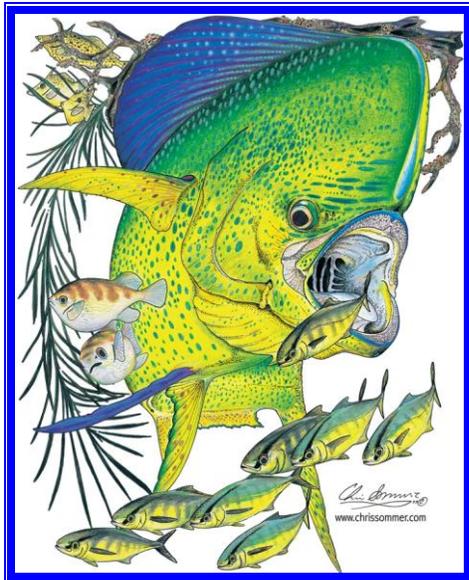


# Cooperative Science Services, LLC Dolphinfish Research Program

September 2014



## Recaptures Pour In

Eight more tag recoveries were reported during July along with two late reports of June recaptures, bringing the total number of reported recaptures in 2014 to 38. These new recaptures show a major shift in the dolphin population off the U.S. East Coast. Out of the 21 recaptures reported in the last newsletter, 14, or 66 percent, occurred off Florida. In this report, only two recaptures, 20 percent, occurred off Florida. The recoveries reflected the seasonal shift in the dolphin population to the Mid-Atlantic Bight with six recoveries off North Carolina and two off Maryland. Seven of the fish were long-distance travelers, being recaptured 121 miles to 828 miles from their release site.

The two late recovery reports from June involved fish released off Miami, Florida, and Charleston, South Carolina. Brian Blakney, fishing aboard the *Weedline*, tagged the fish off Elliott Key, Florida, on May 30, 2014. It was recaptured 27 days later 787 miles from its release site by Joe Bonvetti during a fishing trip off Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, aboard the *Haphazard*. James Johnson tagged the other dolphin off Charleston while fishing on the *Petrel* on June 7, 2014. This fish was recovered 22 days later and 282 miles north of its release site by the charter boat *Good Times* off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. The fish tagged off Florida averaged more than 30 miles per day, while the South Carolina fish held true to the long-standing trend of moving northward at a much slower pace, 13 miles per day, than fish from Florida.

Two of the July recoveries were Florida instate movements, where one was tagged off the Florida Keys and the other off Miami. A fish tagged by Allen Lewis on June 5, 2014 off Cudjoe Key while fishing on the *Killin Time II* was recovered three days later 121 miles to the north off Fowey Light by Michael Owens. The fish traveled an average of 40.3 miles per day. The fish off Miami was tagged by Capt. Bouncer Smith

aboard his boat *Bouncer's Dusky* on July 18, 2014. It was recovered two days later by Joe Kessler's boat *Off Duty* 26.5 miles north of where it was released.

Four of the remaining recaptures occurred off North Carolina, reflecting the northward-migration by dolphin. The southernmost recovery took place off Southport, North Carolina, when Ken Pearce recovered a tagged dolphin that had been released on April 24, 2014, 549 miles to the south off Miami, Florida, by Rick Thomas fishing aboard the *Thomas Flyer*. At liberty for 78 days, this fish exhibited one of the slowest speeds recorded, 7 miles per day, for a Florida fish traveling to North Carolina.

Three of the Tar Heel recoveries occurred off Cape Hatteras. The first was a fish tagged June 22, 2014, off Delray Beach, Florida, by Steve Wroblewski while fishing on his boat *My Rules II*. It was recovered 18 days later and 632 miles to the north by William Rogers during a fishing trip aboard Rom Whitaker's boat the *Release*. The second recapture was a fish tagged by Bryant Stokes off Georgetown, South Carolina, on June 27, 2014, while fishing on the *Pain Killer*. It was recovered 14 days later 243 miles north of its release site by Adam Coffey while fishing on the *Bi-Op-Sea*. The third Hatteras recovery was a fish tagged by Michael Reid on June 23, 2014, off Key West, Florida, during a fishing trip aboard the *Wam Jam*. It was recovered 828 miles north-northeast of its release site 18 days later by Jimmy Hillsman, mate aboard the *High Return*. These fish showed a wide range of travel speeds. The fish released off Georgetown exhibited the slowest speed at 17.4 miles per day. The fish from Key West was the fastest covering an average of 46 miles per day, with the fish from Delray falling in the middle with a speed of 35 miles per day.

The last two tag recoveries are of a rare type, instate recoveries of fish tagged off Maryland. The crew of Larry Golden's boat *Thrill Seeker* tagged 10 dolphin off Ocean City, Maryland, on July 17, 2014. Two of the fish tagged by David

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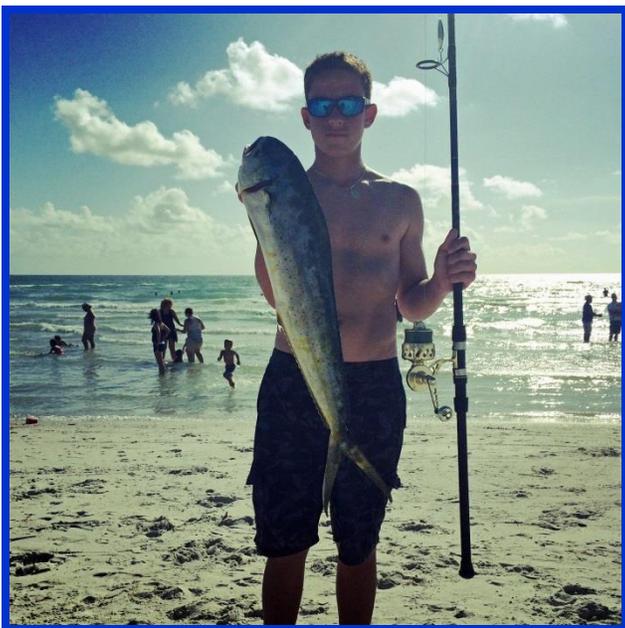
Rudow were recovered. The first one was recaptured by Robert Orr aboard the *Last Chance* five days after its release 7miles from the release site. The second fish was recovered 15 days later by P. J. Brassard while fishing aboard the *Yellowfin* 2.6 miles from the release site.

