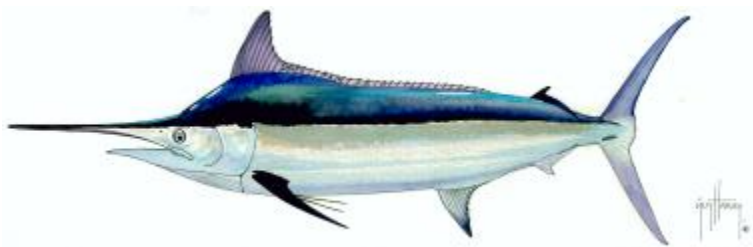


BLACK MARLIN BULLETIN

NUMBER 2

SEPTEMBER 2013



Attention all Billfish Anglers Black marlin fin clips needed

With the black marlin fishing heating up throughout Australia, in this second edition of the bulletin we investigate the background behind post-release survival and handling techniques, as well as giving an all-important update on our latest finclip entries.

Post-Release Survival

Post-release survival in pelagic fish is still not well understood and hard to standardize, as there are obviously large differences between both the durability of a species and individual fish. From what tag-recapture and satellite tagging data have suggested, black marlin are one of the most robust species when it comes to surviving a typical catch-and-release event. However one factor that can evidently affect survival is the skills of the tagger themselves and the same principle applies when taking a fin clip. A key rule of thumb is **PLACEMENT IS CRITICAL**; incorrect placement can also lead to a tag being overlooked when the fish is recaptured as well as severe bruising or flesh mutilation if too much force is used. Remember it doesn't take very much pressure at all to embed a tag through the skin of a marlin.

Handling Techniques

While tagging a pelagic fish or taking a finclip, it is a good policy to keep the fish in the water alongside the boat. However if a fish needs to be removed from the water to extract the hook, safely take a sample and/or document it for record purposes, anglers should lift the fish horizontally, either with their hands or in the case of small fish, with a knotless, rubberized landing net. Most small to moderately large sized fish can be landed by hand. When doing so it is important not to hoist fish vertically out of the water, as this may cause damage to muscles and tendons as well as to internal organs. Ideally, this should be done with wet hands or soft, wet gloves to minimize slime and scale loss. For the best chance of having your fish survive to be recaptured, always try to prevent the fish damaging itself on hard, hot, or dry surfaces. A wet foam mat or similar is ideal (or a wet towel will suffice) for on-boat tagging. This enables improved accuracy of tagging and fin sampling, may simplify hook removal and allow more accurate recording of the length and weight. Ideally, a fish should be played until it is subdued enough to limit head shaking and thrashing near the boat, which can not only damage the fish but be dangerous to those in the boat. After tagging or fin-clipping, fish can and should be revived by motoring slowly forward and making sure the mouth of the fish is under water.

Fin Clipping Progress to Date

West Coast and Gulf of Carpentaria

After an great start on the west coast, Len Vertigan from *King Bay GFC* in Dampier reports that they have taken 10 black marlin fin-clips so far, while around the peninsular the *Nickol Bay GFC* are on a total of 4 fin-clips. The *King Bay GFC* contingent was led by 3 clippings from Scott MacGowan on *The Wench*, closely followed by female anglers Talisha Cook (Still Dreamin) and Joanne Tatham (*Nautic Lady*) recording 2 and 1 clippings respectively. *King Bay* anglers accountaing for one sample each so far are Adam Galash, Adrian Gibbson (*Premium Edition*), junior angler Harrison Weeding (*Ozzie Dollar*) and Paul Leijser (*Swell Azz*).

Further North Chris Nisbet of Broome Billfish Charters extended his tally with another samples bringing his total to two samples and Jeda Ellen of *Makaira Gamefishing Charters* has jumped to top of the Western Australia leader board with 5 black marlin finclips. To round out Western Australia's efforts the Exmouth region has also accounted for fin clips from Kim Dennis, Ryan Mumford, Josh Bruynzeel and Eddy Lawler (*Peak sports fishing*) (number of samples yet to be finalized). An update from Ben Bright operating in the Gulf of Carpentaria has added a second black marlin fin clip to continue his season in Wiepa.

East Coast

With the waters warming and bait in quantity on the east coast of Australia, the late August fishing kicked off with QGFA's Mick Mieres and Evan Jones ,managing to collect 5 juvenile black marlin fin-clips aboard *Princess Sea* in the week leading up to the Townsville Billfish challenge. They then backed up with another two samples after the Innisfail billfish tournament, bringing their tally to 7. These numbers in north Queensland were then bolstered on the tournament front kicking off with Brent Higgins on Sunshine Coast GFC boat *Kamikaze* taking 3, as well as boats *Billy the Kid*, *Annie B* and *Zuri* getting 1 apiece. Lastly, Sunshine Coast GFC skipper's Paddy Diamond and Craige McCulloch both managed black marlin fin-clip samples.

Leader Board	
Angler	Clips
Mick Mieres	7
Nick Hill	6
Jeda Ellens	5
Scott Macgowan	3
Brent Higgins	3
Talish Cook	2
Chris Nisbet	2
Ben Bright	2
Craige McCulloch	1
Paddy Diamond	1
Talisha Cook	1
Adrian Gibson	1
Joanne Tatham	1
Adam Galash	1
Pual Leijser	1
Harrison Weeding	1
Kim Anderson	1
Kim Dennis	*
Ryan Mumford	*
Josh Bruynzeel	*
Eddy Lawler	*
Annie B	1
Zuri	1
West Coast Total	29+
East Coast Total	19
Grand Total	48+

*contributed samples, number yet to be determined

We have also established a number of Western Australia regional collectors who are helping to get the word out, and deserve acknowledgement. In Exmouth I would like to give thanks to Jeni and Matt Gates from *Exmouth Tackle World* and *Exmouth Game Fishing Club* Weigh Master Dennis-Bryan Smith. As well, our Dampier coordinator Len Vertigan from *King Bay Game Fishing Club*, has been making above and beyond contributions. Note that all participants mentioned are now entered into the draw to win a signed copy of Dr Julian Pepperell's award winning book "Fishes of the Open Ocean" (one for each coast).