

Dolphinfish Research Program™

Made possible by a grant from the Guy Harvey Foundation

September 2023



Reported and Received Tagging Progress from 8/29/2023-9/27/2023:

German Davis (**Nemenches**) 15
Angelo Masullo (**Levon**) 9
Ed Kattel (**Cool Cat**) 8
Daryl Wiley (**CFA**) 6
Brian Kimmins (**Flying Tiger**) 5
Jason Hampson (**Early Retirement**) 4
Dave Smith (**Rebecca**) 3
Scot King (**Esperanza Anclada**) 2
Gavilan (**Darien**) 1
Pete Bacon (**Big Game**) 1

Don Gates (**Killin' Time II**) 11
Jeff Liederman (**Sandman**) 8
Angelo Masullo (**Levon**) 8
Guy Harvey (**Sweet Rach**) 6
Rick Bellavance (**Priority Too**) 5
Greg English (**Adios**) 4
Scott Frost (**Lightning Strike**) 4
Dawn Rich (**Reel Paradise**) 2
Chris Yurick (**Why Wait**) 1
Pete Foster Smith (**No Name**) 1

Year to 9/27/2023 for Reported Releases:

1,849 tagged & released for conservation and science by

115+ different vessels

23 Recaptures to date in 2023 21 verified
8 Satellite tags deployed

6 Satellite tag movements (1 at large)

1 Acoustic Tag

This past month, we embarked on 6 fishing outings around Puerto Rico. Three were off San Juan and the remainder were off the west coast. For dolphin, the season is slowly starting. For boats we monitor off SJ, a total of 57 dolphin were caught in September, slightly more than half of what was caught by the same boats during August. This could indicate that the season is slowly beginning along the north coast. We put in a lot of effort over three outings and were only able to tag 4, including one with a PSAT. Our work off the west coast was to target wahoo for satellite tag deployments. We knew it was early season but we wanted to give it a go.

We ended up not getting any wahoo strikes after fishing between buoy 4 and 6 on one day and the shelf edge from Los Rabos to Guajataca tunnel another day. Back to dolphin, we embarked on a mission to the middle of the Mona Passage and found some very large weed mats but they were not holding dolphin, at least the ones we fished. Our reports from southern DR indicate fishing for dolphin at the FADs was better in September than August with 3,124 lbs (7 trips) and 3,327 lbs (10 trips) of fish landed between months, respectively.

Reported Recaptures Since 8/29/2023

Ronald Stalvey reported a fish tagged by Conundrum

Warlin Marte reported a fish tagged by Sandman

Al Fasano reported a fish tagged by someone who has not submitted the tagging data. X62110

2023 Tagging Progress



Acquiring tagging data on dolphin is the backbone of our efforts as an organization. We issue tags to anglers for free, receive and log the tagging data, and respond to recapture reports to acquire fundamental data needed to better understand the species and resource. Our tagging program has managed this process for 22 years, but it was not until 2018 that it was formalized into a relational database structure that streamlined our ability to log, recall, and present the data. On the verge of surpassing 35,000 tags deployed, managing our tagging data in this manner allows for more rapid assessments of the spatial and temporal acuity of tagging activity. For example, at this point last year our tagging network had only deployed 1,336 tags versus 1,849. In fact, we have to go back to 2019 to observe a year where more tags were deployed up to this point. However, given our ability to quickly assess our relational database, last year actually had twice as many fish tagged in September than this year, which begs the question, how does this year's fall run of dolphin compare to last year? Based on this data, it would suggest that either the fishing has not been as good as last fall or weather has held boats back from getting out to fish. Either way, our ability to count and rapidly assess the tagging data our program collects by managing a relational database truly is an asset to our tagging network. Given our enhanced ability to generate accurate and reproducible counts, we are happy to report that due to the participation

of over 115 captains this year we are on track to surpass 2,000 tagged dolphin, the first time since 2019, which would represent only the 5th time in our program's history. We work hard to hit 2K tagged every year and as a result, since we formed the Beyond Our Shores Foundation, a 501(c)(3) to help manage and grow the Dolphinfish Research Program, three of the past six years have resulted in more than 2K tagged. Below, is an image the acknowledges the captains that have tagged and released dolphin so far in 2023. These individuals have tagged and released dolphin in 380 outings between 13 different countries and 23 new movement and growth estimates have been obtained. Interestingly, given the number of fish tagged versus the number reported as recovered, this year is the lowest cumulative recapture rate (1.30%) ever recorded for our program. We are not going to focus on the possible reasons why but this certainly has our attention. As comparison, however, 2009 had 1,263 tagged and 56 recaptured, the highest cumulative recapture rate (4.4%). Click on the image below



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to view the names of the captains that have participated in 2023.

