

Dolphinfish Research Program™

September 2002



By: Don Hammond

North Carolina/Virginia of High Importance

Preliminary information from tagged fish recoveries indicates that North Carolina and Virginia are major players in the east coast recreational dolphinfish fishery.

Sportfishing vessels fishing out of these states have reported an inordinately large proportion of the tagged dolphinfish recoveries this year. Historical tag recovery data also hints that the dolphinfish found in the spring off Florida, Georgia and South Carolina may use this area for its summering grounds.

This indicates a serious need for data on the movements and occurrence of dolphinfish in this area. To achieve this information will require the cooperation and support of fishermen from the area. Anglers fishing out of Oregon Inlet and the Chesapeake Bay are needed to assist in tag small dolphinfish in order that their movements can be tracked when they depart in the fall.

Even those vessels that may not be inclined to release dolphinfish can still provide important help. Complete and accurate information on the recapture of tagged fish is crucial to the project. Charter vessels in particular can provide invaluable support to the study by simply taking the time to report tag recoveries. This would be an excellent way for charter captains and mates whose living depends on the presence of a

healthy dolphinfish stock to give something back to the resource. Not to mention that anglers will receive a project tee shirt and could receive an additional \$20 cash reward depending on the tag.

Tagged fish recaptures can be reported via the Internet web site. The ideal recapture report should include the following information.

Date recaptured	GPS Location (Lat./Long.)
Water Depth	Water temperature
Tag number	Fork length of fish
Angler name	Address & Telephone
Tee shirt size	Boat name
Boat's port	
Is boat charter, private, or commercial	

Dolphinfish Recoveries

One tag recovery was reported since the last newsletter. This brings the number of noted recoveries to ten for the study.

A fish tagged by K. O'Neale of Charleston, SC aboard his boat "In 2 Deep" south of Charleston re-affirmed the link between dolphinfish off SC and those off Oregon Inlet, NC. Released in early July the fish traveled 285 nautical miles during the 48 days of liberty before being recaptured by M. Mitchum of Wanchese, NC while fishing out of Oregon Inlet, NC aboard the "Trophy Hunter".

Also of note is that Mr. Mitchum was the first fisherman to use the project's new web site to report information on the tag recovery.

Check out the Dolphinfish Tagging Web Site!

<http://dolphintagging.com> Learn more about the life of these amazing fish. Find out where fish are being tagged and where they are going. Learn what you can earn and win just by tagging dolphinfish.

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Tagging Activity

A total of 61 vessels have tagged 1 or more dolphin for the study. South Carolina tops the list with 34 vessels having tagged fish while Florida follows closely with 25 boats contributing to the study. Georgia is the only other state with boats, two, that have tagged dolphin.

The private boats are clear out pacing the charter boats in the number of fish tagged. Chester Kalb's unnamed vessel in Key West, FL leads the private boats in number of fish tagged with 52 tagged. Harry Johnson's "Petrel IV" out of Mt. Pleasant, SC is second with 24 fish tagged. Bill Baugh's Cudjoe Key, FL based "Ballyhoo" is in third place with 15.

Grady William's "Plumb Crazy" of Charleston, SC currently leads the charter boat category with 14 dolphin tagged. The "Mistress", out of Charleston, captained by Richard Brackett is in second place having tagged 11 fish with Mark Wilson's Docked Wages of Rockledge, FL following closely in third with 10 dolphin tagged.

So far 123 anglers from 6 different states have tagged 320 dolphin for the study. Thanks to the recent effort of anglers in the Keys, Florida anglers have pulled a head in the number of fish tagged, 175. Anglers fishing off SC have marked 145 dolphin. However, SC leads in the number of anglers tagging dolphin with 77 followed by FL with 39. Three anglers from Georgia have tagged fish for the study along with one angler each from California, Ohio and Texas.

It is Florida anglers who dominate the individual tagging category. Key West captain and angler, Chester Kalb, leads by a wide margin with 32 fish. Bill Baugh of Cudjoe Key, just up the road is in second with 11 dolphin. There is a tie for third between Dean Kelley of Ormond Beach and Mark Wilson of Rockledge.

A Penn International 50TW on a Star stand up rod will be given the charter boat, private boat and individual angler who tag the most dolphin by December 31, 2002. All tag cards must be received at project headquarters by 5:00 pm on January 8, 2003. Only one award will be given to an individual.

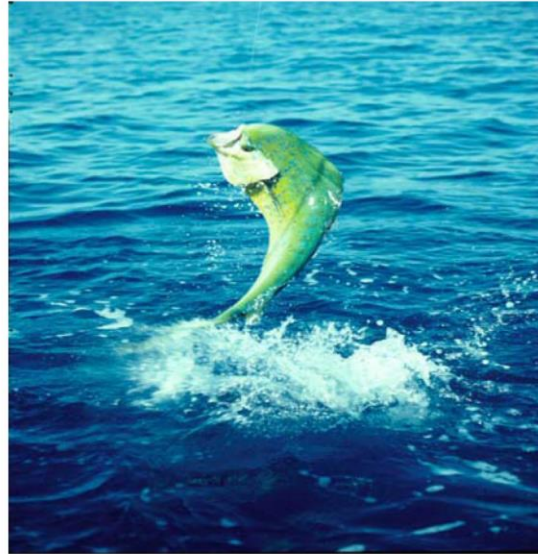


Photo Courtesy of George Poveromo

Photos Requested

We would like to receive photos of your tagging activities. Pictures of anglers releasing tagged dolphin, recapturing tagged fish (including photos of fish with tags in place), or good action shots of dolphin in the water are wanted for use in the newsletter and on the web page. Digital images are preferred but color slides or prints will be accepted. Be sure to identify people appearing in the photo and include a statement giving the SC Dolphin Tagging Study authorization to publish the photo.



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