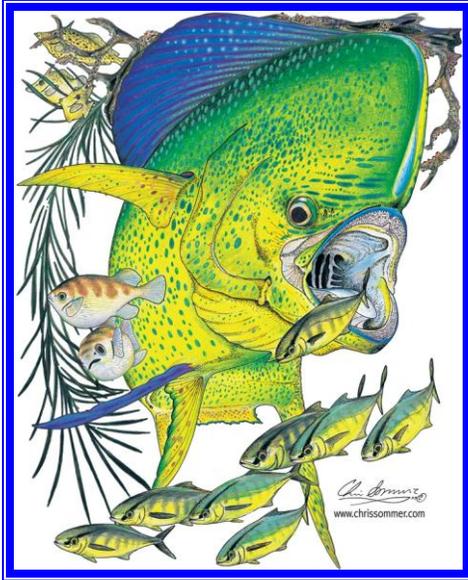


# Cooperative Science Services, LLC Dolphinfish Research Program

Made possible by a grant from Costa Del Mar

April 2012



## Another East Coast Export

Last issue of the newsletter reported on a Miami, Florida, dolphinfish that traveled to the eastern Bahamas. This was the second dolphin to travel from the U.S. east coast to eastern Bahamian waters. The featured recapture for March is a fish that departed U.S. waters to travel to the eastern Caribbean, becoming the tenth dolphin tagged off the East Coast to be recovered by fishermen off Caribbean islands.

This tagged dolphin is the first to be recovered in the Anguilla archipelago of the Lesser Antilles. The fish was tagged on June 20, 2011, off Marathon, Florida, by Philip Brownell of Coconut Creek, Florida, during a fishing trip with his father, Russell, aboard their boat the *Mad Fin*. While Philip has tagged more than 200 dolphin, this is his first long-distance recovery.

Capt. Roland Greaux, of Saint Jean, St. Barthelemy, recovered the fish during a commercial fishing trip off St. Barthelemy in the French West Indies on March 2, 2012. The fish weighed 16 pounds and 5 ounces at recapture. M. Margras Ingenu with Service Navigation in the port of Gustavia, St. Barthelemy, was kind enough to send in the report for Capt. Greaux.

At liberty for 256 days, the fish most likely traveled a minimum of 2,800 miles: 1,300 miles along the U.S. Atlantic Coast and a minimum of 1,500 miles southeastward to the French West Indies. This route would require the fish to travel an average of 11 miles per day (mpd) to reach its destination in the time allotted. However, the fish could have taken the longer route depicted in the figure by the dotted line. Traveling eastward toward the center of the North Atlantic would mean the fish had to travel at least 3,700 miles to reach

its recovery site. To cover this much distance in the time allotted would have required the fish to increase its travel rate by a third to 14.4 mpd. This faster speed is still more than 30 percent slower than the average speed observed for Florida fish traveling north along the U.S. Atlantic coast.

Three dolphinfish tagged off the U.S. Atlantic coast have been recovered in the northeast corner of the Caribbean chain of islands. This area's ocean floor is characterized by deep canyons that link the Caribbean Sea with the open Atlantic. Such large deep passages could serve as major highways for highly migratory fish such as dolphin, moving between these two bodies of



The first 1,300 miles of the fish's travel, shown in yellow, is well documented from previous tag recoveries. The white lines show the routes the fish may have taken.

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water in their annual migrations. Tag recoveries from the southwest corner of Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and Mexico's Yucatan prove that dolphins do leave the Atlantic, passing between the islands to enter the Caribbean Sea.



Three tagged dolphins have been recovered in the northeast corner of the Caribbean Sea, one off St. Kitts (green), one off Antigua (yellow) and one off St. Barthelemy (white).

The fish recovered off Antigua and St. Barths were recovered in the same period of the year, less than four weeks apart. However, the St. Kitts fish was recaptured in mid-spring. The Antigua/St. Barths fish may represent an earlier point in the movement of dolphins through the area, while the St. Kitts fish could reflect the extended nature of the dolphin migration. It should also be noted that these fish were originally tagged off south Florida and the Florida Keys.

