certainly one of our most exciting tournaments and a great finale to the Series. Even Governor Mark Sanford got into the action, fishing aboard the “Aggressor” with his children. The fish were there, the bite was on and the leader board was in constant flux. In total, 82 billfish includ-



The future is here!

ing 62 sails, 12 blues and 8 whites were caught and all released alive by the 57 boats participating. This is the most fish caught in a single event since the 1999 Charleston Harbor tournament when 88 billfish were landed. Thanks to Robbie Freeman, K. C. Rennie, and all the other fine folks at the Charleston City Marina for a memorable event.

WAYNE MOVES ON

Wayne Waltz began his career 32 years ago at the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department as a fisheries technician. With a BS in Marine Biology from the College of Charleston he started work in the early 70’s working with the commercial blue crab industry and working on a project studying hard clams. He was able to participate in the early MARMAP sand bottom cruises and soon became experienced in offshore data collection and species identification. During the late 70’s and early 80’s he worked with a Mariculture program as a marine biologist doing hatchery and grow out work rearing Malaysian prawns (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*). He later began doing offshore ground fish trawl and trap surveys with the MARMAP



“Petrel” takes first place in the MegaDock and third place in the Series.

program. He worked extensively in the area of age, growth and reproductive biology examining many species in the South Atlantic snapper grouper complex. It was during this period that he went back to school and earned an MA in Biology from the Citadel. In the late 80's he helped form the Division's recreational fishery dependent data collection program. He worked extensively with the NMFS Marine Recreational Fishery Statistical Survey (MRFSS) and later helped develop the SC State Fishing Survey to supplement data from the MRFSS. More recently he began coordinating Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) and NMFS grants for the Marine Division of SCDNR and was later named Assistant Director of the Office of Fisheries Management supervising the Fisheries Statistics, Finfish Management and Environmental Evaluations Programs. He helped develop and coordinate the Division's Saltwater License Program, including the annual art contest, which uses funds from the sale of the SC saltwater fishing license to fund programs similar to SFR. In the middle 90's he began directing and coordinating the SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series, which promotes catch and release of offshore blue water species. Over his career he has worked with a variety of saltwater commercial and recreational species and fishermen. During his tenure, he worked as the coordinator of the "Employee of the Year" program and the SCDNR uniform committee. He was the first to use the shrimp baiting file and saltwater license files to conduct mail surveys. Some of his more recent accomplishments include:

1996 – Successfully reached a consensus regarding adjustments to size and bag limits for spotted seatrout. Findings were made available in an issues paper entitled "Evaluation of Management Options for spotted seatrout in SC". These recommendations were later acted upon by the SC General Assembly who changed the law to implement the new limits.

1999 - Worked with an ad-hoc committee of recreational and commercial shrimpers to reach a consensus regarding the recreational shrimp baiting fishery and made three recommendations to address problems in the fishery. The results were writ-

ten in a report entitled "Report on the process, deliberations and outcomes of the 1999 ad-hoc shrimp baiting committee". Two of these recommendations were later acted on by the SC General Assembly and the recommendations became law.

2001 – Worked with fishing clubs, the Coastal Conservation Association, and recreational fishermen to gain grass roots support for an increase in the fee for our saltwater fishing license and the establishment of resident and non-resident licenses. We were able to demonstrate how the funds had been used to promote saltwater fishing and the resources fishermen target. This information was provided to the SC General Assembly, who made the increase into law, creating an additional \$500K in revenues coming to the Department.

2002-Present - Editor and main author of the "Tag and Release" newsletter. Published 5 times a year, with a circulation of approximately 1500 billfishing enthusiasts in the South Atlantic

Wayne is also an avid saltwater fisherman, he loves to hunt and is a PADI certified SCUBA diver. Wayne reported to his new job on Monday August 8, 2005 as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist and will be working with the USFWS Federal Aid program in Atlanta. He is excited about the opportunity to work in Federal Aid and is looking forward to working more closely with the States to assist them with their grant activities. He can be reach at 404 679-4147 or wayne_waltz@fws.gov.

A GRAND FINALE

The South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series awards ceremony was held September 18 at the Governor's Mansion. The setting was fantastic and full of history and antiques. The mansion staff, Katherine Haltiwanger in particular, really showed off this beautiful house. The chef and his co-workers served a beautiful and absolutely delicious bill-of-fare. From oysters on the half shell and cracked crab claws, to tenderloin, to cheeses, to chocolates, I don't think anyone was disappointed. Mrs. Sanford said that it was too hot to present the awards outside, so everything was set up inside. Thank you Mrs. Sanford! Thanks, also, to Nan and Wally Jenkins and my wife Meri for setting up the trophy and awards display. The guests began arriving shortly before 5 o'clock and were greeted on the front porch by Ginnie Martin, Carol Moskos, and Rose Marie Scheibler. As they entered the mansion, the First Lady met and welcomed them to the awards ceremony.

