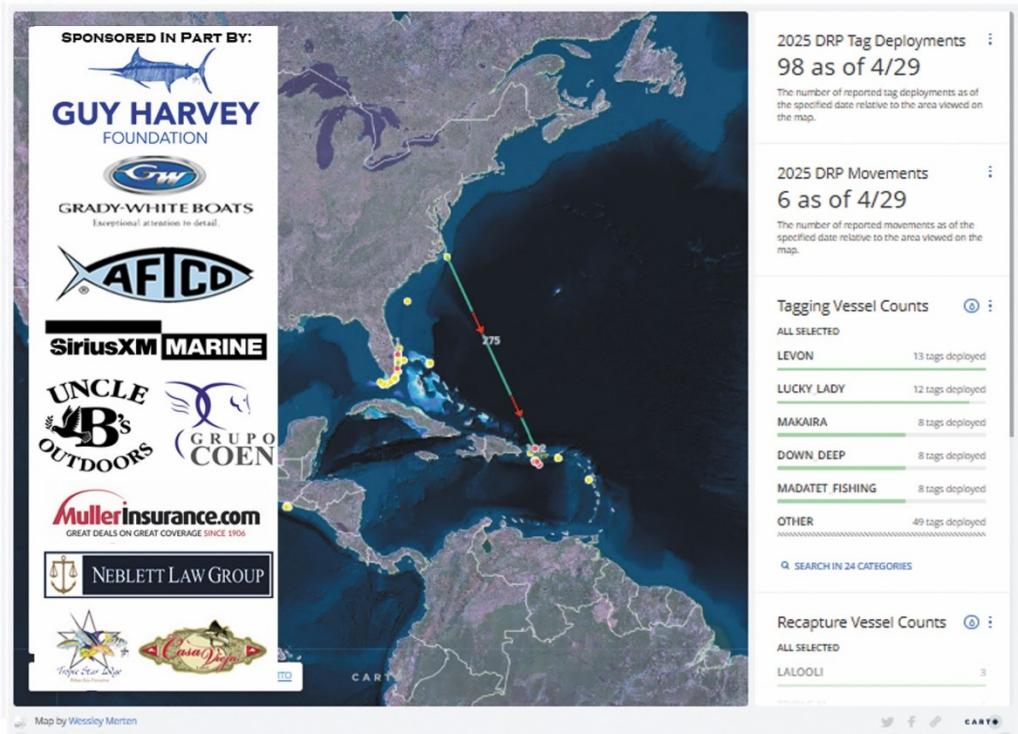


Dolphinfish Research Program™

Made possible by a grant from the Guy Harvey Foundation

April 2025



Reported and Received Tagging Progress from 4/1/2025-4/29/2025:

Jim Henrichsen (Lucky Lady) 11

Angelo Masullo (Levon) 5

Julien Brossel (Madadet Fishing) 5

Mike Peters Jr. (B-Nauty) 3

Jim Ivey (Triple H) 2

Tom Rice (4Rs) 2

Mike Andrejak (Black Dog Mafia) 2

Willie Howard (Captain Willie's Charters) 1

Michael Schreiner (Down Deep) 8

Daniel Kubiak (Southern Run) 5

Dave Kniskern (Madaline Jewell) 5

Brad Forsythe (Knot In A Rush) 2

Don Gates (Killin' Time II) 2

Wilmer Sanchez (The Big Deal) 2

Dave Claeys (Hook N Cook) 1

Rob Bragg (Brown Dawg) 1

Year to 4/29/2025 for Reported Releases:

