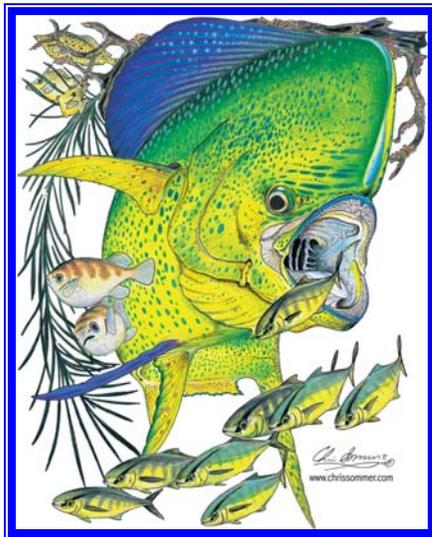


Cooperative Science Services, LLC Dolphin Tagging Research Project

January 2007



Offshore fishermen showed a strong commitment to the study in 2006 with 32 boats tagging 10 or more dolphin while 48 anglers captured and tagged five or more fish to help science. These sports fishing boats were responsible for 83% of the dolphin tagged in 2006. The combined efforts of the top five boats, all from Florida, (*Draggin Dreams*, Capt. Don Brown of Pembroke Pines; *Thomas Flyer*, Capt. Jimbo Thomas of Miami; *Killin Time*, Capt. Don Gates of Chuluota; *Rock Boat*, Capt. Richard DeLizza of Weston; and *Sea Witch*, Capt. Mark Mitchell of Orlando) resulted in 703 fish being tagged or 47% of the total fish marked for the year.

Visit the program's Web site www.dolphintagging.com and go to the "Results Page" to view a list of the boats and anglers who participated in 2006 along with the number of dolphin that each tagged.

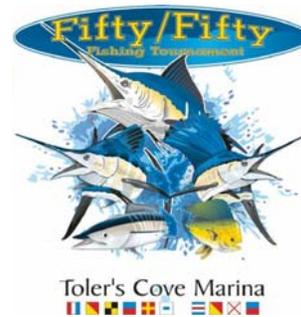
2006 an Outstanding Year

The result of the first year of the Dolphin Tagging Study as a private research program has been impressive. 2006 saw the second-highest number of dolphin tagged, 1,510 fish, in the study's five-year history. The 44 reported recoveries of fish tagged in 2006 set a new record for recaptures in a single year, and that is before the international recovery reports anticipated in late winter and spring of 2007.

More than 250 anglers from 22 states participated in the project during 2006. These fishermen utilized 143 vessels from Montauk, New York, to Sugarland, Texas, to support this study. The research program signed up 69 additional offshore boat-owners to tag fish in 2006. This makes over 950 anglers and boat owners who have registered to tag dolphin for the study.

Anglers fishing off Florida's east coast tagged 76%, 1,146, of the dolphinfish marked and released in 2006. Fishermen off South Carolina contributed 13% of the tagged fish while anglers off North Carolina provided 3% of the total fish marked. Anglers fishing Bahamian waters increased their tagging efforts, providing almost 5% of the fish marked for the year. Tagging in the Mid-Atlantic Bight and Gulf of Mexico remained low with just 43 and 16 dolphin tagged in those areas respectively during 2006. For the first time, dolphin were tagged in the Western Central Atlantic off St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

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CSS Dolphin Tagging Newsletter

January 2007

Page 2.

2006 Tagging Activity

Dolphin Study Tagging 2006 Results.

Zone	Area	Southern Limit	Northern Limit	Number Tagged
1	Bahamas	22° N	28° N	71
2	FL Straits	23° N	25° N	729
3	South Florida	25° N	27° N	344
4	Central Florida	27° N	30° N	73
5	North FL & GA	30° N	32° N	13
6	South Carolina	32° N	33° N	183
7	N. SC - S. NC	33° N	35° N	34
8	Northern NC	35° N	36.5° N	10
9	Virginia	36.5° N	38° N	16
10	N. Mid-Atlantic	38° N		17
11	Gulf of Mexico	24° N	30.2° N	16
12	W Central Atlantic	0°	22° N	4

Top Taggers for 2006

Many of the boat captains and anglers participating in this research program are very dedicated to the study. These fishermen find great reward in having one of "their" fish caught at some distant location. These fishermen seize every opportunity to tag dolphin and are willing to stop on a school dolphin to tag a large number of fish quickly.

Once again, Florida boats and anglers dominated the tagging in 2006. Repeating as Top Angler is Justin Brown of Pembroke Pines who captured 256 dolphin for tagging while fishing with his father, Don Brown, on their boat *Draggin Dreams*. With 256 tagged dolphin they also qualified as the top private boat for 2006 but being limited to one award, they selected the angler category. These dolphin aficionados are so dedicated as to make offshore trips specifically to tag dolphin. Their efforts resulted in 9 of their tagged fish being recovered in 2006.