For the next hour or so, we ate and talked. Almost everyone had a chance to speak with the Governor. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, and there were lively conversations in every room.

At 6:15 we all gathered near the grand piano for the awards presentations. Governor Sanford spoke for a few minutes about the Governor's Cup and its contributions to conservation and then introduced Advisory Board chairman John Darby. Prior to presenting the awards, John asked Mike Campbell to come up. Mike is the son of former governor and Series founder Carroll A. Campbell, Jr. He spoke of his father's love of offshore fishing and how much the Series meant to him. His efforts will be with us for

Series winners Norman Pulliam, Corky Taylor and crew of "Rascal" receive the Outstanding Billfish, Outstanding Billfish Boat and 2005 Shootout Team Awards.



generations. We thank him for sharing his father's thoughts with us.

Past Advisory Board chairman Bobby Hood, recently retired Program Director Wayne Waltz, and soon-to-be retired Board Administrative Assistant Ginnie Martin were presented awards for dedicated service. John and the Governor presented the Series awards in a program filled with a lot of applause, a lot of smiles and laughter, and a lot of picture taking. Congratulations to all the individual tournament and Series winners.

It was one of the best and most enjoyable Series finales in years. Governor and Mrs. Sanford were most gracious and accommodating, and we thank them. Hopefully, they will let us come back.

The Series is a huge event. It takes a great many people and a lot of effort to make it work. Many thanks to the SCDNR Director Mr. John Frampton, the SCDNR Board and its chairman Mr. Mike McShane, the Deputy Director for



Frank Foster and the crew of "Chicora"-2005 Shootout Team.

Marine Resources Mr. Robert Boyles, and the Director of the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund Mr. Sam Hiott. Your continued support is appreciated.

Without the dedicated efforts of the Advisory Board of Directors and the Tournament Committee, the Series would not happen. Next time you see any of these fine folks, let them know how much you appreciate their hard work.

Nan and I appreciate the courtesies shown by the boat owners, captains, and crews during the 2005 season. We look forward to working with all of you in 2006.

My personal thanks go out to Nan Jenkins, Ginnie Martin, Vanessa Geddis, Karen Swanson, Betty Burn, Kris Reynolds, Amy Dukes,



Linda Foster receives her Outstanding Lady Angler Award from Governor Sanford for her blue marlin caught on "Chicora".



Boggs Howard, owner Steve Timmons and crew receive the Outstanding Wahoo Award for "At Ease".



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Brent Merritt, Dean Cain, and Flip Werner. I still call Wayne in Atlanta a few times a week for guidance. And last but not least, I thank my wife Meri, the value of whose support is incalculable. My job would be impossible without them. Thank you.



SCDNR's Ginnie Martin, with Governor Sanford and SCDNR Director John Frampton, is presented with a special recognition award.



Arthur Swygert receives a 2004 Shootout Team Award for "Second Love III".



Jeff Billings and Captain Bobby Garmany of "Top Billing" - 2005 Shootout Team.



SC GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES 2005 INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

Outstanding Billfish Boat

Points: 1 Blue landed - 881.8 lbs.
1 Blue & 2 Sailfish
released, 1456.8 pts

Boat: *Rascal*
Owner: Norman F. Pulliam
Captain: Mark Rogers

Outstanding Billfish

Conservationist
Points: 2 Blues, 1 White and 3
Sail (released), 1125 pts

Boat: *Petrel*
Owner: Harry L. Johnson, Jr.
Captain: Thomas Wynne

Blue Water Conservation

Points: 34 Dolphin (tagged)
1700 pts

Boat: *Petrel*
Owner: Harry Johnson Jr.
Captain: Thomas Wynne

Outstanding Billfish

Weight: Blue marlin, 881.8 lbs
Boat: *Rascal*
Owner: Norman Pulliam
Angler: Corky Taylor
Captain: Mark Rogers

Outstanding Dolphin

Weight: 65.7 lbs
Boat: *C-Dog*
Owner: Charlie Yeomans III
Angler: Earl Johnson

Outstanding Yellowfin Tuna

Weight: 35.0 lbs
Boat: *Guston IV*
Owner: Dennis Lee
Angler: Alexis Lee

Outstanding Wahoo

Weight: 79.4 lbs
Boat: *At Ease*
Owner: Steve Timmons
Angler: Boggs Howard

Outstanding Youth Angler

Fish: Sailfish released
Boat: *Double Billed*
Owner: Freddie Hyatt
Angler: Chip Wall

Outstanding Lady Angler

Fish: 1 Blue landed, 563.5 lbs.
Boat: *Chicora*
Owner: Frank Foster
Angler: Linda Foster

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Many thanks to offshore anglers Fran and Bryan Gulski for their generous donation to help defray costs incurred producing the SC billfish certificates. These certificates are sent to all anglers reporting billfish catches in SC waters. Thank them when you see them.

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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.