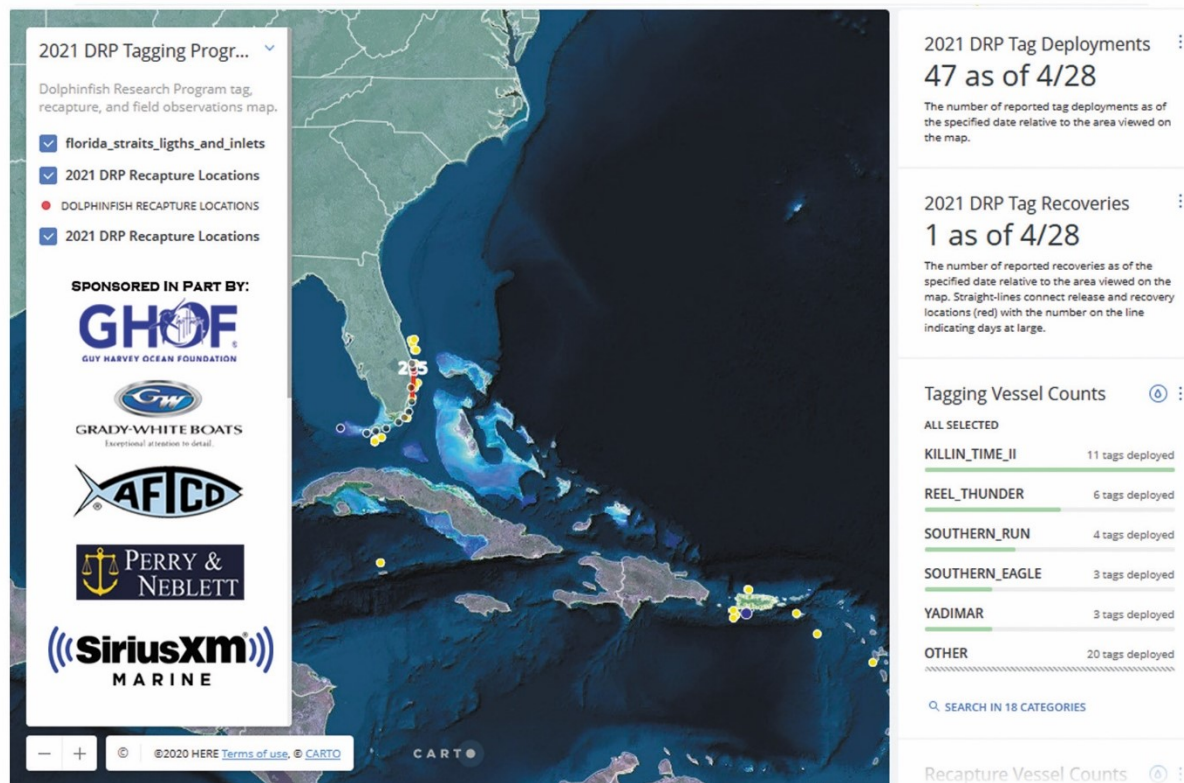


Dolphinfish Research Program™

Made possible by a grant from the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation

April 2021



Reported Tagging Progress from 3/31/2021-4/28/2021:

Robert Malloy (Reel Thunder) 5 **Jesus Duran (Yadimar) 3**
Jim Henrichson (Isabella) 2 **Gary Smolarck (Reel Obsessed) 2**
Alexis Lopez (Coral) 2 **Chase Cornell (Southern Eagle) 1**
Frank Bracciale (Fisherman Delite) 1 **Colt Cook (Hook n' Cook) 1**

