

Dolphinfish Research Program™

April 2006

By: Don Hammond

Dolphin Tagging Study to Continue

Sports fishermen, fishing clubs and marine conservation foundations from the Florida Keys to Jackson Hole, Wyoming have made it very clear they want to see this highly successful study continue. Donations have already exceeded \$25,000, well above the \$12K needed to start the research program and almost half way to reaching the \$55,000 needed to operate the program for a full year. Cooperative Science Services, LLC of Charleston, which will conduct the study, has already started gathering the supplies needed to begin the project.

An important piece of financial support is being provided by the **Hilton Head Reef Foundation** based in Hilton Head, SC. This 501 (c) 3 eleemosynary organization has agreed to receive donations in support of the dolphin tagging study which will allow contributions to be fully tax deductible. Donations should be made out to HH Reef Foundation / Dolphin Study and sent to Cooperative Science Services.

**SPORT
FISHING**
THE MAGAZINE OF SALTWATER FISHING

Major support for the study has also been received from *Sport Fishing* Magazine and World Publications. This nationally renowned saltwater magazine has provided solid support for the study over the last four years, publishing a major article along with news updates on the study's progress to keep fishermen informed. As a sponsor, *Sport Fishing* will provide an invaluable service by alerting new anglers to the importance of the research effort and keeping anglers abreast of the study's findings. The Dolphin Study newsletter will be published in four



The 2006 CSS Dolphin Study will begin to explore the relationship of dolphinfish and Sargassum.



issues of the magazine over the next year. This will be in addition to other articles and news updates.

Donors Making the 2006 Study Possible

Georgetown Landing Marina, Georgetown, SC

Harry Johnson, Jr., Mt. Pleasant, SC

Anonymous, Charleston, SC

South Carolina Saltwater Sportfishing Association,
Charleston, SC

The Rock Boat Fishing Team, Weston, FL

Bailey Smith, Great Exuma, BA

Bill Baugh, Ramrod Key, FL

James Shannon, Isle of Palms, SC

Marine Ventures Foundation, Jackson Hole, WY

Grady White Boats, Greenville, NC

Central Florida Offshore Anglers, Orlando, FL

Tony Gonzalez, Miami, FL

Greenville Saltwater Sportfishing Club,
Greenville, SC

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It's Time to Gear-up for Another Year

Yes, it's going to happen. Anglers are needed to tag dolphinfish in '06! Boat owners and anglers who tagged dolphin for the SCDNR study are invited to join in this new venture. The study also seeks additional anglers who are serious about assisting this research and will take the time to accurately record needed data. However, tagging dolphin is not for everyone.

Anglers interested in participating in the study should contact CSS using the **new contact information** to confirm your mailing address, telephone and email address. Fishermen should also report whether they need a tag applicator. Tags should be distributed in early April.

The 2006 study will be modeled after the former project with minor only differences. The tag will be a new color carrying a different legend but will utilize the same applicator as used in previously. Anglers will also notice a new design of the field data card. This year's study will seek new information regarding the relationship of Sargassum to the presence of dolphin. No study has attempted to quantify this facet of the dolphin's life.

Anglers will need to provide the date, GPS (latitude/longitude) positions for the release site, fork length of the fish, water depth and water temperature. There are three additional questions that relate to the presence and abundance of Sargassum in the area.

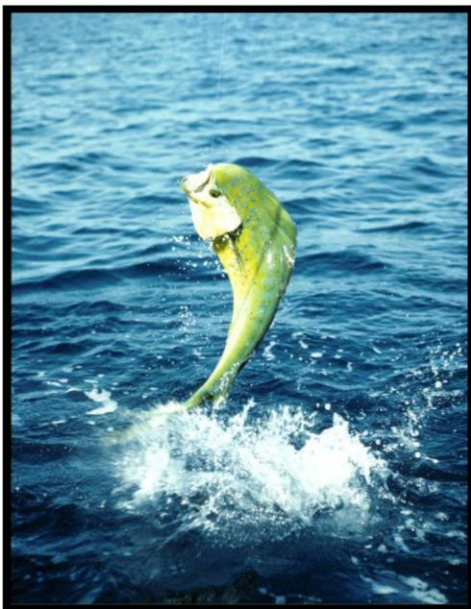


Photo Courtesy of George Poveromo.

Read the first results of the tagging study in the January/February issue of *The Big Game Fishing Journal* on your newsstand now.



Captain Mark Wilson of Rockledge, FL shows one of many dolphin that he tagged in support of the SCDNR study.

Dolphin Study Donation is Tax-Deductible

Your contribution is fully tax-deductible.

Make checks out to:

HH Reef Foundation/Dolphin Study

<http://dolphintagging.com>

The 2006 Dolphin Tagging Study is truly a case of fisheries research by the fishermen. All of the field data collection is being done by fishermen and it is being financed by fishermen and associated industry. This demonstrates that the recreational sector is not willing to wait for government agencies to get around to conducting needed research on economically important recreational species. Dolphinfish are too important to the recreational industry to wait on a decline in their stock to begin collecting needed management data.

Where Has It Been?

Just In. A dolphin tagged by Justin Brown June 24, 2005 off Key Largo, FL, was recaptured February 15, 2006 by Michael Farmer off Boyton Inlet, FL. These points are only 105 miles apart. The fish was out for 236 days. Where did this fish go during this time? Caribbean? Eastern Bahamas? Florida Straits? I sure would like to know.



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