



TAG & RELEASE

Volume 10, No. 1 February 2005

17TH 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 4-7** *Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Bryan Richardson
1880 Andell Bluff Blvd.
Johns Island SC 29455
843-768-1280 FAX 843-768-3481
- May 18-21** *38th Annual Georgetown Landing Marina Tournament*
Contact: Ricky Ferdon
P.O. Box 1704
Georgetown SC 29442
843-546-1776 FAX 843-546-7832
- June 1-4** *Charleston Harbor Billfish Tournament*
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- June 29-30** *MegaDock Tournament*
July 1-2 *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!

2005 SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES SCHEDULE

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources announces the schedule for the 2005 South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series. The Series will be composed of five tournaments along the coast beginning April 20 at Edisto Island and ending June 29 at the Charleston City Marina's MegaDock Billfishing Tournament. The Series is entering its 17th year.

"The 2005 series will be more exciting than ever," said Tom DuPré of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, who coordinates the Series. "The competition level continues to rise. Less than 265 points separated first and fifth place last year, and 41 boats earned points for releasing billfish."

The Governor's Cup Board of Directors has made "tagging" an optional part of the tournament series. "Points can be accumulated for properly catching and releasing billfish, so tagging is no longer required to receive release points," DuPré said. "We are still encouraging anglers to tag tuna, dolphin and wahoo as part of the bluewater conservation endeavor, and to help support on-going studies of these species."

The Series strongly encourages the release of both billfish and other gamefish. "The Governor's Cup Billfishing Series encourages the catch and release of blue marlin, white marlin and sailfish, as well as tuna, dolphin and wahoo," DuPré said.

"The Governor's Cup encourages family participation and conservation of our ocean's resources," DuPré said. "By awarding points for the release of fish, the Series rewards anglers who properly land and release these valuable species, while at the same time promoting the South

Carolina sportfishing industry, coastal tourism and the coastal economy.”

The Series has become a model program for other states and countries and has inspired an increasing number of saltwater anglers to tag and release fish of all species and sizes.

Before the Series began in 1989, virtually all billfish caught were brought back to the docks. “The conservation ethic embraced by the anglers during the 2004 Series was evident, with a 95 percent live release rate,” DuPré said. “A total of 58 billfish were released during the Series including 19 blue marlin, 13 white marlin and 26 sailfish. Eleven fish were tagged before being released, and only three blue marlin were brought to the docks to be weighed throughout the entire Series. This high release rate significantly contributing to the future of our billfish populations,”

“We appreciate the generous support of our major sponsors including Cummins Mercruiser, Cummins Atlantic, Wachovia Wealth Management, HMY Yacht Sales, W. W. Williams, our Board of Directors and others. The Series has made great strides to increase awareness and help conserve numerous important species through its emphasis on catch and release,” DuPré said.

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

Tournament dates and contacts for the 2005 South Carolina Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series are: April 20-23 Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament (contact: Deidre Menefee, 19 Forde Row, Charleston, SC 29412, (843) 345-0369, Fax (843) 406-4813, dpmenefee@aol.com); May 4-7 Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament (contact: Bryan Richardson, 1880 Andell Bluff Blvd., Johns Island, SC 29455, (843) 768-1280, Fax (843) 768-3481, bomarina@bellsouth.net); May 18-21 38th Annual Georgetown Landing Marina Blue Marlin Tournament (contact: Ricky Ferdon, PO Box 1704, Georgetown, SC 29442, (843) 546-1776, Fax (843) 546-7832, glmarina@sc.rr.com, www.georgetownlandingmarina.com); June 1-4 Charleston Harbor Billfish Tournament (contact: Deidre Menefee, 19 Forde Row, Charleston, SC 29412, (843) 345-0369, Fax (843) 406-4813, dpmenefee@aol.com); June 29-July 2 MEGADOCK Billfishing

Tournament (contact: K. C. Rennie, PO Box 759, Charleston, SC 29402, (843) 577-7702, Fax (843) 577-7704, kcrennie@charlestoncitymarina.com).

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 or by phone at (843) 953-9365.

Visit the website at <http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/govcup/govcup.html> to learn more about the South Carolina Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series, and to keep up with the standings.

Written by Jennie R. Davis

BILLFISH NUMBERS AND SUCH

I thought you folks might be interested in some fish numbers we collected last year. Please bear in mind that these figures come from you. We talk to owners, captains, mates, anglers, marinas, dock hands, and just about anyone else who will talk to us. This is in addition to all the dockside interviews we conduct at the tournaments. I’ll start out with data collected at the tournaments. Numbers in parenthesis are the previous year’s totals.

A total of 126 (131) different boats fished the 2004 South Carolina Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series, and 41 (49) caught billfish. 83 (96) eligible fish were hooked, and 61 (68) were successfully landed. 3 (4) were brought to the dock, 11 (61) were tagged, and 47 (3) were released without tagging.