If generating and maintaining accurate and reproducible counts is our main focus, our second is the acknowledgement of exemplary angler tagging and recapture activity. We keep accurate and detailed records to showcase what individuals can help our program achieve in terms of advancing our knowledge of this species. Over the past five years, we have created several dedicated tagging pages for

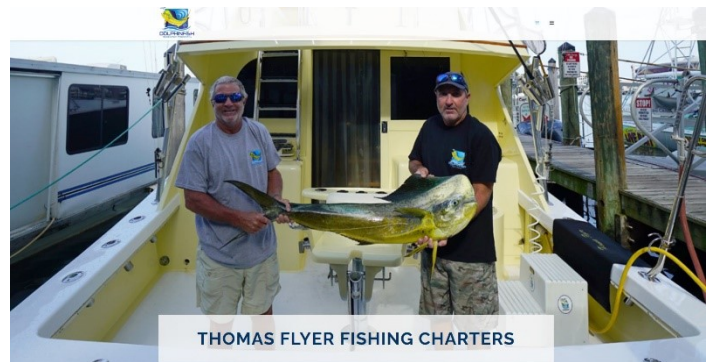


anglers that have generated superb results. **Captain Bouncer Smith**, for example, tagged for our program from 2005 to 2019 and deployed a total of 839 tags. Of those, 44 were recovered. Captain Smith's dedicated tagging page can be found at dolphintagging.com/bouncers-dusky/. Another angler who has embraced the act of tagging dolphinfish with our program is **Don Gates**. Don Gates and his close friends began tagging for the program in 2002. They are the only



tagging team that has tagged and released dolphinfish in every year of our program and the **Killin' Time II** fishing team is only 189 tagged dolphinfish away from surpassing 5,000 overall tagged dolphinfish for our program! Gates' dedicated tagging page and the results his team has generated is viewable at dolphintagging.com/killin-time-ii/.

In terms of offshore fishing charters, **[Thomas Flyer Fishing Charters](#)** of Miami,



Florida, has tagged and released 3,056 dolphinfish for our program and has participated every year since 2005. Their dedicated tagging page is viewable at dolphintagging.com/thomas-flyer/.



And last but certainly not least, since 2018, the **Scouts of America** based out of Summerland Key, Florida, have incorporated tagging dolphinfish into their summer curriculum. In total, the **Scouts of America** have tagged and released 691 dolphinfish, and during 2023, a total of 292 fish were tagged. Their dedicated tagging page that includes an interactive tagging map that showcases their tagging activity can be found at dolphintagging.com/scouts/. There are several other tagging teams that have tagged and released hundreds of dolphinfish for our program which has resulted in solid results. In the future, our goal is to publish several more dedicated pages for these anglers as well as any vessel that takes data collection and tagging with our program seriously to help us advance our knowledge, enhance management, and ensure conservation for dolphinfish.

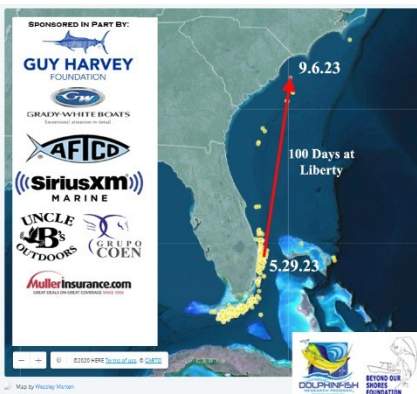
September Dolphinfish Recaptures (click image to enlarge)



