

# SC Dolphin Tagging Study

December 2003

## Dolphin Tag Washes Ashore

In mid November a visitor to a Florida beach sent in a dolphin tag. Mr. Cravens reported that he had found the tag washed ashore during a walk on a beach at Ft. Lauderdale. The tag had originally been placed in a 19-inch fork length dolphin off Key West on March 8, 2003.

Such a report is not unexpected since several situations could lead to such a find. The tag may have been pulled out by another fish or could have fallen out due to improper application. Possibly the dolphin may have been eaten by a larger bluewater-predator with the polyethylene tag passing through its digestive system allowing the tag to float ashore due to its positive buoyancy.

## Dolphin / Wahoo Management Plan Approved

Just before Christmas the Department of Commerce approved the Dolphin / Wahoo Fishery Management Plan for the Atlantic coast fisheries submitted by the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council. However, certain key sections of the plan were not approved. Two of the most prominent sections not approved dealt with placing trip poundage limits on commercial vessels and designating Sargassum weed as critical habitat for dolphin.

The plan should be implemented within two to three months.



The dolphin's affinity for Sargassum is a well known fact among fishermen who commonly utilize this behavior to locate schools by fishing along weedlines.



## Project Status

The number of fishermen volunteering to tag dolphin has now exceeded 650 individuals. More volunteers are coming from the outer reaches of the study along the Mid-Atlantic Bight and Northern Caribbean Islands.

Anglers reported 48 additional fish tagged since the last newsletter bringing the number of dolphin tagged in 2003 to 1,181. This has been accomplished through the dedicated effort of 123 boats and 257 anglers.

## Dolphin Study Tagging Progress by Zone

Zone	Area	Southern Limit	Northern Limit	Number Tagged
1	E. Bahamas	22N	28N	9
2	FL Straits	23N	25N	507
3	South Florida	25N	27N	173
4	Central Florida	27N	30N	45
5	North FL & GA	30N	32N	69
6	Southern SC	32N	33N	297
7	N. SC - S. NC	33N	35N	57
8	Northern NC	35N	36.5N	0
9	Virginia	36.5N	38N	2
10	N. Mid-Atlantic	38N		22

How is your fishing zone doing? Have you contributed to the tagging effort in your zone?

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## Leaders for Year End Awards

With the strong fall and winter winds keeping fishermen off the ocean for most days since September, there has been very little tagging activity. Subsequently there have been just a few changes in the tagging leaders.

### NOTE

Anglers are reminded that all tag cards notifying the project of tagged fish must in possession of the project director by 5:00 pm on January 9, 2004 to be counted toward the year-end awards.

### Individual Angler Division

1. Chester Kalb of Key West, FL – 124 fish
2. Justin Brown of Pembroke Pines, FL – 104 fish
3. Kerry Kahl of Lake Worth, FL – 84 fish
4. Bob Delizza of Weston, FL – 57 fish
5. Bill Baugh of Ramrod Key, FL – 48 fish

### Private Boat Division

1. Chester Kalb's Boat of Key West, FL – 177 fish
2. Don Brown's *Draggin Dreams* of Pembroke Pines, FL - 105 fish
3. Kerry Kahl's *Partner* of Lake Worth, FL – 97 fish
4. The Hightower Brother's *Triple Play* of Charleston, SC – 74 fish
5. Richard Delizza's *Rock Boat* of Weston, FL – 62 fish

### Charter Boat Division

1. Jerry William's *Plumb Crazy* of Charleston, SC – 29 fish
2. John Thomas's *Special Lady* of Charleston, SC – 22 fish
3. Randy Ragland's *Castaway* of Charleston, SC – 21 fish
4. Albert Spring's *Anticipation* of Oregon Inlet, NC – 11 fish
5. James Messina's *Reel Fantasy* of Ocean City, MD – 7 fish

Check Out the Newly Revised 2003  
Tag Tracking Chart

<http://dolphintagging.homestead.com/map.html>

## Shimano

### TIAGRA®



Year End  
Awards  
Promote  
Tagging

Star Rods

Shimano Reels and Star Rod Company are providing strong incentives for fishermen to support the research project on dolphin. These premier fishing tackle companies have shown their commitment to the conservation of our important fisheries resources by donating top quality equipment for incentive awards to encourage fishermen to assist the study.

The SC Dolphin Tagging Study was designed to utilize private sports fishermen as the backbone of the project. Fishery managers recognize that anglers along the eastern seaboard of the US are concerned over the future health of the dolphin stocks and would be willing to get involved. The project was designed to capitalize on this army of volunteers to carry out tagging of dolphin that would span over 1,300 miles of US coastline. A project of such magnitude would have been cost-prohibitive without volunteers.

At the end of the year, three fishermen who participated in Dolphin tagging Study will receive a Shimano Tiagra 50 on a top-of-the-line Star Standup rod for their contributions to the study. These outfits will be given to the private boat, charter boat and individual angler tagging the most dolphin.

### Special Note

*A note of gratitude is extended to the anglers and captains who made 2003 Dolphin Study the giant success that it was. I look forward to your support in 2004.*

**Good Fishing & Happy New Year**

**For more information on the project, visit**

<http://dolphintagging.homestead.com> or contact

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