Of 40 (32) blue marlin hooked, 22 (22) were successfully landed. 3 (4) were brought to the dock. Those were caught by “Done Diggin’” (507.0), “Lady S” (506.5 disqualified), and “Game On” (412.0) 3 were tagged and released, and 16 were released without a tag. There were 16 (8) white marlin hooked and 13 (5) landed. 2 (5) were tagged and released and 11 (0) were released without tagging. 27 (50) sailfish were hooked and 26 (41) were landed. 6 (40) were tagged and 20 (1) were released without tagging. Crunching the numbers a little more shows that 55% of the blues

hooked, 81% of the whites hooked, and 96% of the sails hooked were landed. The overall release rate for fish landed in the Series exceeded 95%.

During the 2004 Series the following data were collected for tuna, dolphin, and wahoo:

44 (272) yellowfin tuna were reported caught, 28 of those were measured for length (37.7” avg.), and 27 were weighed (36.8 lbs. avg.). 2251 (1060) dolphin were reported, 975 measured (35.2” avg.), and 183 weighed (21.1 lbs. avg.). 90 (57) wahoo were reported, 56 measured (48.2” avg.), and 37 weighed (34.3 lbs. avg.).

Overall reported billfish catches for 2004, which include tournament and non-tournament fish, made it a below average year. Total blue marlin reported – 56 (54), white marlin – 33 (8), sailfish – 148 (170), and swordfish – 2 (3). Total – 239 (236). The 1995 to 2004 ten-year average is 302. Blue marlin numbers were up slightly and white marlin were up as much as sailfish were down from 2003 levels. “Top Billing” captained by Bobby Garmany reported 45 billfish released in SC waters in 2004. This is the highest single year total on record.

With 99 (112) boats reporting 239 (236) billfish, it works out to an average of 2.41 (2.11) per boat. Breaking this down further comes up with .57 (.49) blues, .33 (.07) whites, and 1.50 (1.53) sailfish per boat. 43 (48) boats reported multiple catches. The overall release rate for reported non-tournament billfish in SC was 98.5%.

Not included in the above totals are 3 fish tagged by 2 boats in non-SC waters.

If you caught billfish in SC waters in 2004 and have not received a state billfish certificate, please get in touch with me by phone at (843) 953-9365 or email at dupret@mrd.dnr.state.sc.us. Certificates are issued for landed, tagged, or released billfish. Postage paid release cards are available. If you tag billfish outside of SC waters using SCDNR tags, you are also eligible for a certificate. If you tag billfish in SC waters using tags from another program, you are still eligible for a SC certificate, but only if you report it to the SCDNR.

NEW DOLPHIN/ WAHOO PERMITS REQUIRED BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER

Reminder of Vessel Permit, Dealer Permit, and Vessel Operator Permit Card Requirements in the Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery in Federal Waters of the Atlantic

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) reminds Atlantic (Maine through the east coast of Florida) dolphin-wahoo commercial vessel owners and operators, charter vessel/headboat owners and operators, and dealers of new federal permit requirements approved under the Fishery Management Plan for the Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic (FMP). The FMP was developed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC), in cooperation with the Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils.

Charter Vessel/Headboat Permits, Effective September 24, 2004: To possess a dolphin or wahoo in or from Atlantic federal waters on board a charter vessel or headboat, a dolphin-wahoo charter vessel/headboat permit must have been issued by the Southeast Region of NOAA Fisheries and be on board that vessel.

Commercial Vessel Permits, Effective September 24, 2004: For a person aboard a vessel to be eligible for exemption from the dolphin-wahoo bag and possession limits in or from Atlantic federal waters or to sell such dolphin or wahoo, a dolphin-wahoo commercial vessel permit must have been issued by the Southeast Region of NOAA Fisheries and be on board that vessel. An owner of a charter vessel or headboat who desires to sell dolphin will be required to obtain a dolphin-wahoo commercial vessel permit in addition to the charter vessel/headboat permit.

If you wish to add the dolphin-wahoo charter vessel/headboat and/or commercial permit types to a vessel that is currently federally permitted by the Southeast Region, you must return a written request (no application) with a

check or money order made payable to the U.S. Treasury (\$20 for each additional permit type) to NOAA Fisheries, Permits Branch, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702. If you instead wish to add either the dolphin-wahoo charter vessel/headboat and/or commercial permit types to a vessel that is not currently federally permitted by the Southeast Region, you must complete a new vessel permit application available from NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region, Permits Branch or at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

Dealer Permits, Effective September 24, 2004: An Atlantic dolphin-wahoo dealer must obtain a dealer permit issued by the Southeast Region of NOAA Fisheries. "Dealer" is defined as a person who first receives fish by way of purchase, barter, or trade, or who first receives dolphin or wahoo harvested from Atlantic federal waters upon transfer ashore.