Dominican Republic September Dolphinfish Recapture

Recapture Vessel Counts
SANDMAN

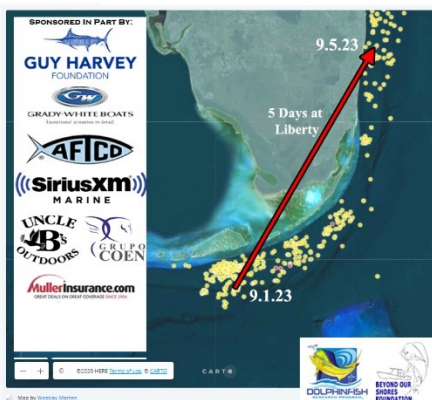
Vessel Sandman has been tagging fish off DR for our program since 2021. This past week, a small 20" fish they tagged along a weedline was recaptured by a small-scale artisanal angler fishing off Punta Rusia, DR. This angler actually recaptured one of Sandman's fish last year, too. This fish traveled from off Punta Cana to Punta Rusia in 23 days. The fish was recaptured at a FAD 15 miles off Punta Rusia. In total, the Sandman fishing team has generated 13 recoveries from 160 tagged fish since 2021 off DR. This is their first for 2023. They have only tagged and released 14 fish so far off DR in 2023. With one of 14 recovered, the 7.1% recapture rate indicates how hard anglers fish for dorado off the north coast of DR.



South Carolina September Dolphinfish Recapture

Recapture Vessel Counts
CONJUNCTION

Today, we received a recapture report from Mr. Ronald Stalvey of Murrets Inlet for a 24" bull he recaptured on Wednesday while fishing for kings 30 miles offshore Pawleys Island. He caught the fish on a live pogie. The fish was tagged by Captain Rob Rollins aboard Conjunction on May 29, 2023. The angler that caught the bull on Rob's boat was Steve Inparato. The fish measured 17" FL when released. The fish was released 10 miles off Boca Raton, FL. Given the time at large, there are many movement scenarios but two include a slow nearshore movement off GAS/C confined by the Charleston Gyre or a mini-migration around the Bahamas back up the Stream. Either way, this is another significant recovery and represents another key growth measurement for a small bull in the wild.



South Florida September Dolphinfish Recapture

Recapture Vessel Counts
KILLIN' TIME II

Vessel Killin' Time II had their 5th Florida in-state recapture for the year reported in early September. This is their 7th recovery in 2023. With 305 tags deployed as of this report, their recapture rate is 2.3%, low when compared to years prior. For this year, however, this movement is their fastest movement yet with the 26" female moving at least 40 miles per day based on a straight-line distance between tag and recapture sites of ~187 miles. The fish was recovered aboard Chips Ahoy during a private recreational outing. Mr. David Knight reported the recovery. The fish was caught and tagged with the assistance of Gordon Spottwood on a j-hook while trolling on 9.1.2023.

More Wahoo Samples Needed!



Last month, we put out a request among our network to aid in wahoo tissue sample collection for a study that intends to estimate the genetic connectivity and diversity of wahoo around Puerto Rico and the Western Central Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea by sequencing nuclear DNA from the samples collected. A special thanks to the following captains and vessels who have collected samples so far: **Chris Frost, Lightning Strike; Don Gates, Killin' Time II; Andrew Blake, Trainwreck; Bryant Stokes, Georgetown Hole Marina, Chris Whitley, Jason and Casey Hampson, Early Retirement, James Sanderson.** If you catch a wahoo over the next month, please collect a fin clip for this research. [Click here](#) to learn more about our overall research on wahoo or [here](#) to email us for guidance on sample collection and preservation. Thank you for your consideration and support of this important endeavor!

Fall Fundraising Campaign Begins

New Black and White DRP Performance Shirts!



With three months remaining in 2023, we are beginning our effort to raise funds to expand and enhance our research effort in 2024. A great way to support the work we do is to purchase a tag kit, performance fishing shirt, hat, or t-shirt in our online shop. Check out the new [black](#) and [white](#) performance fishing shirts and preorder one today to help support our work! [Click to shop.](#)

Advance Citizen Science For Our Oceans, Support the Beyond Our Shores Foundation



Six years ago, we formed the **Beyond Our Shores Foundation** to build the **Dolphinfish Research Program**. Thanks to the generous

support of our sponsors, the **DRP** is expanding and making a big impact. As of last weekend, we have shipped out 386 tagging kits with 4,574 tags this year. Over the history of our program, we have distributed nearly 70,000 tags to anglers around the world. Our effort remains the longest running and most impactful angler driven effort to describe the

movements of dolphinfish in the world. We have a solid [publication record](#), dedicated history working with state and federal fishery management [agencies](#), and commitment to continue to provide anglers and their families with the opportunity to participate in rich, educational, and meaningful marine science experiences and scientific research. For more information on our IRS registered 501(c)(3), the **Beyond Our Shores Foundation**, visit our profile on [Guidestar.org](#). Help support our work by purchasing a tagging kit, shirt, or making a tax-deductible donation via the links below. Thank you for your support and consideration!

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