



TAG & RELEASE

Volume 8, No. 4 August 2003

15TH ANNUAL SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE...

- April 30-
May 3** ***Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Susie Bost
3702 Docksite Rd.
Edisto Beach SC 29438
843-869-3504 FAX 843-869-3738
- May 14-17** ***Bohicket Invitational Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Damien Zanetti
1880 Andell Bluff Blvd.
Johns Island SC 29455
843-768-1280 FAX 843-768-3481
- May 28-31** ***Georgetown Landing Blue Marlin Tournament***
Contact: Ricky Ferdon
P.O. Box 1704
Georgetown SC 29442
843-546-1776 FAX 843-546-7832
- July 9-12** ***HMY - Viking Charleston Harbor
Marina Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369
FAX 843-406-4775

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!

"SPECIAL LADY" WINS CHARLESTON TOURNAMENT IN GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES

The 15th Annual South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series wrapped up its last of four tournaments, the Charleston Harbor Marina Resort Billfish Tournament.

As for the Charleston Harbor tournament, "Those folks put on a wonderful event including a super facility, service and people, making this a top-notch final tournament for the South Carolina Governor's Cup Series" said Tom DuPré of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, who coordinates the tournament series.

No billfish were brought back to the docks at this tournament. A total of 40 billfish were tagged and released during the tournament including six blue marlin, one white marlin and 33 sailfish. Two blue marlin were released without tags. Of the 93 boats that participated in the tournament, 85 boats fished two of the three days. Friday fishing was canceled due to a Small Craft Advisory.

"Special Lady," owned by Ed Kosnik of Columbus, OH captured the Best Billfish Boat award with 500 points for one tagged blue marlin and two tagged sailfish. The angler of the blue marlin was Randy Brown of Mount Pleasant, and the anglers of the sailfish were Park Smith of Charleston and Andy Giannelli of Mount Pleasant.

"Rapid Pace," owned by Trey Banks and Sam Schrimmer of Mount Pleasant, also finished with 500 points for a blue marlin and two sailfish, but its blue marlin was tagged after "Special Lady" tagged their blue marlin. The angler of the blue marlin was Steve Crosby of Mount Pleasant, and Ken-



Deidre Menefee with the crew of "Summer Girl".

neth Nelson of Charleston was the angler for the 2 sailfish.

"Summer Girl," owned by John Smith of Walterboro, Steve Leasure of Charleston and Dean Kelly of Folly Beach came in third in the tournament with 400 points for a tagged blue marlin and sailfish. Steve Leasure of Charleston was the angler on the blue marlin and the sailfish.

A 56.8-pound wahoo caught aboard "Big Kahuna," earned owner and angler Rhett Spencer of Florence the Biggest Wahoo Award.

The Biggest Tuna Award went to angler Steve Mungo of Edisto Island who reeled in a 49.8-pound yellowfin tuna aboard his boat, "Home Run."

As for the Biggest Dolphin Award, angler Justin Wooten caught a 48.5-pound dolphin aboard "Foolish Pleasure," owned by Benny Shirley of Camden.

The Outstanding Female Angler Award went to Lyn Tayloe of Myrtle Beach for the tag and release of a blue marlin aboard "Totally Hooked," owned by Cindy McDonald, also of Myrtle Beach.

The Outstanding Youth Angler Award went to 14-year-old Fran

Johnson of Sullivans Island for the tag and release of a sailfish aboard "Petrel IV," owned by Harry Johnson of Charleston.

Funds from each tournament are also used to support a broad range of marine fisheries research and conservation efforts each year.

The top five boats from the South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia Governor's Cup Series will be showcased in a prestigious, all-tag-and-release event called The Carolinas Shootout. The Shootout for the 2003 Governor's Cup Series will be held in the spring of 2004, and will be hosted by South Carolina.

For more information on the South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series contact Tom DuPré of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources by e-mail at dupret@mrd.dnr.state.sc.us, by phone at (843) 953-9365 or visit the website at <http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/govcup/govcup.html>.



Frank Gibson and the Series' "Outstanding Wahoo" caught aboard "My Time Out". We apologize to Frank for the mislabeled photo in Vol. 2.



HMY/Viking Charleston Harbor trophies.

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**GOVERNOR'S CUP/
HARRY HAMPTON
AWARDS BANQUET
AUGUST 16, 2003**

Everyone's invited! Join in the fun on August 16th, Passenger Terminal in Charleston at the end of Market Street. Help us recognize and congratulate our Series winners and honor them with beautiful hand carved trophies by Chris Costello. After that, there



will be good food, raffles, live auction, and entertainment, everything the Marine Conservation Banquet is noted

for. The best part is that everyone is invited. You don't have to be a Series winner to attend. Cost will be \$40 per couple, \$25 single in advance or higher if you pay at the door. Interested: make your check or money order payable to the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund and send to SC Governors Cup Program; PO 12559, Charleston, SC 29422; Attention: Wayne Waltz. Remember the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund is a non-profit, eleemosynary corporation.

