

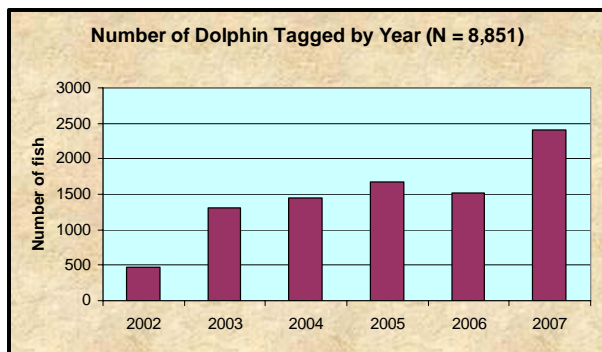
Cooperative Science Services, LLC Dolphin Tagging Research Project

December 2007



2007 - A Record Year

What a phenomenal year! New records were set for the number of fish tagged and number of tagged fish reported recaptured. You, the fishermen who have participated in this research, have done a truly outstanding job. Anglers tagged more than 40% more fish, 2,412, in 2007 than any previous year. At the end of its sixth year, sports fishermen have tagged more than 8,800 dolphinfish total.



Florida anglers have tagged an amazing 1,386 dolphin this year. This is more than the average number of fish tagged totally in the first five years of the study. Anglers out of South Carolina marked and released 499 dolphin, their second best year. But it was anglers in the Bahamas that really came through, tagging 348 fish, which was five times more than in 2006.

The first fish was tagged in the western Caribbean Sea in 2007 by the crew of the *Makara* owned by Tom McMurray. They managed to mark 134 dolphin in the Yucatan Strait during their tagging expedition.

Number of Dolphin Tagged in 2007 by Zone. As of November 30, 2007				
Zone	Area	Southern Limit	Northern Limit	Number Tagged
1	Bahamas	22N	28N	348
2	FL Straits	23N	25N	803
3	South Florida	25N	27N	526
4	Central Florida	27N	30N	57
5	North FL & GA	30N	32N	83
6	South Carolina	32N	33N	416
7	Southern NC	33N	35N	18
8	Northern NC	35N	36.5N	6
9	Virginia	36.5N	38N	15
10	N. Mid-Atlantic	38N		0
11	Gulf of Mexico			6
12	W C Atlantic			0
13	Caribbean			134
Total				2412

Tagged fish have been reported recovered during every month of 2007 so far except September. A total of 70 recaptures have been reported this year. The recovery rate for dolphin tagged in 2007 is one of the highest recorded at 2.9%. With such a large number of fish marked in 2007, more recoveries are expected in 2008.

Sponsored In Part By:

Marine Ventures
Foundation



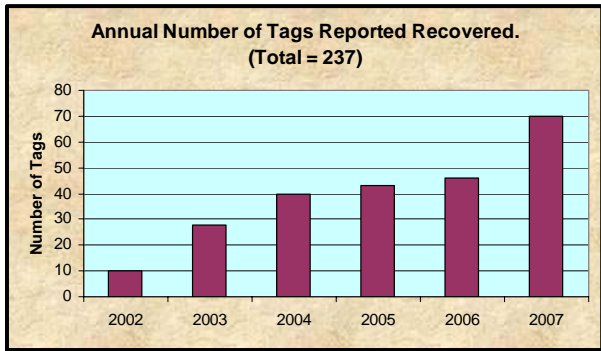
GRADY-WHITE BOATS



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More than 87% of the tag recoveries took place during the months of May, June and July. June had more than twice the number of tag recoveries reported (37) than any other month. July was a distant second with 15 tag recoveries. These high monthly recovery rates are not by chance. These months are the peak recovery period for two reasons: it is the peak migration period of dolphin along the U.S. East Coast, and it is the peak blue water troll-fishing period in the South Atlantic Bight (SAB).

The fish were abundant for a large part of the spring and summer throughout most of the SAB leading to the success in tagging such a large number of dolphin in 2007. Most of this area found not only lots of fish but above-average size with fish 10 to 20 pounds being common. But not all areas enjoyed the same fishing.

The Florida Keys had a strong run of dolphin up through June. Unfortunately they also had about two to three straight weeks of wind that kept most anglers on shore. Then in July and August when large schools of small fish are usually available, it was hard to find any dolphin. In July especially it seemed that more small dolphin were present off the Miami to Jupiter Inlet area than off the Keys.

The increased abundance of dolphin off area 3, south Florida, with no corresponding earlier runs along the Florida Keys suggest that the Miami to Jupiter fish may not have traveled by the Keys. They may have emigrated from the Bahamas. The question is, where - maybe the Northeast Providence Channel?

Supporting Dolphin Tagging Research Hilton Head Reef Foundation

www.reeffoundation.com

A registered 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization.

Donations are fully tax deductible.

Grady-White Boats Inc. Invests in Dolphinfish



Jim Hardin, Compliance Manager; Eddie Smith, Chairman and CEO; Joey Weller, Director of Sales & Marketing, present a check for \$5,300 from Grady-White Boats, Inc. to Don Hammond, President of CSS, for the purchase of a Pop-off Archival Satellite Tag.

With encouragement from Jim Hardin, Compliance Manager, and Joey Weller, Director of Sales and Marketing, for the world famous boat manufacturer, Grady-White Boats, Eddie Smith, Chairman and CEO, decided to step up his company's support for the Dolphinfish Research Program. He said that it was important that the recreational fishing industry actively support fisheries research such as through sponsoring a satellite tag to further the study of dolphinfish.

Mr. Smith readily recognizes the importance of a healthy dolphin stock to the offshore sportfishing industry. He said that off North Carolina, it is likely that dolphin are the only fish in the box for three out of four boats returning from a day of blue water trolling. If the dolphin stocks were to crash, it would have a serious impact on the offshore recreational fishery not only in North Carolina but the entire South Atlantic Bight and Gulf of Mexico.

Grady-White will also provide the fishing trip off North Carolina to capture a suitable dolphin for biologists with the Dolphinfish Research Program to deploy the satellite tag.

Research made possible by grants from

Marine Ventures Foundation,
Jackson Hole, WY
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Central Florida Offshore Anglers,
Orlando, FL
South Carolina Department of Natural
Resources, Charleston, SC

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Send in Your Favorite Tagging Photos

The Dolphin Research Program would like to have your favorite photo of tagging dolphin or trophy dolphin that you have caught, especially those caught by women and children. These photos will be used in the newsletter and other publications of the program. High resolution digital images in at least 1mb file size should be e-mailed to the program at the e-mail address shown below. Please provide the names of all people in the pictures and a narrative about the scene.

Mail in Your Tag Cards

All tag cards must be in the CSS office by January 7, 2008, to be counted toward the 2007 year end awards. Four dedicated taggers will receive a Shimano TLD50LRS on a Star Custom Crafted standup rod. The awards categories are private boat, charter boat, individual angler, and boat tagging the most dolphin in areas other than the Florida east coast.

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Joe McMurray, Shelby, NC

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