98 tagged & released for conservation and science by 24 different vessels

6 Recaptures/Movements to date in 2025 6 verified

10 Satellite tags deployed (6 (2025) & 3 (2024) at large)

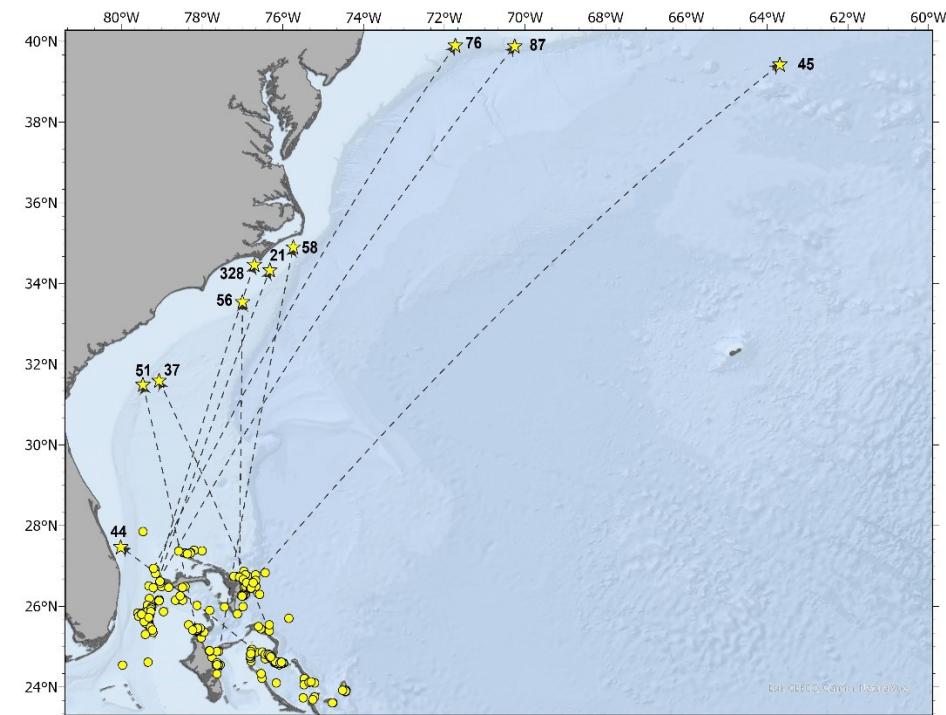
In April, our program embarked on our first tagging expedition to the Bahamas since the earlier years of operations. We fished from Cherokee Sound to Hope Town not exceeding 10 miles offshore and mainly focused effort along weedlines and along the depth contours that define the fishery off the Abacos. Using stabilizing binoculars we must have marked and subsequently fished 50 frigate birds following marine life. The first and second day we successfully caught mahi under some of those frigates but on the third we found bird-fish groupings but the fish would not eat our baits and the sargassum made it very difficult to properly present our baits. Plus, the fish that we did see were moving fast and were focused on a large bait ball of flyers. We ended up getting skunked on our third day with only a few opportunities to catch mahi over the 8+ hour outing. During our trip seas were 1-2' with light winds. During our visit we spoke extensively with the captain and mate who indicated that the dolphin fishery is not the same as it used to be off Hope Town and that April is supposed to be excellent for mahi abundance. They said that this seems to have changed and the season begins later nowadays. Part of our drive to deploy satellite tags on mahi off the Abacos is to further define the species movements on the eastern flank of the Gulf Stream as the stream moves toward the north Atlantic and near Bermuda. Our hunch is that the further offshore in the Antilles Current, into the Sargasso Sea, dolphin abundance may be higher and good runs of fish off the Abacos now occur when fish get pushed in from weather. On the day we departed a hard easterly wind set in and seas increased to 4-5' and the easterly blow has continued to the time of this report. This past week reports came in of larger fish being caught including one up to 80 pounds by the boat we were fishing on the week before. Timing is everything and especially when targeting mahi nowadays!!

April Bahamas Tagging Expedition



deployments in the Bahamas date to 2003 and since then over 1300 mahi have been tagged and released for our program in the Bahamas. From these releases, 38 recaptures have occurred, with 28 documenting within-region movements and 10 documenting movements to the U.S. east coast, including to North Carolina state waters, movements to the Mid-Atlantic Bight, and a region of interest outside of the Canadian Exclusive Economic Zone in the Atlantic High Seas. That recapture was reported by a commercial longliner in 2008. This location is only 300 miles away from where two of our satellite tags surfaced last year during the fall and spring outside of the Canadian EEZ. Those tags surfaced in an area where commercial longline activity was present according to Global Fishing Watch. Another key recapture to point out is a recovery in North Carolina state waters that was at liberty for 328 days. The 21" fish was tagged and released by Gary York aboard his vessel Mag E III on June 21st, 2014, and recaptured as a 46" slammer on May 15th, 2015, by Greg Nuttall aboard his vessel Sal T Vols. This event is another example that shows this year's schoolies released in Florida can become next years slammers in North Carolina and the same is applicable from NC to FL. More information on