Reported Recaptures Since 3/31/2021

Last week, we set out on a satellite tagging trip to southern Puerto Rico for some redemption. Last March, just before COVID-19 changed our world, we traveled down to the same location and fished for 2 days straight and did not see any schools of dolphinfish or anything floating that was holding fish. Other anglers in the area reported that March 2020 was also very slow. Fast forward to this year and March was stellar for those same boats in the same area and we are happy to report that every day we fished last week we found a good amount of fish. We deployed 3 PSATs on 32" and 34" bulls and another on a 48" female. In 2 of the 3 outings we landed 12-14 dolphin with some of the fish pushing 25 pounds. To the east, the eruption of a volcano on St. Vincent affected fishing outings in the Lesser Antilles for at least 2-3 weeks. A recent report from Barbados indicated that medium size fish are plentiful. To the west, we received a report in mid-April that the fishing in the Cayman's was slow for dolphin as well as off of Cozumel. In the Keys, we have seen decent reports of fish being caught. In fact, a 58.3 and 61.4 lb bull were caught off the Lower Keys between mid and late April. Last year in April we did not see any fish reported of this size. Further to the north, the largest mahi landed in the dolphin division of the SC Wahoo series was a 56.4 pound bull. That fish was landed last week and intel suggests fish just started to show around then. The OBX is still not reporting any significant catches of dolphin but that will change very rapidly.

Year to 4/28/2021 for Reported Releases:
47 tagged & released for conservation
and science by
18 different vessels

1 Recaptures to date in 2021 1 verified
0 PSAT movements
3 PSAT Deployments 0 Acoustic Tag

Captain Bouncer Smith's Distinguished Dolphin Tagging Effort



Last year, **Captain Bouncer Smith** retired from the charter fishing industry after a remarkable career that spanned 54 years. Over that time period, he guided more than 6,000 half and 10,600 full-day trips fishing the inshore and offshore waters off South Florida as well as throughout the Caribbean Sea. The number of people that he guided and educated, through his live radio shows, seminars, and magazine articles, are too numerous to estimate but could likely fill a stadium rock concert. One thing is certain: we are all fans of **Bouncer's** career and the positive influence he had and continues to have on the sportfishing industry, fisheries knowledge, and conservation for game fish species such as dolphin. **Bouncer's** retirement as a Miami-based charter captain prompted us to take a detailed look at his contribution to our knowledge of the movements and life history traits of dolphin in the Western Central Atlantic Ocean (WCA) - a species that he loved to target with his clients and also began to tag and

release in conjunction with the **Dolphinfish Research Program**

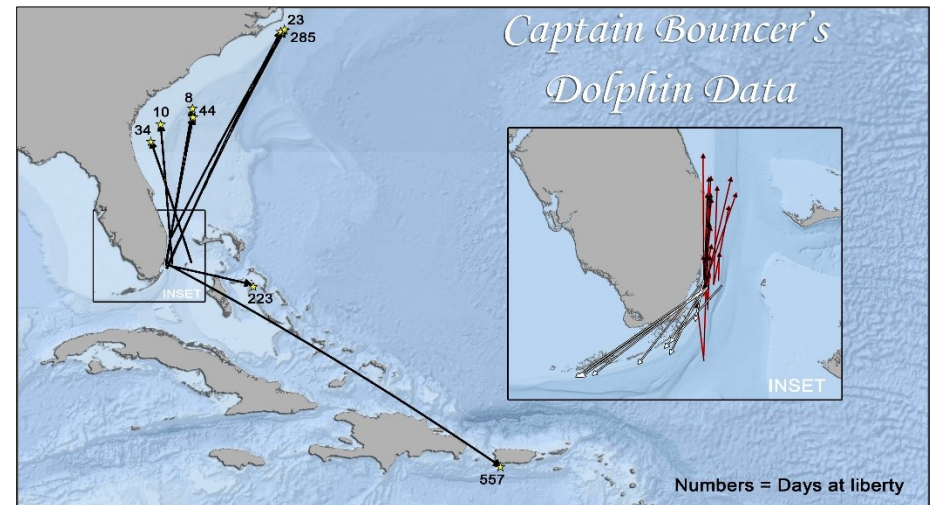
"I have always been very interested in fishery knowledge. We had released a large portion of our mahi catch so tagging made good sense." - **Captain Bouncer Smith**