If you wish to add the dolphin-wahoo dealer permit type and already have other dealer permits issued by the Southeast Region, you must return a written request (no application) with a check or money order made payable to the U.S. Treasury (\$25 for the additional permit) to NOAA Fisheries, Permits Branch, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702. If you instead wish to obtain a dolphin-wahoo dealer permit but have no other dealer permits issued by the Southeast Region, you must complete a new dealer permit application available from NOAA Fisheries, Permits Branch, or at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

Charter Vessel/Headboat/Commercial Vessel Operator Permits Cards, Effective November 23, 2004: An operator of a commercial vessel, charter vessel, or headboat that is required to have a federal dolphin-wahoo vessel permit must have and display an operator permit card issued by the NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Region. The FMP proposed the operator permit card requirement to enhance enforcement of fishery regulations. An operator permit card issued by the NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Region for the Fisheries of the Northeastern United States or for the American Lobster Fishery do not meet the Atlantic dolphin-wahoo operator permit card requirement. You must

also obtain an operator permit card for Atlantic dolphin-wahoo from the NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Region.

NOAA Fisheries is in the process of revising regulations to allow the issuance of a single operator permit card for use in applicable Northeast and Southeast fisheries. Until those regulations are revised, an operator permit card issued by the Southeast Region is valid for any fishery for which the Southeast Region requires an operator permit card (i.e., South Atlantic rock shrimp and/or Atlantic dolphin-wahoo). Operator permit card applications are available from NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region, Permits Branch, or at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and require two recent color, unobstructed passport size photos no more than one year old, and a \$50 check or money order made payable to the U.S. Treasury.

Completed application forms and all required supporting documents, or add-on permit requests, must be submitted to NOAA Fisheries at least 30 days prior to the date on which you wish to have the permit made effective. For further information on how to obtain a vessel permit, dealer permit, or operator permit card from the Southeast Region, contact the NOAA Fisheries, Permits Branch, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, St. Petersburg, FL, 33702, or by phone at 727-570-5326 between 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., eastern time, Monday through Friday.

This and other news releases are available on the Southeast Regional Office homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>. NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Department of Commerce.

Note: This information is taken from a NOAA Fishery Bulletin.

For additional information contact:

Robert Sadler
727-570-5326
FAX 727-570-5490
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>
OR
Kim Iverson
Public Information Officer
(843) 571-4366



REMEMBERING LAST YEAR



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SC GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES 2004 WINNERS

Outstanding Billfish Boat

Points: 2 Blues, (1 released, 1 landed at 412 lbs.: 2 sails released), 987 pts

Boat: *Game On*

Owner: Sea Hunt Boats

Captain: Richard Brackett

Outstanding Billfish Conservationist

Points: 2 Blues, 1 Sail released, 775 pts

Boat: *Golden Lady*

Owner: Chris Morris

Captain: Chris Morris

Blue Water Conservation

Points: 1 Tuna, 101 Dolphin and 1 wahoo (tagged), 5300 pts

Boat: *Summer Girl*

Owner: Smith, Leasure, & Kelly

Captain: Charles Aimar

Outstanding Billfish

Weight: Blue marlin, 507 lbs

Boat: *Done Diggin'*

Owner: Jim Brewer

Angler: Brad Brewer

Outstanding Dolphin

Weight: 40.7 lbs

Boat: *Rapid Pace*

Owner: SHSR Enterprises

Angler: Teddy Thornhill

Outstanding Yellowfin Tuna

Weight: 70.9 lbs

Boat: *Top Billing*

Owner: Top Billing Enterprises

Angler: Rob Montgomery

Outstanding Wahoo

Weight: 57.6 lbs

Boat: *Triple Play*

Owner: Art, Jimmy & Bubba
Hightower

Angler: Kate Freeman

Outstanding Youth Angler

Fish: Wahoo

Boat: *Triple Play*

Owner: Art, Jimmy & Bubba
Hightower

Angler: Kate Freeman

Outstanding Lady Angler

Fish: 1 Blue released

Boat: *Paradox*

Owner: John Hood

Angler: Margaret Hood Mevers

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WALLACE F. PATE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The SC Governor's Cup Board of Director's is pleased to announce the establishment of the new Wallace F. Pate scholarship, which will be administered through the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund. To be eligible for this one time \$1,500 scholarship you must be a full time SC resident, a

senior in a public or private high school in SC and plan on attending an institution of higher learning in SC, pursuing a major in the Natural Resources arena. The deadline for applications is December 31, 2004. For more details and application information, visit www.hamptonwildlifefund.org

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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.