Many fishermen have a mind-set that charter boats don't throw back edible fish. But Capt. Jimbo Thomas's boat the *Thomas Flyer* out of Miami clearly shows that is not always the case by tagging 217 dolphin in 2006. For the second year straight Capt. Thomas has earned the Top Charter Boat award and in so doing has set an example of how charter boats can work with science for better fisheries management.

Top Private Boat award was earned by the *Killin Time*, owned by Capt. Don Gates of Chuluota by tagging 129 dolphin during 2006. Capt. Gates is one of just a few participants in the Dolphin Tagging Study who have tagged fish each year of the study. Capt. Gates, who is moving to Texas, is taking on a new challenge of tagging

dolphin in the Gulf of Mexico and introducing Gulf anglers to the Dolphin Tagging Study.

A new award was introduced in 2006 for the boat tagging the most dolphin outside the east coast of Florida. This was created to encourage more tagging by boats fishing areas that don't have as large supply of dolphin. The *Special Lady* out of Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, captained by John Thomas received this year's award for tagging 38 dolphin off the Carolinas. Like the *Killin Time*, the crew of the *Special Lady* have tagged fish for the Dolphin Tagging Study every year of the study.

Each of these top taggers will receive a Shimano TLD50 2 Speed reel on a Star Custom Crafted standup rod. These year-end incentive awards are made possible by donations from Shimano Fishing Tackle and the Don Coffey Company and Star Rods of the Sea Striker Company. The program deeply appreciates their support.



Next Month: Satellite Tag Results



Photo Courtesy of Richard DeLizza

Donations to the Dolphin Study are Fully Tax-Deductible

Make checks out to:

HH Reef Foundation/Dolphin Study

CSS Dolphin Tagging Newsletter

January 2007

Page 3.

Latest Recovery Joins 1,000 Mile Club

A late report on a fish recaptured in July 2006 has become the eighth member in the dolphin 1,000 mile club. This exclusive club is for tagged dolphinfish that are recovered 1,000 miles or more from their original release sight. Four members involved international travel, but this fish joins three others that accomplished it through domestic travel.

The dolphin was tagged by Mark Mitchell of Orlando, Florida, off Key West, Florida, on June 22, 2006, while fishing aboard his boat, the *Sea Witch*. The fish was recovered 23 days later, July 15, by Lori Iwanowski of Tabernacle, New Jersey, while fishing aboard the *Tail Dancer* in Spencer Canyon off Cape May, New Jersey. The fish had traveled a minimum of 1,123 miles averaging 49 miles per day during its three weeks of travel. At time of release, Mitchell measured the fish at 17 inches fork length. At recapture it was estimated to be 35 inches in length but because it was not physically measured, growth is considered to be unknown.

Recaptures of fish tagged in 2006 showed the highest percentage of recaptures, 24.4%, within the Mid-Atlantic Bight in a single year. Recaptures from the area of Cape Hatteras to Nantucket Island normally compose fewer than 20% of the total tagged fish recoveries. The previous record number of recoveries in the MAB was in 2004 when 22% of the tag recoveries came from these more northern waters.

The 2006 tag recovery reports have set a new record for the most reports in a single year with 48. Four of the reports involved dolphin marked in 2005, including one that was at liberty for more than a year and two fish that traveled to the Caribbean. The remaining 44 recoveries involving fish marked in 2006 were recovered along the Eastern Seaboard.

Four of the 2006 tag recoveries reflected movements in excess of 1,000 miles. This is the highest number of long-distance movements reported in a single year for the study. These recoveries doubled the number of fish in the dolphin 1,000 mile club.

2006 recaptures not only exhibited long-distance travel but they also showed high travel speeds. Ten fish had average daily travel speeds in excess of 40 miles. More than 60 miles per day were traveled by four of the tagged fish recovered. The fastest movement was a fish that traveled 79 miles from one day to the next.

For a complete listing of recoveries of 2006 fish go to the "Study Results" page on www.dolphintagging.com.



Donations Support Dolphin Research

The continuation of this highly successful study hinges on private financial support. In today's world of marine fisheries management there is not enough state or federal money available to finance research needed on fish stocks that are overfished. These declining fish stocks receive priority when it comes to research dollars.

Fishery managers know that proactive research should be done on important stocks before they get into trouble. However, it is hard for state and federal agencies to justify spending dwindling research dollars on species that are, by all indications, still healthy.

This is the dilemma that research on dolphinfish faces. The CSS Dolphin Tagging Research Project has gathered information on the species that had never before been achieved. It has provided insight into movements of the fish that astounded researchers and managers alike. But this study will only continue with financial help from private industry and individuals.

Donations to the Dolphin Study are fully tax deductible. Contributions should be made out to the Hilton Head Reef Foundation/ Dolphin Study and sent to CSS at the address shown below.

I wish to thank all of the individuals, clubs, organizations and businesses that provided financial support in 2006 to get this program started as a private research endeavor. Some individuals had reservations as to the potential success of such private fisheries research. However, the numerous outstanding achievements of the 2006 program clearly speak to the quality of the project and the high level of public support that it receives.

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