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TAG & RELEASE

Volume 12, No. 1 April 2007



CAROLINA FIRST

We take your banking personally.

20TH ANNUAL SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE...

- May 9-12** ***Edisto Marina Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- May 23-26** ***40th Annual Georgetown Blue Marlin Tournament***
Contact: Ricky Ferdon
P.O. Box 1704
Georgetown SC 29442
843-546-1776 FAX 843-546-7832
- June 27-30** ***Charleston Harbor Resort & Marina Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813
- July 11-14** ***HMY/Viking MEGADOCK Billfishing Tournament***
Contact: K.C. Rennie
P.O. Box 759
Charleston SC 29402
843-278-4914 FAX 843-577-7704
- July 25-28** ***Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament***
Contact: Deidre Menefee
19 Forde Row
Charleston SC 29412
843-345-0369 FAX 843-406-4813

For more information contact:

Tom DuPré
Office of Fisheries Management
843-953-9365 email: dupret@dnr.sc.gov
<http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/etc/govcup/govcup.html>

A RELEASE TODAY IS A FISH TOMORROW!
Fish Responsibly!

BILLFISH NUMBERS AND SUCH

I thought you folks might be interested in some fish numbers we have collected this 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 133 (137) different boats fished the 2006 South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series, and 78 (57) caught billfish. 336 (191) eligible fish were hooked, and 220 (127) were successfully landed. No eligible fish were brought to the dock, 12 (22) were tagged, and 208 (99) were released without tagging.

Of 135 (58) blue marlin hooked, 85 (32) were successfully landed. No eligible fish (6) were brought to the dock. 5 (9) were tagged and released, and 80 (17) were released without a tag. There were 96 (32) white marlin hooked and 54 (18) landed. 3 (4) were tagged and released and 51 (14) were released without tagging. 105 (101) sailfish were hooked and 81 (77) were landed. 4 (9) were tagged and 77 (68) were released without tagging. Crunching the numbers a little more shows that 63% (55%) of the blues hooked, 56% (56%) of the whites hooked, and 77% (76%) of the sails hooked were landed. The overall release rate for eligible billfish landed in the Series was 100% (95%).

During the 2006 Series the following data were collected for yellowfin tuna, dolphin, and wahoo:

49 (17) yellowfin tuna were reported caught, 27 of those were measured for length (38.7" avg.), and 21 were weighed (46.1 lbs. avg.). 1713 (1502) dolphin were reported, 649 measured (37.5"

avg.), and 213 weighed (24.9 lbs. avg.). 102 (91) wahoo were reported, 61 measured (49.6" avg.), and 63 weighed (38.1 lbs. avg.). All of the totals and averages are increases over 2005.

Overall reported billfish catches for 2006, which include tournament and non-tournament fish, make it a well above average year. Total blue marlin reported – 152 (57), white marlin – 96 (60), sailfish – 702 (445), and swordfish – 3 (9). Total – 953 (571). The 1996 to 2005 ten-year average is 339.

With 147 (132) boats reporting 953 (571) billfish, it works out to an average of 6.45 (4.33) per boat. Breaking this down further comes up with 1.04 (.44) blues, .65 (.45) whites, and 4.78 (3.38) sailfish per boat. 98 (85) boats reported multiple catches. The overall release rate for reported non-tournament billfish in SC was 99.6%.

Not included in the above totals are 3 fish tagged by 1 boat in non-SC waters.

If you caught billfish in SC waters in 2006 and have not received a state billfish certificate, please get in touch with me at (843) 953-9365 or at DuPreT@dnr.sc.gov. 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. -Tom

SCGC RULES CHANGES

Changes have been made to Rules 1, 2, 3, and 6 for the 2007 tournament season.

1. Fish must be caught in accordance with all state and federal laws to qualify to earn points or awards. A fish may be struck and the rod passed, immediately, to an angler who has not reached their thirteenth (13th) birthday by April 1st of the current tournament year. After a rod is passed, only the angler is allowed to touch the rod or line. Once the leader is brought within the grasp of the mate or is wound to the rod tip, then the angler may have assistance to catch and release or boat the fish. Series points will accrue towards Series awards for these fish. Vessels may provide assistance to other vessels for boating fish.

2. White marlin and sailfish are catch and release only. Tagging is optional and not required for points. The minimum size for landed blue marlin is 110 inches measured in a curved line along the body from the fork of the tail to the tip of the lower jaw.

