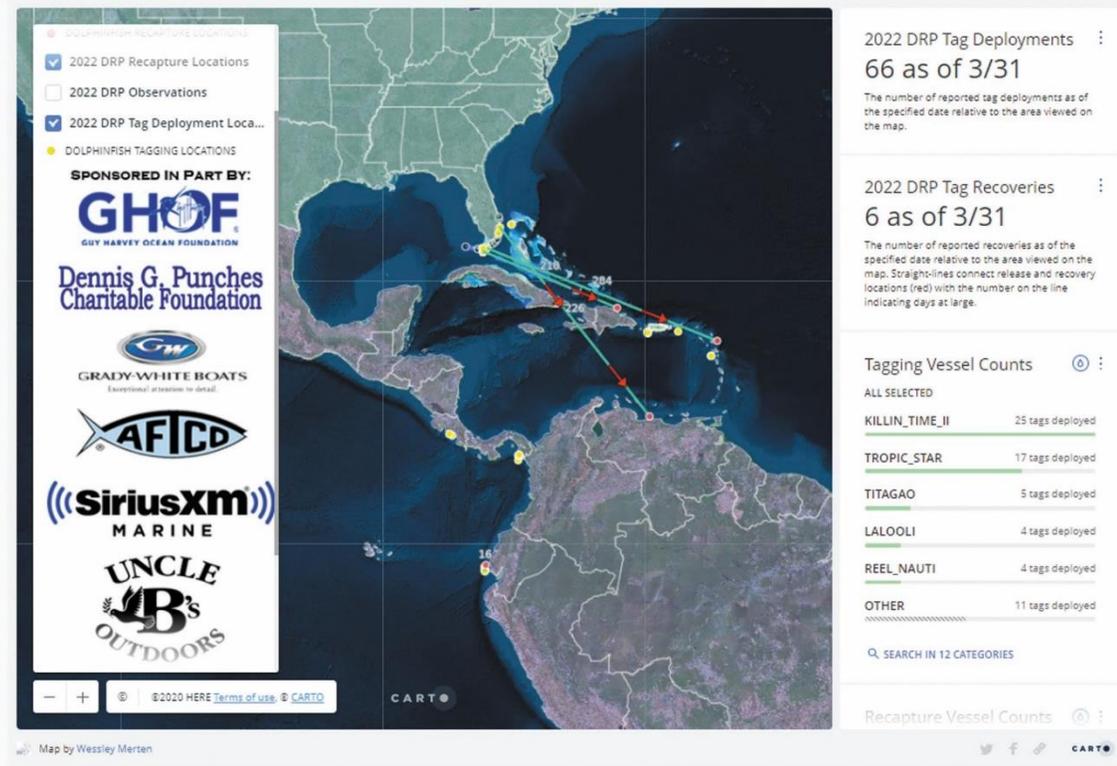


# Dolphinfish Research Program™

Made possible by a grant from the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation

March 2022



The spring run of dolphin along the south coast of Puerto Rico has been on fire this season. However, many anglers have actually noted larger females and less large bulls during this spring run which really began early in February. This past week, we have deployed 3 Microwave Telemetry satellite tags on 2 females and a male. Two of the tags are 90-day preset geolocating tags while the other tag is a high-rate vertical movement tag. Tomorrow, we have one more day on the water to try to deploy up to 4 more tags. This work feeds into our mission to describe the movements of dolphinfish throughout the Caribbean Sea and builds on work we have done along the south coast of PR since 2014. Since 2014, and with the most recent tag deployments, 13 satellite tags have been deployed on male and female dolphin with several of those tags reporting full interval datasets, geolocation estimates, habitat use data, and other fishery related information in the Caribbean Sea. One of the primary goals of this work is to describe the pathways and movement routes dolphinfish take as they move westward toward the Loop Current. While the spring run of dolphin off the south coast is still occurring, in a few more weeks the abundance of fish will decrease which opens up the question about where that biomass of fish has moved to and at what rate? Recently, we also received a report of a recapture east of Antigua and Barbuda by a commercial fishermen, a fish that was at large for 284 days and tagged off Marathon, FL, which raises the question of whether or not this signals the final run to the spring movement of these fish through the northern Lesser and Greater Antilles. South of Antigua and Barbuda, Julien Brossel an active tagger in our program just reported the influx of a lot of small dolphin off the west coast of Guadeloupe. A few years ago we had one of Julien's tags show up in DR so we do have data that points to the fact that these fish may end up moving through this part of the Caribbean but we certainly need more movement examples to pinpoint the timing. We also recently received reports

**Reported and Received Tagging Progress from 3/1/2022-3/31/2022:**

**Captain Don Gates (Killin Time II) 24**  
**Captain Julien Brossel (Madatet) 1**

**Captain Jesus Duran (Lalooli) 4**  
**Captain Jeffrey Liederman (Sandman) 1**

**Year to 3/31/2022 for Reported Releases:**  
**66 tagged & released for conservation and science by 8 different vessels**

**6 Recaptures to date in 2022 6 verified 5 Satellite Tags deployed**

of small fish being caught in the Keys and off Charleston, SC, so suffice to say the spring run along the EC has started to begin, too, but large fish still remain to be reported like those off southern PR.

