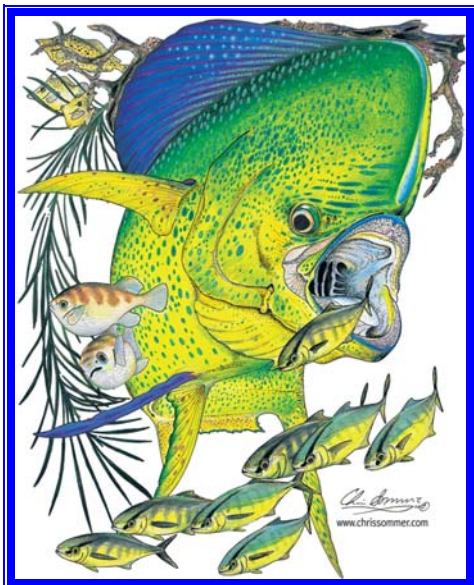


Cooperative Science Services, LLC Dolphinfish Research Program

Made possible by a grant from Costa Del Mar

January 2012 - Happy New Year



Top Taggers for 2011

A total of 106 boats home ported from Isla Mujeres, Mexico, to Galveston, Texas, over to Key West, Florida, up to Montauk, New York, and down to Puerto Rico and Antigua, West Indies, participated in tagging dolphin this year in the Western North Atlantic Ocean. More than 230 anglers fishing aboard these vessels gave up dolphin they had caught to be tagged for science.

The bulk of the boats participating in 2011 study, 72 vessels, tagged between one to five fish for the study. Eleven boats were able to tag between six and nine fish. Only 23 of the boats tagging fish in 2011 tagged 10 or more. The crews of these 23 vessels were responsible for 80 percent of all dolphin tagged in 2011.

The Dolphin Tagging Study offers year-end awards for participants tagging the most fish in four different categories: individual angler, private boat, charter boat, and boat tagging in areas other than the east coast of Florida. These awards are intended to recognize and reward participants who work hard to support the study. It does not hurt that these rewards also add a little competitive spirit to tagging. To spread the awards out to as many boats as possible, each boat and its crew are eligible to receive only one award each year.

The top participant in each category will receive a TLD 30A 2-speed reel generously provided by **Haddrell's Point Tackle and Supply** of Mt. Pleasant and Charleston, South Carolina, along with a **Star Handcrafted** standup rod complements of **Sea Striker Fishing Tackle** of Morehead City, North Carolina. For the first time the Dolphinfish Research Program is able to offer a second-place award, thanks to the generosity of **Costa Del Mar** of Daytona Beach, Florida, makers of

the official sunglasses for the Dolphinfish Research Program. Winning participants will receive their choice of a pair of sunglasses, a fabulous Costa backpack, Tee shirt and hat along with a set of their C-Line retainers.

Top Ten Boats of 2011.

Boat Name	Captain/owner	Number Tagged
Thomas Flyer	Jimbo Thomas, Miami, FL	178
Missing Angel	Manuel Botello, San Juan, PR	140
Mad Fin	Russell Brownell, Coconut Creek, FL	103
Killin' Time	Don Gates, Conroe, TX	88
Bouncer's Dusky	Bouncer Smith, Miami, FL	79
Scungilli	William Pomenti, Islamorada, FL	67
Hooked UP	Zehntner Gay, Islamorada, FL	65
My Rules II	Steve Wroblewski, Delray Beach, FL	52
Wam-Jam	Dave Wamer, Taylors, SC	25
Good Vibes	Joey Lenderman, Richmond, TX	21

For the first time a boat tagging in an area other than the southeast coast of Florida has won the Top Private Boat award. The *Missing Angel* home ported in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and owned by Manuel Botello earned this recognition for 2011. Through the dedicated effort of its

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GRADY-WHITE BOATS



Dolphinfish Research Newsletter

January 2012

Page 2.

core crew members, Irvin Baez, Alexis Alfala, Mario Lugo, and Ernie Martinez, the *Missing Angel* was able to tag 140 fish during the year. Second place in the Private Boat division was captured by Dr. Bill Pomenti's Islamorada, Florida, based boat *Scungilli*. With the aid of crew members Norm Brown and Jeff Absten, the *Scungilli* was credited with tagging 67 fish for the year.

Once again the Top Charter Boat award was earned by the Miami, Florida, based charter boat *Thomas Flyer* operated by Capt. Jimbo Thomas and his brother Rick. They managed to tag 178 fish for science. Capt. Thomas has won this division five out of the last six years. Second Place Charter Boat went to Capt. Thomas's good friend and fellow Miami charter boat operator, Capt. Bouncer Smith and his boat *Bouncer's Dusky* for tagging 79 dolphin.

The award for the boat tagging the most fish in areas other than the Florida east coast was earned by a boat crew known best for their tagging efforts in the Florida Keys. Capt. Don Gates of Conroe, Texas, shifted the tagging efforts of his crew aboard the *Killin Time II* to the Galveston, Texas, area. In their first year of fishing the Gulf waters, the *Killin Time II* crew managed to tag 88 dolphin, which set a record for the number of dolphin tagged for the DRP in the Gulf. Second place in this category also went to a Texas-based boat, the *Good Vibes*, captained by Joey Lenderman of Richmond, Texas, whose crew managed to tag 21 fish.

For the second consecutive year, the Top Individual Angler award goes to 16-year-old angler, Phillip *Top Ten Anglers for 2011*.