Note: 110 inches exceeds the federally mandated minimum size limit. Should the federal size limit be increased, the minimum size for blue marlin eligible for weighing in SC Governor's Cup Series tournaments will be increased automatically to exceed the new federal minimum size by two (2) inches if required.

3. A penalty of 600 points will be assessed against a boat for each blue marlin brought to the dock not meeting the minimum South Carolina Governor's

Cup Series size requirements.

6. Only blue marlin, white marlin and sailfish are eligible for catch and release points. Tagging is optional and not required for points. Scoring for billfish caught and released in good condition is as follows:

Blue Marlin	600 points
White marlin	200 points
Sailfish	100 points

CONTACT INFO

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ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT MEASURES

SUMMARY: NMFS proposes to temporarily suspend circle hook requirements for anglers participating in Atlantic billfish tournaments. The final rule implementing the Final Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan (FCHMS FMP) published in the Federal Register on October 2, 2006, and restricted anglers fishing from HMS permitted vessels and participating in Atlantic billfish tournaments to deploying only non-offset circle hooks when using natural baits or natural bait/artificial lure combinations, effective 12:01 am, Janu-

ary 1, 2007. The purpose of the final rule was to reduce post-release mortality of Atlantic billfish and other species with which billfish tournament anglers may interact. NMFS has continued to receive public comment since publication of the Final CHMS FMP regarding the perceived impacts of the billfish tournament non-offset circle hook requirement. The objective of this proposed rulemaking is to increase post-release survival of Atlantic billfishes by improving longterm compliance with billfish tournament non-offset circle hook regulations.

PULLIAM

Investment

COMPANY

BILLFISH REPORTED LANDED IN SC WATERS IN 2006 - AS OF FEBRUARY 2, 2007

Boat	Blue Marlin	White Marlin	Sailfish	Swordfish	Boat	Blue Marlin	White Marlin	Sailfish	Swordfish
ADAM AND EVIL	1				INSTIGATOR		1		
AFICIONADO			7		JABEZ	1		1	
AGGRESSOR	3		24		JON BOAT		1		
ALI L	1				JUNCANEWT	2		1	
ANTICIPATION	1	2	10		JUST ONE MORE			1	
ARTEMIS			2		KRIVOCAIN			2	
ASSURETHING			1		LAZY BONZ	1		1	
AT EASE	1	3	5		LEGACY			1	
BAK BAR		2	1		LEGAL HOLIDAY	2	1	13	
BAIL OUT	1				LIL-BIT		1	1	
BENTLEY'S BEST	4	2	1		LOCK N LOAD	3		4	
BILLFISHER	1	1	1		LONESOME DOVE			1	
BILLFISHING			27		LURE ME			1	
BILLISTIC	3		1		MAJOR MOTION	4		43	
BLACK MAGIC			1		MARY AGNES		3	2	
BLESSED ADVENTURE			2		MINDSET			1	
BLOODY BULL			1		MIRAGE	2			
BLUE BOY	9	3	29		MISS LIBBY II			1	
BLUE ENDEAVOR	2				MISS WY IV	2	1	8	
BLUE HEAVEN			1		MITCHELL'S CONTENDER		2		
BLUE SKY	5	7	2		MY THREE SONS	4	1	1	
BOATYARD BLUE	3				MY TIME OUT		1		
BOTTOM LINE		2			NAVICULA	2			
BUMPY GIN	1		3		OUTTA CONTROLS			1	
C-TIME	1	1	4		OVER RUN	1	1	12	
CARAMBA	2	2	10	3	OVERSPRAY	2	1	4	
CAROLINA LADY	1	2	2		PHARM-A-SEA	1	1	2	
CATCH 22			1		PAINKILLER	2		3	
CERVEZA	1	1			PROWESS	3	2	21	
CHASIN		1	38		RAISIN' HAYES	1			
CHICORA			3		RAPID PACE	2	2	6	
CHRISTY II	2				RASCAL	3	2	4	
COMPROMISE IV			2		REEL DEAL	1			
COOKIE MONSTER	2	2	26		REEL FUN 2		1	2	
DAWG DUE	2	1	16		REEL HOOKER			4	
DAYMAKER	2	2	49		REEL LOVE		1		
DESPERADO		1			RIGGED OUT	1	3	9	
DIAMOND II			1		RISKY BUSINESS		2	14	
DILLIGAF	2				ROOKIE IV		2	4	
DITCH DIGGER			1		RUTHIE D			8	
DOUGH BOY	2				SALTY DOG		1	2	
DOWN TIME			3		SEA BABY	1		5	
EL TEJANO	3		3		SEA-BATICAL	1	1	1	
EMOTIONAL RESCUE	1		4		SEA FIX			4	
ENTROPY	1				SEA FOX	2			
FIN-ADDICT	4	2	6		SEASONAL AFFAIR			1	
FINAL ANSWER			1		SEA TRACE	1	1	1	
FISH DANCE			1		SEA TRIAL II			1	
FISH KILLER	3		1		SECOND LOVE III		1	1	
FISHWRAPPER	1		5		SHORTER PIE	1			
FOUR GONE			1		SIMPLE INTEREST			9	
FRENZY	1	1	1		SPECIAL LADY	1	4	27	
GAMECOCK	2				SPORTIN' LIFE	3	3	14	
GAME ON	2	3	9		SPORTSMAN	1		1	
GOTTA GO			1		SUMMER GIRL	4	1	18	
GREAT ESCAPE			2		SUMMERTIME BLUES	1	1		
HAPHAZARD		2	9		SWEET DEAL			12	
HARD TIMES III	1				SYKED OUT	2	2	6	
HATTA DREAM	1				TAG A LONG			1	
HATTITUDE	1				TEAM M.C. MARINE			3	
HAT TRICK	1				TEASER			1	
HEAVY IRON		2	10		THE SEASESSION			2	
HEY DOC	1	1	6		THRESHER	1			
HIGH CURRENT	1				TRANSIENT BOAT			10	
HIGH EXPECTATIONS			1		TRIPLE PLAY			4	
HIGH MAINTENANCE	1		3		TRUE BLUE			1	
HIGH ROLLER	2	2	6		ULTRA		1	12	
HOME RUN	2	1	21		UNKNOW BOAT			2	
HOT SHOT		1			WATERS EDGE	2	1	2	
HOUDINI	4	1	8		WATER WITCH			1	
HOY BOY	3		1		WILD HARE			3	
ICE COBIA	2		1		YARD BOY	1			