**Reported Recaptures Since 2/24/2022**

**Ted Lewis reported a Wam-Jam tagged fish by Captain David Wamer**  
**Rodder Frenco Toro reported a Titagao tagged fish by Captain Humberto Moya**

## Tropic Star Lodge Dolphinfish Research Program Update



Figure 1 Photo: Chris Gough

Last November marked the third field expedition for the **Dolphinfish Research Program** to **Tropic Star Lodge** to determine the horizontal and vertical movements of dolphinfish in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean (ETP). This field expedition and research is funded by the **Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation**. During the most recent expedition, a total of 12 satellite tags were deployed, and we have received data from 9 so far with 2 more scheduled to report in May. Since 2018, we have deployed 20 satellite tags on dolphinfish ranging in size from 36" to 56" fork-length. When combined



with TSL's conventional tagging participation, which has amounted in the tag and release of 572 dolphinfish, of which 20 have been recaptured, a preliminary dataset is taking shape that shows both fine scale and broad movements, habitat use, and fishery dynamics in this part of ETP. Detailed updates on the progress of our research and program expansion in the ETP are available [here](#). A special thanks goes out to the entire TSL staff as well as the captains and mates for their help in making this effort possible!

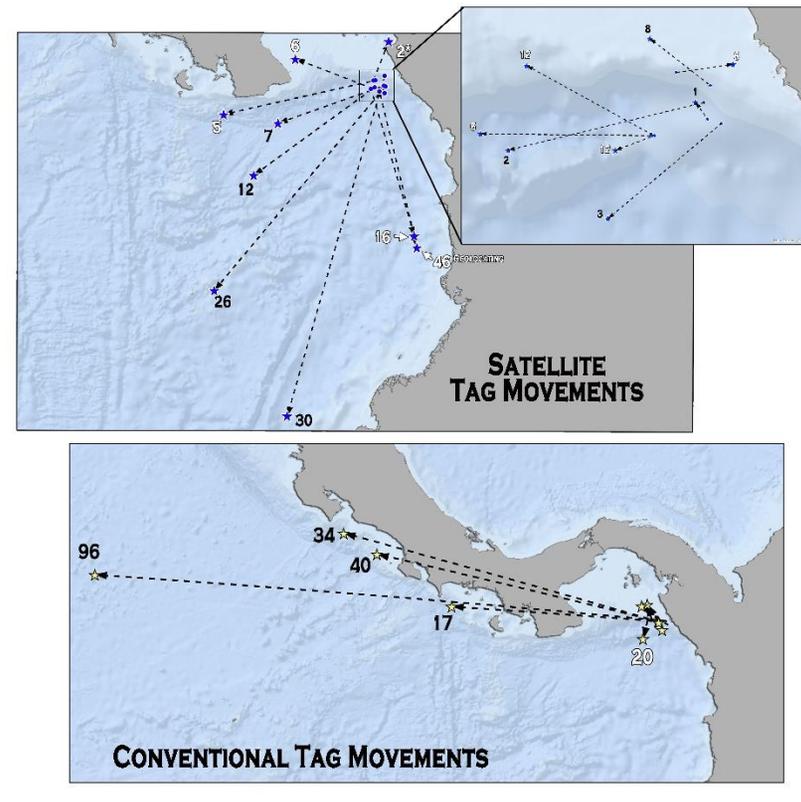


Figure 1 – (Top Panel) - Straight-line satellite tag movements (n=17) of 20 deployed off Tropic Star Lodge during the fall between 2018-2021.

## Dolphinfish Research Program Newsletter

March 2022

*The numbers indicate the days at liberty. White numbers are movements acquired from the DRP's November 2021 field expedition. Two tags programmed for 180-day deployments remain at large. Only one satellite tag has not reported post deployment and monitoring period. Geolocating = represents a tag with unprocessed geolocation position estimates. 2\* = A satellite tag that began transmitting from a vessel in port. (Bottom Panel) Straight-line conventional tag movements (n=20) of 572 deployed off Tropic Star Lodge during the fall and winter between 2018-2021. The numbers indicate the days at liberty. White numbers are movements acquired since November 2021. A more descriptive analysis of some of these movements is included below on this webpage.*

### U.S. Atlantic Coast Dolphinfish Management Updates



Recently, the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council reviewed options for the development of a new federal regulatory amendment (Regulatory Amendment 2) as their previous full amendment (Amendment 10) is proceeding through the Secretary of Commerce

approval phase. Toward the end of the development of Amendment 10, a significant number of public comments (including from BOSF/DRP) were received that favored stronger conservation measures than were being included. However, after 4-5 years spent developing the amendment, the committee and council elected to bring the process to a close while at the same time recognizing the possible need to implement stronger changes. As a result, the process of formulating the regulatory amendment has begun. Development is projected to take place through the remainder of this year and into early 2023.