**CIRCLE HOOKS (THE
GOOD, THE BAD AND
THE UGLY TRUTH)**

By Wayne Waltz

The Bad (Continued from Vol. 8, No. 3, June 2003)

With all the science done to date and the many accolades regarding this hook type, why are they not already in everyone's tackle box. The fact is when you switch to circle hooks you are doing more than just changing your terminal tackle. In order for this hook to work properly you must also change the way you were taught to fish. Since these hooks are self setting (listed as an advantage) you don't have to jerk the rod back to set the hook. In fact, doing so will likely end in a lost fish. In order to properly use these hooks you must be patient. After the fish picks up the hook, you need to wait and let the fish swim away from you, as the pressure on the line increases the hook will rotate in the fishes mouth and set itself. It also helps if the fish turns slightly as it moves away. This is one reason why seasoned anglers become frustrated with this hook and end up losing fish. It is ingrained in most of us that fish, that a tap tap on the line will automatically illicit an involuntary response to reel down and slam it home. Circle hooks offer the challenge of learning how to fish all over again, and for some it's a change that is hard to make.

Gap opening can also be a problem until you use them long enough to find the right hook for your fishing situa-

tions. Circle hooks have a smaller gap opening than "J" hooks. This means it can be difficult baiting the hook with larger baits. To compensate for this, some use larger hooks, which ultimately means less bait action for live baits. The gap opening is also critical and must not be obstructed by the bait if it is to work. In addition, it's important to use the right size circle hook. This has to be determined through experience depending on your line and bait and the species you are targeting. Smaller hooks may not hook larger fish, and if the hook is too big in relation to the size of the fish it can wind up deep hooking the fish.

Rigging live and natural (uncut) bait can also be a challenge. This hook works best when your whole (uncut) bait is on the outside of the hook, leaving the gap unobstructed. This means that in some cases you will need to find a way to bridle your bait to the hook. Most experienced circle hook fishermen suggest you bridle your bait in such a way that the hook ends up sitting on top of the bait. Some use monel or copper wire for this, in other cases running rigging twine or dental floss through the lips, eye sockets or head of the fish with a rigging needle allows the bait to be tied to the hook. The correct method for you will depend a lot on trial and error.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration is the fact that these hooks work best on fairly aggressive fish species. Fish that will grab your bait and then run with it. Fish that nibble and suck the bait rather than gulp are not good targets for circle hooks. Species like triggerfish and

sheepshead probably are not good candidates for circle hooks. Another concern has to do with the shape of the hook and the extra effort that may be needed to rig the bait. At some juncture the point will undoubtedly end up in your finger. And finally, it's difficult to document because of the lack of a comparable gauging system, but circle hooks do cost more than conventional hooks. Following are some additional comments about circle hooks and some of the problems anglers have had with them.

Pollack, R - "For bottom fishing they are great, but I'm not excited about them catching marlin...From a conservation perspective they are very attractive, but our hook up rate using circle hooks has been very poor".

Blue Water magazine - "The size of the hook relative to the size of the fish is very important, but how can anyone know what size fish is going to take the hook"

Sue and Jeri Drake - "One problem we did come up against is that the smaller hooks did not hook the larger fish".

Larry Danlberg - Sentinel Wire Services "Dick Sternberg, a noted writer and walleye expert isn't convinced circle hooks have broad applications. He used them last year while fishing for walleyes in a river and found himself missing nearly every strike "I had no luck whatsoever, I ended up taking my pliers and straightening the damn thing out". The problem was Sternberg was fishing a river where fish tend to orient themselves upstream. The circle hook works best on the premise that

The crowd at Edisto wait for the tournament results.



the fish picks up the bait and turns away from the angler. The other problem was that it was winter, when walleyes tend to be picky eaters. Circle hooks tend to work better on more aggressive fish. Perhaps the biggest problem with circle hooks is that they require more patience”.

Megabyte - “I have just had trouble with the hookups on flounder. I’ve pulled quite a few back to the boat only to have them spit the circles at me”.

J. Lucy - Summer Flounder coordinated studies in NY, VA and NC comparing “J”-hooks to circle hooks did not demonstrate that for this one species circle hooks do not appear to significantly improve post-release survival rate.

Rudy Lukacovic - ..”this means that unless a circle hook is fished properly, there is less chance of setting once a fish picks up the bait. Studies indicate that catching rate is slightly less with the circle hook configuration.

BengYong Tang - “Circle hooks work best for fish species which snatch the bait and swim away with it, as this gets the fish to hook itself. It works less well for fishes which suck at the bait or nibble it while it is stationary.”

Artmarina - “One reason the success rate on billfish using circle hook

pitch baiting is so high is that the fish is usually close enough to be seen and thus the appropriate time for tension can be accurately determined. Without being able to watch a fish feeding on far baits, more dropback is better than less”.