**BILLFISH REPORTED LANDED IN SC WATERS IN 2006 -
AS OF FEBRUARY 2, 2007 (CONT.)**

Boat	Blue Marlin	White Marlin	Sailfish	Swordfish
YELLA JAY	1			
YO YO			1	
27' SEA PRO			1	
TOTALS	152	96	702	3
OVERALL	953			

Certificates are available for released, landed, or tagged and released billfish.

**Billfish Reported
Tagged And Released
Outside SC Waters - 2006**

Boat	Blue Marlin	White Marlin	Sailfish
ANTICIPATION	1		2

To report billfish, please call Tom DuPré at (843) 953-9365 or e-mail dupret@dnr.sc.gov FAX (843) 953-9362

**SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S CUP BILLFISHING SERIES
TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES - 2007**

1. Fish must be caught in accordance with all state and federal laws to qualify to earn points or awards. A fish may be struck and the rod passed, immediately, to an angler who has not reached their thirteenth (13th) birthday by April 1st of the current tournament year. After a rod is passed, only the angler is allowed to touch the rod or line. Once the leader is brought within the grasp of the mate or is wound to the rod tip, then the angler may have assistance to catch and release or boat the fish. Series points will accrue towards Series awards for these fish. Vessels may provide assistance to other vessels for boating fish.

2. White marlin and sailfish are catch and release only. Tagging is optional and not required for points. The minimum size for Series points or awards consideration for landed blue marlin is 110 inches measured in a curved line along the body from the fork of the tail to the tip of the lower jaw.

Note: 110 inches exceeds the federally mandated minimum size limit. Should the federal size limit be increased, the minimum size for blue marlin eligible for weighing in SC Governor's Cup Series tournaments will be increased automatically to exceed the new federal minimum size by two (2) inches if required.

3. A penalty of 600 points will be assessed against a boat for each blue marlin brought to the dock not meeting the minimum South Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Series size requirements.

4. Boats guilty of wanton waste of fish taken in a Series event will be disqualified from earning points in that event.

5. Scoring for eligible billfish weighed-in is based solely on those points officially awarded each boat by each tournament. Boats earn one point per pound and fraction of a pound for their single heaviest billfish weighed in each tournament. No points are awarded for additional billfish weighed in any one tournament.

6. Only blue marlin, white marlin and sailfish are eligible for billfish catch and release points. Tagging is optional and not required for points. Scoring for billfish caught and released in good condition is as follows:

Blue Marlin	600 points
White marlin	200 points
Sailfish	100 points

7. To qualify for catch and release points, a billfish must be fought to the boat according to program guidelines. A billfish is considered caught when: 1) the leader is grasped by the mate or the leader is wound to the rod tip. (A leader may be no longer than 30 feet); 2) the billfish is positively identified; and 3) the fish is released in a healthy condition. Boats are encouraged to remove the hook or to cut the leader as close as possible to the hook.