The actions currently included in the new amendment are: .

- Extend the 20" minimum size limit north of South Carolina
- Lower the daily recreational bag and vessel limits below the current 10 per person bag/54 (assuming final approval of Amendment 10) vessel limit
- Modify retention limits by captain and crew onboard charter vessels

Prior to the SAFMC meeting and in response to the lack of stronger measures in Amendment 10, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission proactively approved implementation of the regulations below for dolphinfish in Florida Atlantic waters (FAW) effective May 1 2022:

- Reduce recreational bag limit from 10 to 5 per person for FAW
- Reduce the private recreational vessel limit from 60 to 30 fish per day for FAW
- Clarify that for-hire captain and crew are prohibited statewide from retaining a bag limit

[Click here](#) to learn more and to stay engaged and informed about management updates regarding dolphinfish along the U.S. East Coast.

## Four Submerged FADs Deployed

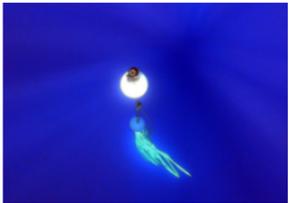


vessel *Family Ties* to lead FAD site surveying, FAD construction, and deployment, we deployed submerged FADs off Arcibo, and El Morro, last October. Recently, we deployed two more submerged FADs; one is off of Fajardo and another is off of San Juan called Camino Del Mar. Along with these deployments, we have reinitiated our FAD and FAD fishery research to build and expand upon our original research objectives that our group focused on during the earlier years of the PR FAD system, which are to better



describe fish movements relative to the FADs, fishing trip success and catch and effort, how FAD design can affect species abundance and biomass, and the impact that FADs have on local businesses and visitors to Puerto Rico. One important aspect we learned from our earlier work was that with the deployment of FADs brings the opportunity to engage anglers in our research. Thus, if you would like to get involved in our research, whether it be by tagging and releasing small juvenile fish at the FADs, or providing fishing reports when you visit the FADs, or learning how your business is impacted by the presence of the FADs, please [contact us](#). Working together, we can guide best practices in FAD construction, placement, and integration of anglers into fishing and research opportunities in the pelagic environment to ensure a sustainable FAD fishery into the future.

The **Puerto Rico FAD System** began in June 2015 with the first deployments of surface FADs off of San Juan, Puerto Rico, off the northeast coast of the island. During the first three years of the program, a total of 16 surface FADs were deployed from Fajardo in the east to Manati in the west. While the surface FADs worked well to attract pelagic fish, the FADs suffered losses due to



shipstrikes and storms. Last February, our fisheries research foundation known as the [Beyond Our Shores Foundation](#), received funding from **Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources** to reinitiate the PR FAD system along the north coast of Puerto Rico. This time, we deployed submerged fish aggregating devices, moored in 1,000 to +3,000 feet of water where the top buoy would range anywhere from 30' to 60' below the surface. Working with

### New PRFADSYSTEM.org Website Launched!



The **Puerto Rico FAD System** was modeled after the highly successful **Hawaiian FAD System** to provide enhanced recreational fishing opportunities to fishermen around Puerto Rico and to increase catch while decreasing time and fuel spent searching for fish. Since the program began in June 2015, and with our recent submerged FAD deployments, there have been 20 FAD deployments. PRFADSYSTEM.org provides information on recent deployments, current and historic FAD locations, research objectives and information, and options to contact our program to get involved in FAD research. [Click here](#) to visit the new site.

[Click Here to Visit PRFADSYSTEM.ORG](https://www.prfadsystem.org)

### FUNDED BY:



## Help Support Our 2022 Research Effort



A special thanks to everyone who has contributed to our tagging program since the beginning of our 2022 fundraising campaign. With your support, we were able to start 2022 strong and, to date, we have already shipped out 187

tagging kits. Our goal is to distribute 450 kits and 6,000 tags in 2022. While we have an operational budget to begin the year, we still need support to help us fund our online tagging map ([click here](#)), acquire additional satellite tags to deploy on adult dolphinfish and wahoo in 2022, as well as increase our tagging kit and education supplies to meet our growing demand for tagging kits. Our tagging program is at the forefront of educating anglers, advancing discussions and actions surrounding conservation of the species, and gathering additional data to help inform data-driven decision making at state, federal, and international levels. Help the **DRP** expand in 2022. [Click here to shop](#) or [here to donate](#) to support our program.



To Donate by Check [click here](#),

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**Mail to:**

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