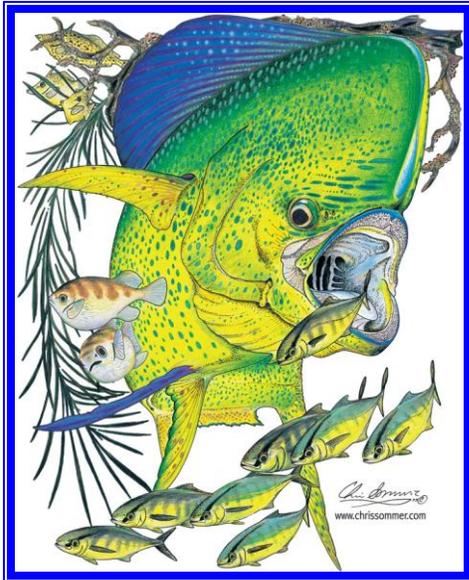


Cooperative Science Services, LLC Dolphinfish Research Program

Made possible by a grant from Costa Del Mar

December 2012



The Latest Recaptures of Florida Fish

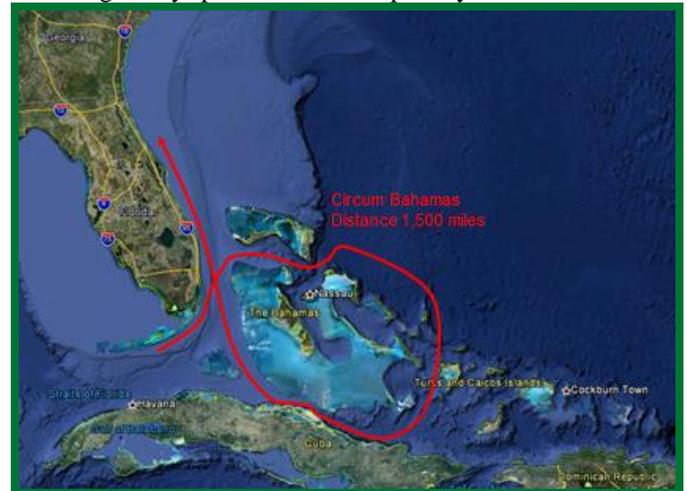
Recaptures of three more dolphin tagged off southern Florida were reported this period, all associated with very familiar names in the world of dolphin tagging. Capt. Bouncer Smith saw his fourth and fifth fish of the year recovered, while Capt. Don Gates had his seventh fish of the year recaptured.

The first of these recoveries involved a dolphin tagged August 7, 2012, off Miami, Florida, by Capt. Smith's crew on the *Bouncer's Dusky*. The fish was recovered 23 days later by a charter boat fishing off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, with the tag discovered and reported by Jim Lyons, who runs the Hatteras Harbor fish cleaning service. The fish had traveled 690 miles during its liberty period, averaging 30 miles per day. While covering 30 miles per day is pretty impressive, it does not come close to the record speed for a Florida fish traveling to North Carolina, 93 miles per day.

Bouncer's second fish to be recovered was one tagged in the fall, September 27, 2012, off Miami. This fish had a short-term memory problem, being recaptured just two days later. It was recovered by David Smith of Davie, Florida, during a fishing trip off Dania Beach, Florida, aboard his boat the *Alias Smith and Jones*. The fish had covered 44 miles in its trek north, averaging 22 miles each day.

Crew member Allen Lewis aboard Don Gates' boat *Killin Time* tagged the third fish recovered this period while fishing off Cudjoe Key, Florida, on June 8, 2012. Jackson Wilson of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, recaptured the fish 386 miles from its release site during a fishing trip off Daytona Beach, Florida. The fish had

been at liberty for 149 days, which would translate into an average daily speed of 2.6 miles per day for a



When a south Florida dolphin is at liberty for 149 days and is recaptured just 386 miles from its release site, there has to be more to the movement than just a straight line between the two points.

straight-line travel route. Using the speed of Capt. Smith's first fish, this fish would have covered the distance in 13 days. Even at the slower pace of Capt. Smith's second fish, it would have taken just 18 days to reach Daytona. Such a slow pace would suggest that there is more to the movement than the fish traveling directly between these two points.

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Each year we receive word of one or more recoveries of fish tagged and recovered off Florida's east coast that have been at liberty for more than 60 days. While few in number, they are a regular part of the annual recoveries, suggesting that the movement represented by these recoveries is common among the population. This is similar to the southerly movement noted for dolphin tagged inshore off south Florida.

The question is just where do dolphin go when they don't travel up the U.S. east coast? The answer may have been hinted at in the movement of a satellite-tagged dolphinfish that went from the Straits of Florida into the New Providence Channel, which bisects the Bahamas Bank. Plus, two Florida fish have shown up on the east side of the Bahamas Bank. The probable explanation is that they are making short migrations around the Bahamas Banks. Dolphin could begin the route by hooking a right turn around the northern tip of the Bahamas Bank east of Ft. Pierce, Florida, or by entering the Providence Channel that provides a short cut to the North Atlantic. Once in the Atlantic, they could travel southeast at least as far as San Salvador Island before either cutting through the Bahamas Bank south toward Cuba or rounding Grand Turk before turning west and heading back toward the Florida Straits.

Using the Providence Channel route and a loop around San Salvador Island to cross the Bahamas Bank before heading back toward the Straits of Florida, would require the fish to travel roughly 1,500 miles. With the fish at liberty for almost five months, it would only need to travel 10 miles per day to complete the movement in the time frame indicated. This is certainly a realistic travel rate, since it is virtually half the speed that dolphin average when traveling up the U.S. east coast.