8. White marlin and sailfish may not be brought into the boat. Any white marlin or sailfish boated for pictures or any other reason will not receive catch and release points. Blue marlin brought into the boat for measurement without the use of a gaff, harpoon or other device will qualify for catch and release points provided they are returned to the water in a healthy condition and are meet the federal minimum size limit. (currently 99 inches).

Note: Federal law prohibits the boating of undersized billfish.

9. Any billfish gaffed, harpooned or otherwise injured in an attempt to boat the fish will not qualify for catch and release points, even if ultimately returned to the water.

10. For a vessel to qualify any billfish for points, every person aboard the vessel 18 years of age or older must sign an affidavit swearing that all rules and regulations were observed in reference to the described fish. Failure of any person to sign, for any reason, disqualifies that fish.

11. Affidavits must be completed the day the catch and release or landing occurs, except when a medical emergency involving the boat's crew prohibits completion of the form or when a mechanically disabled boat cannot return within the prescribed weigh-in period. In these instances, the forms must be completed and returned within ten (10) days of the catch and release. Boats fishing out of other marinas or ports must fax or hand-deliver the completed catch and release affidavit to tournament headquarters prior to the close of the weighing scales on the day of catch with the exception as noted above.

12. Boats will be awarded 25 participation points for each Series tournament entered up to a maximum of three events. A boat's points total will include participation points as indicated along with points for landed or caught and released billfish from all tournaments fished. Points will count toward aggregate point totals for Outstanding Billfish Boat and Outstanding Billfish Conservationist. Points cannot be transferred from one boat to another.

13. Boats must fish a minimum of two Series tournaments to qualify for Outstanding Billfish Boat and Outstanding Billfish Conservationist. Vessels fishing only one tournament qualify for Outstanding Billfish, Lady Angler awards, Youth Angler awards, and Outstanding Dolphin/Wahoo/Tuna.

14. In the event of a tie, the boat accumulating their points the earliest shall be the winner. If a tie still remains, the boat fishing in the most Series events will be declared the winner.

15. Tournament awards will be presented for the heaviest tuna, dolphin, and wahoo caught by boats participating in the Series and for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place outstanding female and youth (under sixteen years of age) anglers. The tournament awards for female and youth angler will be awarded for the heaviest tuna, dolphin or wahoo if no female or youth angler has landed or caught and released a legal billfish. Billfish caught by female or youth anglers will earn regular Series points for the species. Series awards for non-billfish species will be awarded for largest tuna, dolphin, and wahoo.

16. A Blue Water Conservation Award will be presented to the boat accumulating the most points tagging dolphin (50 points), yellowfin tuna (100 points) and wahoo (150 points). All fish must be caught on legal Series tournament fishing days and tagged using official tags supplied by the Marine Resources Division's Marine Gamefish Tagging Program. Completed tagging reports will serve as official entry forms and must be submitted to Marine Resources Division personnel working the tournament or the weighmaster on the same day the fish was tagged.

17. Creel limits for dolphin are 10 per angler per day with a limit of 60 per boat per day, with no minimum size restriction. Creel limit for yellowfin tuna is 3 per angler per day with a minimum legal size of 27 inches curved body fork length. Creel limit for wahoo is 2 per person per day.


Note: Size or creel limits will automatically be changed in SC Governor's Cup Billfishing Series tournaments to reflect changes in federal or state laws.

18. All awards are presented to the boat. Invitations to the annual Governor's Cup awards reception are limited to winning boat crews and to boat owners whose boats fish two or more yearly Series events.

19. It is the intent of the S.C. Governor's Cup to encourage release of healthy billfish, therefore the use of 130 lb. class line is allowed.

20. A boat owner may request an official ruling from the Governor's Cup Series. The request for a ruling must be submitted in writing to a member of the Tournament Committee. The Tournament Committee shall rule on the request within seven (7) days. Any ruling of the Tournament Committee may be appealed by writing to the Board of Directors within forty-eight (48) hours, excluding weekend days and holidays. The Board shall render results of an appeal, in writing, to the appellant within thirty (30) days. All decisions of the Board are final. All rulings will focus solely on compliance with Governor's Cup Series rules, not individual tournament rules.

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Good Luck in the 2007 Governor's Cup

GREYSTAR

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.