This past month, and for the first time since the earlier years of our tagging program, DRP personnel embarked on a dedicated tagging expedition to the Bahamas. Our goal was to deploy up to four popup satellite archival transmitters (PSATs) on adult dolphinfish (>36" fork-length) off of the Abaco Islands. Unfortunately, we did not encounter any dolphinfish large enough to tag and release with satellite tags after three full days of fishing. We did, however, tag and release eight dolphinfish that ranged in size from 24-36" fork-length fishing from Cherokee Sound to off of Hope Town. While our PSAT deployment goals were not met on this trip, the amazing experience fishing with [Abaco Down Deep Fishing Charters](#) inspired us to focus on working to return next spring to try again. Our earliest records of tag



² Figure 1 Dolphinfish movements from the Bahamas to the U.S. East Coast. Numbers indicate days at liberty.

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U.S. East Coast return migrants can be seen at

<https://dolphintagging.com/us-east-coast-return-migrants/>. On that page there are several dolphinfish recaptures that show semi-annual or annual returns from one location of the East Coast to another. The most examples have been documented from Florida given that 67% of our tagging database is from Florida tagging zones. What these records do not show is the path the dolphinfish take to return, hence our drive to deploy geolocating satellite tags off the Abacos. We will get 'em next time! We would like to thank the anonymous private donor that made this trip possible as well as **Captain Michael Schreiner** and **Captain Corey Engle** of Abaco Down Deep Fishing Charters.



Image Left to right: David Wamer, Corey Engle, and Pete Loy on our final day after three full days of fishing aboard *Down Deep*.

Research Showed North Carolina Dolphinfish Size Decline

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Evidence for declining numbers of large Dolphinfish in the western North Atlantic

B J Runde, P J Rudershausen  , G R Stilson [Author Notes](#)

North American Journal of Fisheries Management, vqaf007,
<https://doi.org/10.1093/najfmt/vqaf007>

Published: 01 April 2025 [Article history](#) ▾

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In April, researchers from the Nature Conservancy, North Carolina State University, and the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries published a study that observed a negative signal in the population dynamics of dolphinfish that occur seasonally in North Carolina (NC) offshore waters. The authors found a substantial increase in effort is required to catch a large "citation-sized" Dolphinfish off NC, and the results suggested that the abundance of large individuals of this species has declined off NC. This is the fifth scientific paper in the last seven years to document negative or declining attributes associated with dolphinfish in the Western Central Atlantic Ocean (WCA). In 2018, Lynch et al. suggested a downward trend in the relative abundance of dolphinfish in the region, and in 2022, Merten et al. documented the extent of uncertainty in international dolphinfish landings. In 2024, Damiano et al. further modeled the relative abundance of dolphinfish in the WCA and found a decline in recent years, while Rudershausen et al. (2024) observed a decrease in dolphinfish sizes (i.e., total lengths) caught in NC sportfishing tournaments over recent decades. The results of the study published this past month is consistent with the increase in effort we have had to exert to catch large dolphinfish (e.g., >18 pound) to qualify for satellite tag deployments off Puerto Rico and also with the fact that we have never caught a qualifying tagging subject fishing off the Lower Keys on average 5 times each June since 2018.

Wahoo Research Published



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Condition of the International Fisheries of Wahoo (*Acanthocybium solandri*) in the Western Central Atlantic Ocean

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In 2021, our group set out to research wahoo. The decision to focus time on this species was born out of the lack of information and knowledge presented on the species' life history, movements, and population dynamics during the most recent revision of the Dolphinfish-Wahoo Management Plan by the **South Atlantic Fishery Management**

Council as well as during recent **Caribbean Fishery Management Council** meetings as the CFMC works to better manage the resource in the U.S. Caribbean Sea. Due to these factors and the critical importance of the fishery to offshore recreational anglers, we got to work and are excited to announce that our first scientific paper from our wahoo work was recently published by the **Caribbean Journal of Science**. [Click here](#) to read more. To request tags to tag small wahoo [click here](#).

