

Cooperative Science Services, LLC Dolphinfish Research Program

Made possible by a grant from Costa Del Mar

September 2011



Sportfishing Groups Support Research

The Dolphinfish Research Program (DRP) relies on private donations to finance its studies on dolphinfish. There have been severe cutbacks in funding for marine fisheries research at both state and federal levels. Today there is not enough government money to do the work needed on the stocks of fish identified as overfished, leaving little chance for money to support work on a fish stock like dolphinfish not considered to be in trouble.

Sports fishing organizations and tournaments have come to be major supporters of the work being conducted by the DRP. Not only are these clubs and tournaments providing substantial financial support, they are also collecting important biological data on dolphinfish harvested and encouraging anglers to tag small fish. This year eight sports fishing clubs and three privately sponsored fishing competitions (not club sponsored) have provided support for this important research work.

Jason Solano, general manager of *Milliken's Reef Restaurant* in Port Canaveral, Florida, joined with Dave Heil of Winter Park, Florida, a noted tournament director, to hold a sports fishing tournament to raise money for the DRP. Jason Solano used his contacts with local businesses to arrange sponsorships that covered most of the expenses of the event. Dave Heil, in addition to organizing the program, worked with his contacts in the *Central Florida Offshore Anglers* and the *Florida Sports Fishing Association* to secure volunteers to staff the July 30th event. The well-organized, fun event attracted 65 boats and more than 300 participants in its inaugural event. As a result, the tournament was able to donate \$10,000 to dolphinfish research. Jason and Dave

wish to thank all of the fishermen and volunteers who made the tournament so successful and they look forward to holding another fun tournament next year to support the DRP.

At the awards ceremony for the *Milliken's Reef Classic* fishing tournament, Terry Winn, president of the *Central Florida Offshore Anglers* of Orlando, Florida, presented Don Hammond with a check from his club for \$5,000 to fund the work of the DRP. Seven other fishing clubs made contributions to support dolphinfish research. They were:

Florence Blue Water Fishing Club, Florence, SC \$1,500
Piedmont Offshore Fishing Club, Greensboro, NC \$1,200

Florida Sports Fishing Association, Cape Canaveral, FL \$1,000

Beaufort Sportfishing and Diving Club, Beaufort, SC \$750

Sebastian Inlet Sportfishing Association, Melbourne, FL \$500

South Carolina Saltwater Sportfishing Association, Charleston, SC \$500

West Palm Beach Fishing Club, West Palm Beach, FL \$500

Several clubs used their organized fishing events to benefit the work being done by the DRP. The *Central Florida Offshore Anglers* and the *Florida Sports Fishing Association* collected length and weight data on the fish entered in their tournaments. Members of the *Florence Blue Water Fishing Club* used a competition to raise money, collect length and weight data on dolphinfish and

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promote dolphin tagging. The *Piedmont Offshore Fishing Club* used a club fishing event to get members to tag dolphin off North Carolina.

Tailwalker Marine, a Georgetown, South Carolina, based boat dealer, donated \$400 from its *2011 Offshore Challenge* fishing tournament to help fund dolphin research. Sponsors of the Georgetown, South Carolina, based *Belle Isle Wahoo Tournament* contributed \$500 from their competition.

Through their donations, these businesses and organizations show their concern for the future of the dolphin stock and the need for more research before the fishery is overfished. More help is needed from fishing clubs and tournaments along the entire U.S. Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts to collect important biological data on the dolphin they catch, encourage tagging and provide financial support for this research. Contact Don Hammond to learn more about how you can help, using the information at the end of this newsletter.

Milliken's Reef restaurant, the favorite dining and gathering spot among local fishermen in Port Canaveral, Florida, sponsored a fishing tournament on July 30, 2011, that raised \$10,000 to support dolphin research.

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

Dolphin Tagging Progress by Zones, August 31, 2011.

Zone	Area	Southern Limit	Northern Limit	Number Tagged
1	Bahamas	22° N	28° N	44
2	FL Straits	23° N	25° N	308
3	South Florida	25° N	27° N	231
4	Central Florida	27° N	30° N	48
5	North FL & GA	30° N	32° N	30
6	Southern SC	32° N	33° N	105
7	N. SC - S. NC	33° N	35° N	27
8	Northern NC	35° N	36.5° N	6
9	Virginia	36.5° N	38° N	0
10	N. Mid-Atlantic	38° N		2
11	Gulf of Mexico			81
12	W Central Atlantic			20
13	Caribbean Sea			32
	Total			934

Follow a Dolphin Under Water

Those of you who have followed this research over the years are aware of the program's use of archival satellite tags to monitor dolphin's use of the vertical water column and the temperatures that they occupy. You may have seen one of the graphs that depict the fish's vertical movements over a 24-hour period. However, I have never been able to figure a way to show a long-term, multi-day, depiction of these vertical movements.

Enter the newest model of the fishery researcher with the latest computer skills. Wessley Merten, of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, is finishing his Ph.D. degree in marine science at the University of Puerto Rico. The research project he chose for his doctorate deals with the behavior and biology of dolphinfish found around the Caribbean Island. His desire to conduct research on dolphinfish in the Caribbean led to DRP joining with him in a collaborative research effort. Earlier this year a pop-off satellite archival tag (PSAT) was provided for deployment in the Caribbean as part of his research.

The PSAT was deployed in April of this year, and the resulting 30-day track is the first look at the underwater behavior of a dolphinfish in the Caribbean Sea and the longest period that a dolphin has been monitored by PSAT. As part of his research, Wess has devised a way to graphically depict the fish's vertical movements as well as showing the temperatures that it used in a video format. He also shows the movements in relation to day and night periods as well as to the moon phases. He terms this a "lifescape." He has completed the first segment of a six-part series, following the fish after its release. This segment covers the first five days.

To view the first installment of this dolphin's underwater behavior, visit the You Tube video by clicking on the following link, [Click here](#). Be sure to read Wess's introduction to the video before viewing the 12-minute animation.

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Dolphinfish Photo Gallery Established

During the nine years that this program has operated, anglers have sent in pictures of dolphin that they have tagged or caught. Many shots are of trophy fish or amazing aerial displays. Some photos have featured prominent injuries while others have shown unusual parasites and stomach contents. Many depict the beauty and awesome power of these amazing game fish.

The main theme of this page is to show the world-wide interest that anglers have in dolphin and some of the amazing aspects of this impressive animal that many fishermen never get to see. The faces of the many anglers displayed here reflect the great enjoyment fishermen derive from catching dolphin.

The best of these photos have been assembled into a gallery on a new page on the Web site entitled "Photos." Visit WWW.DOLPHINTAGGING.COM and click on the "Photos" page to see some interesting fish and the people who pursue them.

You are invited to send in your favorite digital pictures of dolphinfish. These could be of fish showing anything out of the ordinary or pictures of fish you have tagged. Photos must be sharply in focus and clearly depict the subject with a preferred file size of 1MB. Email your pictures to CSSLLC@BELLSOUTH.NET along with information about where and when the fish was caught and what is unusual about it.



Capt. Dave Leverone, of Kona, Hawaii sent in this photo of a Pacific pompano dolphin caught on his boat in April. He reports that while pompano are not common, they do occasionally catch them in the Hawaiian Islands.

New 2011 Financial Contributors

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Florida Sports Fishing Association, Cocoa Beach, FL
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**Your donations to the Dolphin Study are
Fully Tax-Deductible**

Make checks out to:

HH Reef Foundation/Dolphin Study

Mail checks to the address below.

For More Information, Contact

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