Fish tagged by Bouncer Smith's and Don Gates' crews are recovered more frequently than most participants in the tagging study. A primary reason is the care that they exercise when handling the fish during tagging. The tagging efforts of the crew of *Bouncer's Dusky* has generated 28 tag recoveries for the DRP, while the crew of Capt. Gates' boat *Killin Time II* have produced an amazing 73 recaptures. Because of their care in handling and tagging of the fish, they have achieved a recovery rate of five percent, twice the overall average for the program. Kudos to the crews of these two boats.

Industry Leaders Join in Supporting DRP

Two prominent members of the world of sport fishing commerce have joined six other industry leaders in providing financial support for the Dolphinfish Research Program. Joining **Costa Del Mar, Grady-White Boats, Milliken's Reef Restaurant, Central Florida Offshore Anglers, Hilton Head Reef Foundation** and the **South Carolina Department of Natural Resources** are the **Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation** based in Ft.

Lauderdale, Florida, and the **American Fishing Tackle Company (AFTCO)** of Santa Ana, California.



"The Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation is pleased to announce a grant to the Dolphinfish Research Program," says Guy Harvey. "The DRP's proven track record in gleaned meaningful scientific data from its tagging program while also successfully engaging the angling community is in accordance with the stated mission of the GHOF, and I encourage anglers everywhere to participate in this program." Guy is recognized worldwide as a leading artist in the world of marine art. Holding a PhD in marine science, he is also a leader in marine research and fisheries conservation, using his knowledge and talents to benefit the world's oceans and the animals living in them.



AMERICAN FISHING TACKLE CO.

Similarly, the American Fishing Tackle Company (AFTCO) has long-time ties to fisheries research and conservation, going back to Milton Shedd, the founder of AFTCO and a co-founder of the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Bill Shedd, Milton's son, continues the tradition as president of AFTCO. Bill recently announced, "AFTCO is proud to support the Dolphinfish Research Program because it is a credible and much needed effort to learn more about dolphin, a fish whose future health is vitally important to the sport fishing community. Our support of DRP is a natural extension of the rich AFTCO and Shedd family history of support of and involvement in tag and release. That all started with Milt Shedd in 1961 when he put together programs that resulted in the tagging of several thousand albacore, bluefin tuna, and marlin along with 30,000 anchovies. Those efforts were followed up with the tagging of broadbill swordfish, the AFTCO TAG-A-Tuna For Tomorrow Tournament, the AFTCO TAG-Flag-Tournament, and AFTCO's efforts with sonic tagging, archival tagging, and more."

Having two more prominent members of the sport fishing industry join in providing financial support for the Dolphinfish Research Program speaks strongly of the importance placed on this species by the recreational fishing community. It also reflects the respect that the DRP has earned among sports fishermen and associated industry members over its ten-years of operation. Partnering with sport fishermen throughout the North

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Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea, this research program has documented more about the movements and behavior of dolphinfish in the North Atlantic than any previous research effort.

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Send in Your Tag Cards

The end of 2012 is quickly approaching. Please get your tag reports in so that they can be counted toward the year-end awards. Tagging reports need to be received at the DRP office by January 7, 2013, to be counted for the year-end awards. Don't miss out on the rods and reels and Costa Del Mar gift packs!

2012 Tagging Activity

This year's tagging activity has been slow, but growth shows in areas where tagging lagged in previous years. While the program has met its goal of having one thousand dolphin tagged this year, hopes for increased participation in areas of previously low tagging activity are growing as indicated by more angler interest.

A record number of anglers were signed up in the Gulf of Mexico, and while the tagging effort was less than in

Dolphin Tagging Progress by Zones, November 24, 2012.

Zone	Area	Southern Limit	Northern Limit	Number Tagged
1	Bahamas	22° N	28° N	13
2	FL Straits	23° N	25° N	315
3	South Florida	25° N	27° N	406
4	Central Florida	27° N	30° N	40
5	North FL & GA	30° N	32° N	4
6	Southern SC	32° N	33° N	40
7	N. SC - S. NC	33° N	35° N	84
8	Northern NC	35° N	36.5° N	0
9	Virginia	36.5° N	38° N	3
10	N. Mid-Atlantic	38° N		27
11	Gulf of Mexico			29
12	W Central Atlantic			52
13	Caribbean Sea			46
	Total			1,059

2011, it did produce the first tag recovery of a Gulf fish traveling into the Atlantic. Similarly, many new anglers were signed up to tag in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, and the tagging did increase but remained below the 100-fish level desired. Tagging off North Carolina showed a mark improvement, largely due to the efforts of one boat fishing out of Hatteras, the *Will Power*.

Florida anglers provided two-thirds of the fish tagged this year. For only the second time in the ten years of this study, south Florida anglers, those fishing from Key Largo up to Jupiter Inlet, tagged more fish than the anglers fishing in the Keys. This year brought interest from anglers in the Jacksonville area not seen before.

While tagging and interest to tag in the Bahamas has been far below normal levels, interest has increased in other areas. Tagging and angler interest in the Caribbean markedly increased this year. This is especially true in Puerto Rico, where a record number of anglers have signed up to tag. While the number of fish tagged around Puerto Rico is currently below last year, the fishing season has just started and December's tagging could lift the number of dolphin tagged above last year.