Angler	Boat	Number
Phillip Brownell Coconut Creek, FL	Mad Fin	103
Irvin Baez Rio Grande, PR	Missing Angel	49
Ernie Martinez Hollywood, FL	Missing Angel	39
Heather Patton Ponce Inlet, FL	Hooked Up	25
Steve Wroblewski Delray Beach, FL	My Rules II	23
Beau Benson Spring, TX	Killin Time II	20
Norm Brown Islamorada, FL	Scungilly	19
Alexis Alfala Rio Grande, PR	Missing Angel	17
Bill DeVierno Davie, FL	Dottom II	16
Mario Lugo Bayamon, PR	Missing Angel	15

New 2011 Financial Contributors

Jim Rose, Shelby, NC

Tim & Michelle Heiser, Plantation, FL

Dolphin Tagging Progress by Zones, December 31, 2011.

Zone	Area	Southern Limit	Northern Limit	Number Tagged
1	Bahamas	22° N	28° N	62
2	FL Straits	23° N	25° N	352
3	South Florida	25° N	27° N	320
4	Central Florida	27° N	30° N	49
5	North FL & GA	30° N	32° N	30
6	Southern SC	32° N	33° N	105
7	N. SC - S. NC	33° N	35° N	28
8	Northern NC	35° N	36.5° N	7
9	Virginia	36.5° N	38° N	0
10	N. Mid-Atlantic	38° N		4
11	Gulf of Mexico			110
12	W Central Atlantic			127
13	Caribbean Sea			40
	Total			1234

Brownell of Coconut Creek, Florida. Phillip reported tagging 103 dolphin while fishing with his father, Russell, aboard their boat *Mad Fin*. Second place went to Heather Patton of Ponce Inlet, Florida, who caught and tagged 25 of the 65 fish credited to Capt. Zehntner Gay's Islamorada based charter boat, *Hooked Up*.

The Dolphinfish Research Program is proud of the dedication to learning more about dolphin that members of these boat crews have shown. Because of their efforts, we continue to gain new insight into the movements and behavior of this important game fish.

Individuals Making a Difference

Many anglers who consider getting involved with the Dolphin Tagging Study get discouraged before they begin when they learn that only two or three fish are recovered for every 100 fish tagged. But there are others who forge ahead and beat the odds. Because these individuals are genuinely interested in learning about their fish, they pay more attention to releasing healthy fish and recording accurate data. This maximizes the chance for the fish to be recovered and increases the level of information gained.

Mitchell Collette of Julian, North Carolina, is a clear example of beating the odds. Fishing aboard his boat *Still Drip'n* about 40 miles off Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina, on June 6, 2011, Mitch and his crew tagged ten dolphin. Three of these fish would ultimately be recovered. The first occurred just two days later and 12 miles inshore from the release site. The second recapture took place off Cape Hatteras, 77 miles to the northeast, 13 days following its release. The third recovery came from off Oregon Inlet, 123 miles to the northeast, after 27 days of liberty. These recaptures could be viewed as documenting a rather slow but steady movement of dolphin as they follow the North Carolina coast line northward. This suggests that individuals could linger

The Dolphinfish Research Program needs your financial support. No federal funds support this important research. This program exists because of private donations.

Dolphinfish Research Newsletter

January 2012

Page 3.

as long as a month off the Tar Heel coast, which would help explain the large harvest of dolphin made by anglers off North Carolina.

For the first time in the ten years of the Dolphin Tagging Study, a meaningful number of dolphin were tagged for the program in the Gulf of Mexico. This was primarily because Don Gates of Conroe, Texas, knowing that few dolphin had been tagged in the Gulf and tagging there was of high priority, shifted his fishing efforts from the Florida Keys to Texas for 2011. His crew managed to tag 88 fish, and when combined with 21 fish tagged by the crew of the *Good Vibes* captained by Joey Lenderman, of Richmond, Texas, resulted in more than 100 fish being tagged in the Gulf for the first time.

Because of the periodic recoveries in the Caribbean Sea of fish tagged off the U.S. East Coast, we knew there was a close link between dolphin in these tropical waters and those off the U.S. Atlantic mainland. But there was only a one-way flow of movement because few fish were being tagged in these southern waters. In 2008 Manuel Botello and his crew aboard the *Missing Angel* became involved in the Dolphin Program. Since their start, the crew of the *Missing Angel* has tagged 290 dolphin with seven of their fish being recovered. These recoveries have provided the first look at the movement of dolphin in the Caribbean Sea and along the north shore of the northern Caribbean Islands. The crew has also been instrumental in deploying the first two satellite tags placed on dolphinfish off Puerto Rico.

A lot of south Florida fishermen have voiced opinions about the existence of a fall southerly migration of dolphin in these southern U.S. waters but few have tagged fish in October, November and December to help answer the question. It has been Capt. Bouncer Smith's boat *Bouncer's Dusky*, a Miami, Florida based charter boat, that has tagged the most dolphin in the fall off the south Florida coast. In his seven years of participation Capt. Smith has tagged a total of 419 fish with 23 of his tags reported recaptured. Six of his tag recoveries occurred in 2011, with half of these moving from Miami to Key West, Florida. One of the Key West fish was tagged and recovered in March, while two fish tagged in November were recaptured in November and December. Combining Bouncer's recoveries with other similar recaptures, a picture is emerging that indicates that a small portion of the dolphin found off south Florida throughout the year will make a southerly movement.

The biggest point to be made by these examples of individual boat crews making a difference is that any boat crew who is genuinely interested in learning about their fish and willing to spend a modest amount of time aiding science can make a big contribution. More dedicated individuals like these are needed in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, Gulf of Mexico, Bahamas and Caribbean.

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For More Information, Contact

Don Hammond

Cooperative Science Services, LLC
961 Anchor Rd., Charleston, SC 29412

Telephone – FAX (843) 795-7524

Email CSSLLC@bellsouth.net

Web site www.dolphintagging.com