Seein Stripperswith small baits or fish that tend to gobble the bait very quickly, a circle hook will do exactly what any other hook will when swallowed, hook the fish’s throat or stomach tissue. I documented two days last year when we landed seven and eight big strippers, all over 20 lbs and three fish each day got it in the gut.

Russ Symons - “Quite rough conditions. Big tide ebbing. Fished for wrasse on a local reef, again using circle hooks size 1/0. Today...mainly smaller fish 2.5 lbs, repeatedly swallowed the circle hooks right down to the stomach. Only 1 fish out of 5 was lip hooked. Bites felt tentative- gentle nibbles.....unable to clearly feel the weight of the fish come onto the line due to the rough swell. Maybe these conditions are those when circle

hooks are not at their best”.

Seein Strippers: If you’ve fished with circle hooks, you’ve had one in your finger. They are a cross between a steel-jaw bear leghold trap and a Chinese finger trap. It will definitely demonstrate to you the power of the circle.”

The Ugly TRUTH

Circle Hooks are not a cure for all the post release mortality problems of the world, but they do work well for certain methods of fishing and with certain species. They should be in everyone’s tackle box and everyone should experiment with them. They will require more patience than you are probably used too and a change in your fishing technique. They may require you to adjust how you rig your live, dead and cut baits (The jury is still out on how effective they are in combination with an artificial lure). You will find them most useful when targeting aggressive game fish, like red drum, strippers, bluefin tuna, sharks, snappers and groupers. They work well in bottom fishing, drift fish-



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ing and slow trolling. They work well when used as a pitch bait for billfish. You may find them very useful as a "switch bait" if you end up catching undersized gamefish and find they are being gut hooked, be prepared to switch hooks and see if you can detect any improvements. As more and more anglers experiment with this hook and begin thinking about using good catch and release practices and as the hook manufacturers develop other styles and hook/lure combinations that can be used with circle hooks under more high speed trolling conditions, we should ultimately see better catches and higher survival rates for our released fish, which will ultimately mean better fishing for the future.

(THE LAST) NOT SO FAMOUS FISHING/FISHY QUOTES AND PALINDROMES (MOTIVATIONAL AND INSPIRATIONAL)

compiled by Charlie Boykin

Fishing is a delusion entirely surrounded by liars in old clothes... Don Marquis
Something fishy this way comes... Anonamous

Here Fishy Fishy Fishy...Anonamous
and finally our Palindrome of the week
I ham, I ham, yum — muy "mahi mahi!"

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**2003
SC GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING
SERIES WINNERS**

<u>Top Boats</u>	<u>Totals</u>
<i>Summer Girl</i>	1100
<i>Totally Hooked</i>	794.4
<i>ReeSea</i>	686.0
<i>Special Lady</i>	575
<i>Rapid Pace</i>	525
<i>Dem Boyz</i>	500

Outstanding Billfish Boat

Points: 1100
Boat: *Summer Girl*
Owner: Smith, Leasure, & Kelly
Captain: Charles Aimar

Outstanding Billfish Conservationist

Points: 1100
2 Blue Marlin, 1 Sailfish T&R
Boat: *Summer Girl*
Owner: Smith, Leasure, & Kelly
Captain: Charles Aimar

Blue Water Conservation

Points: 1550
4 Tuna, 23 Dolphin T&R
Boat: *Summer Girl*
Owner: Smith, Leasure, & Kelly
Captain: Charles Aimar

Outstanding Billfish

Fish: Blue Marlin, 586.0 lbs
Boat: *ReeSea*
Owner: John Kornegay
Angler: Richard Avant

Outstanding Dolphin

Weight: 59.9 lbs
Boat: *Insane-O*
Owner: Denton Williams Jr.
Angler: Meg Williams

Outstanding Yellowfin Tuna

Weight: 55.4 lbs
Boat: *Legal Holiday*
Owner: Fred Bergen
Angler: Eugenie Barrow

Outstanding Wahoo

Weight: 64.4 lbs
Boat: *My Time Out*
Owner: Frank Gibson
Angler: Frank Gibson

Outstanding Youth Angler

Fish: Sailfish T&R
Boat: *Petrel IV*
Owner: Harry Johnson
Angler: Fran Johnson

2nd Place Youth Angler

Fish: Sailfish T&R
Boat: *Paradox*
Owner: John Hood
Angler: Garrett Sloan

3rd Place Youth Angler

Fish: Dolphin, 57.6 lbs
Boat: *ReeSea*
Owner: John Kornegay
Angler: John Kornegay III

Outstanding Lady Angler

Fish: Blue Marlin, 444.4 lbs, Blue Marlin T&R
Boat: *Totally Hooked*
Owner: Cindy McDonald
Angler: Lyn Tayloe

2nd Place Lady Angler

Fish: White Marlin T&R
Boat: *Big Sky*
Owner: Jim Johnston
Angler: Anne Johnston

3rd Place Lady Angler

Fish: Sailfish T&R
Boat: *Sea Fix*
Owner: Robbie Johnson
Angler: Beverly Mebane

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