Killin' Time II Showcased in Saltwater Sportsman Film



If you follow our research and tagging program, you certainly know of **Don Gates** and the *Killin' Time II* fishing team, whose support and participation has been integral to the abundance and success of gathering data for our research. If you missed past articles on this team's

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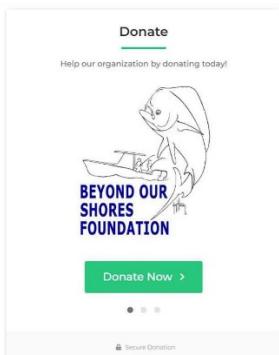
participation in our program, the following is a brief summary. Last June, *Killin' Time II* surpassed 5,000 dolphinfish tagged for our program

([click here](#) to read that article). In 2022, we used their catch and effort data from the Florida Keys to submit a detailed public comment to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) ([click here](#) to read) which documented an increase in effort to catch a fewer amount of dolphinfish over a six-year time period. Overall, their volunteer

participation in our tagging program has resulted in 210 recaptures throughout the region. So, when we were approached by Salt Walter Sportsman to feature our program, we pointed them to showcase *Killin' Time II*'s amazing contribution to dolphinfish research with hopes that it will inspire others to get involved. A special thanks goes out to Shawn Bean for creating this amazing piece. [Click here](#) to watch the video.



Support Our Work – Shop or Donate



Support Our Research in 2025



For the past seven years, we have built a 501(c)(3) known as the [Beyond Our Shores Foundation](#) to manage and expand an international tagging program on dolphinfish and focus on other key fisheries research topics throughout the western central Atlantic and eastern tropical Pacific Oceans. With the support of hundreds of private donors and several key corporate sponsors, the Dolphinfish Research Program continues to compile new movement records and data on dolphinfish in the Western Central Atlantic and Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean. As of today, 37,737 dolphinfish have been tagged for the DRP and 868 recaptures have been recorded. In addition, 125 satellite tags have been deployed on dolphinfish and eleven on wahoo. Collectively, these data have been used to publish 17 scientific articles, and the data is publicly available at [dolphintagging.com/map](#). With three key scientific papers in preparation on dolphinfish growth, detailed regional movement dynamics, and catch and effort as well as our ambitious distribution goals this year (400 kits and 5,000 tags), **we need your support to achieve these key outcomes**. Help the DRP expand in 2025. Click the icons below to [shop](#) or [donate](#) to support our program.

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The Beyond Our Shores Foundation is a federal and Puerto Rico registered 501(c)(3). Examine our [federal tax-exempt status](#) and examine our [Puerto Rico registration](#).

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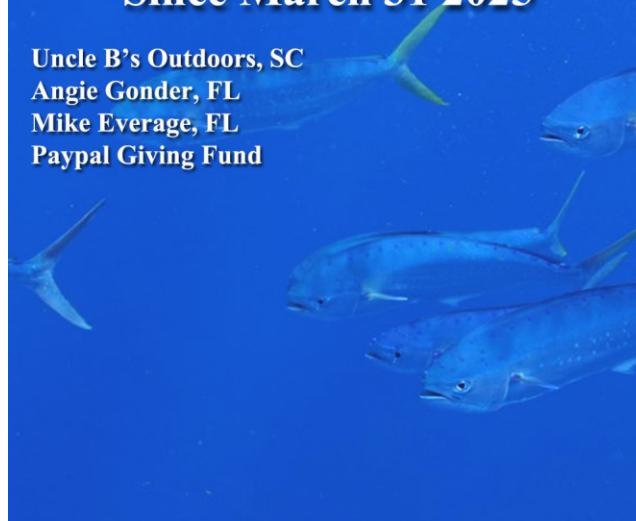
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