### FAO of U.N. Recognizes Med Dolphin Study

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization has issued a paper recognizing the cooperative dolphin tagging study being conducted in the Mediterranean Sea between the DRP and the Spanish *Confederation of Responsible Recreational Anglers*. In this paper they reference the tagging study as a good example of incorporating recreational anglers into the scientific process of fisheries management. This is a point that the U.N. agency feels is important to the success of managing shared fisheries. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department recognizes the importance of involving the consumers of the fisheries resources in

research to get their buy-in to management measures, making them responsible fishermen.

The endorsement by this agency of the United Nations of the Dolphin Tagging Study is indicative of the international support the DRP has received.

The paper's citation is as follows:  
Camiñas J.A., 2011. Dolphinfish (*C. hippurus*) recreational fishing in the Mediterranean Sea, a theoretical tool for scientists and managers. A CopeMed II contribution to the CopeMed II - MedSudMed Workshop on Fisheries and appraisal of *Coryphaena hippurus* (Palermo, Italy. 5-6 July, 2011). GCP/INT/028/SPA-GCP/INT/006/EC. CopeMed II Occasional Paper N° 4: 7 pp.



Length, weight and sex data are needed on dolphins caught from the U.S. Atlantic Coast, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea and Bahamas.

### Help Requested

Sports fishing clubs and other sponsors of offshore big game tournaments in the Western North Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea are being asked to assist the Dolphinfish Research Program. Sponsors of these events can provide a very valuable service to science by simply recording specific data on each dolphinfish entered into their events.

Tournaments are being asked to measure the fork length for each dolphin that is weighed in for their event and to record the length, weight and sex for the fish. Length-weight information such as this is extremely useful in learning about the life history of the animals and monitoring changes in their body condition between areas and from year to year. A drop in weight per given length between two areas could indicate that a major spawning activity had occurred between the two areas. A drop in the average body weight per length in one area from one year to the next could suggest a lower abundance of food in that year.

**Donations are Fully Tax-Deductible**

Make checks out to:

**HH Reef Foundation/Dolphin Study**

Mail checks to the address below.

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

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In 2011 data on the length, weight and sex of more than 370 dolphin were collected from Islamorada, Florida, to Oregon Inlet, North Carolina. Contributing data were the Blue Water Fishing Club of Florence, South Carolina, and the Florida Sports Fishing Association, Cocoa Beach, Florida. Length-weight data were also collected in Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, through the help of the Piedmont Offshore Fishing Club of Greensboro, North Carolina. John Ouellette and his son Kyle of Miami, Florida, collected data at the Florida Coconut's 25<sup>th</sup> Dolphin Tournament in Key Largo, Ocean Reef Tournament in Key Largo, the Island Grill Dolphin Tournament in Islamorada and the University Of Miami, Sports Hall of Fame First Dolphin Tournament in Key Largo.

Individuals can get involved just as John Ouellette did. You do not have to be fishing in a tournament. Your everyday catch of dolphin can contribute just as much information. It only takes a minute to measure and record this important information, and it is a simple and easy way for consumers of the resource to assist in learning more about the fish so important to their recreation and enjoyment.

If you, your club or tournament would be willing to assist in collecting length-weight data on dolphinfish, please contact Don Hammond by e-mail or telephone using the contact information at the end of this newsletter.

### New 2012 Financial Contributors

The Rock Boat Fishing Team, Weston, FL



Milliken's Reef Restaurant in Port Canaveral, Florida, will host its second fundraising event to benefit the Dolphinfish Research Program. Dave Heil, tournament director, reported that owner Jason Solano announced that all proceeds from its Second Annual Milliken's Reef Classic Fishing Tournament scheduled for June 30, 2012, will benefit dolphinfish research.

### 2012 Financial Supporters

Robert Frevert, Jupiter, FL  
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Young pompano dolphin look very similar to common dolphin, but the short pectoral fin, greatest depth at mid-body, and absence of a point on the anal fin will still separate the two species. The crew of Don Gates' Killin Time II caught this pompano off Marathon, Florida.

### For More Information, Contact

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