(DRP) in 2005. In total, **Bouncer** tagged and released 823 dolphin, of which 45 were recovered throughout the WCA. **Bouncer's** high 5.5% recovery rate speaks to his care and handling of dolphin during the tagging process; during the last 14 years of his career, he tagged and released at least 1 dolphin in 190 separate outings aboard his vessel, **Bouncer's Dusky**. One key facet of **Bouncer's** dolphin tagging participation that we would like to highlight is the fact that he was able



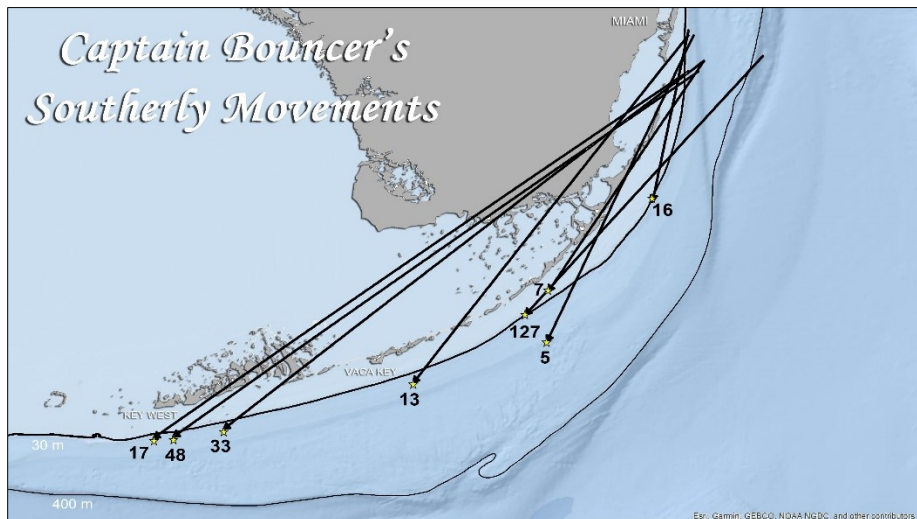
to make a substantial contribution to our knowledge of dolphin through tagging in only 5% of all of his outings from 2005 to 2019. But, through persistent participation, he allowed our program to incorporate his data collection into four separate scientific manuscripts that described, for the first time, movements of dolphin along the U.S. East Coast, in the Bahamas, in the northeastern Caribbean Sea, and on the species population structure in the WCA. As a result, we are pleased to present to him an award of distinguished tagging effort for his dedication to participating in the **DRP** and highlight his specific contributions below. Congratulations **Captain Bouncer Smith** and thank you for your participation!

Recognition of Distinguished Tagging Effort

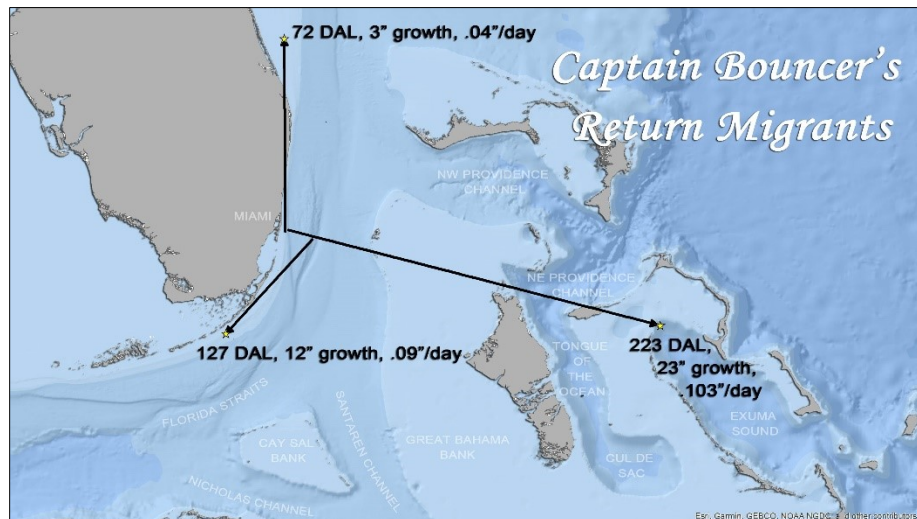


Captain Bouncer's Dolphin Data

Bouncer's dolphin data collection revealed both local and regional short and long-distance movements throughout the WCA. We arranged his data collection into three separate sections based on specific attributes that relate to the recoveries he generated.