## In The Surf???

Most people's initial reaction to hearing that a dolphin was caught in the surf is "no" way. What is even more surprising is where it was caught. My immediate thought was, it must have been on a beach in Miami, Florida, where the Gulf Stream is just a half-mile off the beach. Such close proximity could allow hungry dolphin to enter the surf in pursuit of baitfish. But was I ever wrong.

My good friend Sue Cocking, outdoor editor for the Miami Herald newspaper, did a story on this unusual catch and suggested that the angler contact me. Jeremy Cook of Weston, Florida, did follow up, contacting me to report his unique fishing experience.

It seems that during the week of June 16, 2014, Jeremy went out to the beach at Naples, Florida, (people, that is on Florida's Gulf coast where there is a long, shallow shelf) to fish for snook. He saw a big swirl in the water, so he cast his jig to it and the battle was on. After a lengthy fight, he



*Jeremy Cook of Weston, Florida, proudly shows the dolphin he caught in the surf from a beach in Naples, Florida. Photo provided by J. Cook.*

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

## Dolphin Tagging Progress, July31, 2014.

Zone	Area	Southern Limit	Northern Limit	Number Tagged
1	Bahamas	22 ° N	28 ° N	68
2	FL Straits	23 ° N	25 ° N	693
3	South Florida	25 ° N	27 ° N	505
4	Central Florida	27 ° N	30 ° N	25
5	North FL & GA	30 ° N	32 ° N	29
6	Southern SC	32 ° N	33 ° N	49
7	N. SC - S. NC	33 ° N	35 ° N	83
8	Northern NC	35 ° N	36.5 ° N	0
9	Virginia	36.5 ° N	38 ° N	12
10	N. Mid-Atlantic	38 ° N		9
11	Gulf of Mexico			66
12	W Central Atlantic			27
13	Caribbean Sea			20
	Total			1586

discovered that the fish he cast to was not a snook but a cow dolphinfish. The roughly 30-inch female dolphin had wandered in from the Loop Current, which is commonly more than 100 miles offshore. This fish was not a casual stray. It was lost!

## Financial Support Needed

The Dolphinfish Research Program is a research effort by fishermen for fishermen. The 2013 program was amazingly successful in revealing new information on dolphin in the Atlantic, and Caribbean. Fishermen as well as fishery management personnel who have heard talks on the results of the study are impressed by the success of the program in revealing important facets of dolphin life history.

This program needs your help to continue. It does not receive any government funding, relying on private donations for its financial support. It is private fishermen, fishing organizations, and businesses that have provided the funding to allow this research to continue. The DRP works in concert with the Hilton Head Reef Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) organization, which allows all donations to be fully tax deductible.

While the 2014 tagging and recapture activities have soared, financial support has fallen to its lowest point. Please consider making a donation to keep this important and highly successful research program operating. The dolphinfish stock is too important to the recreational fishery to wait until the stock is over-fished to begin collecting needed information. Checks should be made out to Reef Foundation/Dolphin Study and sent to the DRP office at the address shown at the end of this newsletter.

**Your Donations to the Dolphin Study Are Fully Tax Deductible**

**Make checks out to:**

**HH Reef Foundation/Dolphin Study**

Mail checks to the address below.

# Dolphinfish Research Newsletter

September 2014

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## Send in Your Dolphinfish Photos



*Kris Mortensen sent in this picture of a male pompano dolphin caught on July 3, 2014, in 1,000 feet of water off Key Largo, Florida. This fish stood out as very different from the two common dolphin taken from the same school.*

During the twelve years that this program has operated, anglers have sent in pictures of dolphin from all over the world that they have caught, tagged or recaptured. Many shots are of trophy fish or amazing aerial displays. Some photos have featured prominent injuries while others have shown unusual parasites and stomach contents. Many depict the beauty and awesome power of these amazing game fish.

The best of these photos are assembled into a gallery on a new page on the Web site entitled "Photos." Visit [WWW.DOLPHINTAGGING.COM](http://WWW.DOLPHINTAGGING.COM) and click on the "Photos" page to see some interesting fish and the people who pursue them.

The purpose of this Photo Gallery is to show the world-wide interest that anglers have in dolphin and some of the amazing aspects of this impressive animal that many fishermen never get to see. The faces of the many anglers displayed there reflect the great enjoyment fishermen derive from catching dolphin.

You are invited to send in your favorite digital pictures of dolphinfish showing an interesting or unusual aspect about the fish. These could be injuries the fish survived, color patterns, unusual items that the fish ate, or anything else out of the ordinary. I would also like to have pictures of fish you have tagged. Photos must be sharply in focus and clearly depict the subject with a preferred file size of at least 1MB. E-mail your pictures to [CSSLIC@BELLSOUTH.NET](mailto:CSSLIC@BELLSOUTH.NET) along with information about where and when the fish was caught and what is unusual about it.

**Newest Sponsor for 2014**  
**Capt. Larry Harvey, Georgetown, SC**

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