Among the most unique tagging results generated by **Bouncer** were 7 movements of dolphin from Miami to near-shelf locations (< 2 miles) from Key West to North Key Largo. All fish that exhibited southerly movements were tagged and released within 4 miles of the 30 meter depth contour and the main reef tract of the Florida insular platform off Miami. In all examples, the leading edge of the western wall of the main part of the Gulf Stream, as calculated by the Naval Oceanographic Office, ranged from 7.5 to 12.6 miles off of Fowey Rocks Lighthouse during the time periods these fish were at liberty. Therefore, these fish were released well inside the main part of the Gulf Stream which could have had an impact on their movement pattern. One fish, tagged offshore the 400 meter depth contour, was at liberty for 127 days and represents a return migrant which is highlighted in the next column.



In total, five of **Bouncer's** dolphin exhibited return migration patterns, which are when dolphin are tagged off Florida and recovered in Florida waters, the Bahamas, off the Outer Banks, or in the Caribbean Sea in a year subsequent to when they were tagged. While conventional tagging data do not provide the pathways traveled by fish, the timing, when compared to surface drifter tracks and regional oceanography, provide realistic comparisons that suggest small and large-scale recirculation patterns of dolphin biomass through the Florida Straits. Bouncer's tagging activity contributed to this knowledge. To read more about U.S. East Coast return migrants [click here](#). Growth is another key aspect of these recoveries which is highlighted below.

Dolphin Growth



Raudrick Nazario of San German, Puerto Rico, displays the 58 pound tagged dolphin he caught off the southwest coast of Puerto Rico on December 9th, 2012 (Photo provided by R. Nazario)

Bouncer currently holds the record for the longest time at liberty for a tagged and recovered dolphin: 557 days. He tagged and released the 20" peanut off Miami and it was reported by **Raudrick Nazario** of San German, Puerto Rico, after he caught the 58-pound brute off southwestern PR (image left). Based on the tagged and recovered

lengths, the fish grew 29" in 557 days at large which equates to a weekly growth rate of .36"/week. Growth obtained for fish at liberty up to a year for our tagging program observe dolphin grow around 45" or 28 pounds (35 grams per day) a year (unpublished). This equates to a weekly growth rate of .86" and shows Bouncer's brute started to slow in terms of growth in length but made up size in terms of pounds packed onto its 49" frame. It is relevant to note here that my predecessor, **Don Hammond**, received a recapture report of one of **Bouncer's** fish that was at liberty for 1,470 days (4.02 years)! However, the individual that submitted the report never responded back to repeated inquires, never sent in the tag, or corroborated additional details to verify the report. Nevertheless, **Bouncer's** tagged dolphin provide some remarkable examples of growth and life history of this species in which both scientists and anglers alike can learn about for years and decades to come. In April, 2019, we published a more in-depth analysis of Bouncer's brute. [Click here](#) to read the PDF of that newsletter or [click here](#) to read it on [dolphintagging.com](#). For a complete listing of all of Bouncer's tag recoveries visit:

<https://beyonourshores.org/captain-bouncer-smiths-distinguished-tagging-effort/>

Dolphinfish Research Program Newsletter April 2021

New DRP Pocket Tees Now Available!



Through the years we have had various requests to print DRP pocket tees. We are pleased to announce that we have recently met this request! Purchase a new DRP pocket tee to help sustain and grow of our tagging program. As a leader in public engagement in research and conservation of dolphin, your purchase will advance our expanding organization by helping to purchase more tags to distribute to anglers, bolster our education programs and materials, and improve fisheries data collection among recreational, for-hire, and small-scale commercial fishermen. Help the DRP continue documenting movement and population trends of wild dolphin in our oceans in 2021 by supporting us today. There are two ways to support our effort. You can make a tax-deductible donation to the Beyond Our Shores Foundation ([click here](#) to donate) or purchase a kit, shirt, or hat in our online shop ([click here](#) to shop).

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