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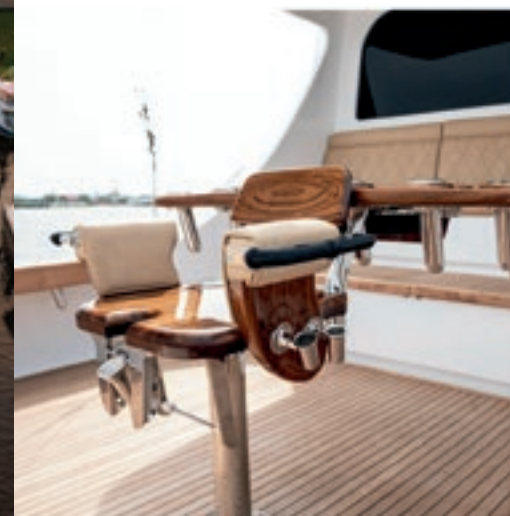


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Magazine Design/Production Cabin Fever Communications
Traffic | Production Ellen Rix
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>> THE WMO MAGAZINE

The White Marlin Open Magazine is published by Tightlines Publishing in partnership with Cabin Fever Communications.

Creative design and photography is produced by Cabin Fever Communications, a full service marketing firm specializing in publications, advertising, promotions, photography, public relations, strategic planning and events.

>> THE WMO TOURNAMENT

The White Marlin Open is committed to providing an outstanding experience for our sponsors, participants and fans all of whom have contributed to making the WMO the world's largest and richest billfish tournament.



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White Marlin Open





America, Apple Pie and the White Marlin Open

Welcome to Ocean City, MD and the 53rd White Marlin Open, where the American Dream is alive and well! The United States celebrated its 250th Birthday last month and it was an amazing tribute to the greatest country on Earth. We are all blessed to be part of this “grand experiment” as George Washington aptly described our newly founded republic. The White Marlin Open itself has been a grand experiment and it can be argued reflects many of the principles upon which this great nation was founded and continues to thrive.

The WMO was established 53 years ago by Jim Motsko along with his wife Marianne and brother Chuck. The founders were all in their mid-twenties with little money but lots of ambition. These three didn’t run a tournament yet or own a marina, but they had a “what if”

“May God bless our participants, may God bless the White Marlin Open and may God bless the United States of America.”

idea. What if they were to start a fishing tournament in their small oceanside town with guaranteed prize money that they could openly promote. Nothing like it existed at the time. So with nothing but a dream, lots of hustle and a small bank loan, the White Marlin Open was born. After a tricky start, the tournament quickly grew and by

1978, five years after it started, the WMO became the largest billfishing tournament in the world. A small, family run business that started as a brainchild is now in its sixth decade of operation and still holds claim to the largest and richest billfishing tournament in the world. The WMO is a true American success story.

It’s not just the organizers that dream, so do the thousands of participants who show up every year to fish the WMO. With life changing purses, the White Marlin Open has provided many “Only in America” stories. Years ago we met a winner in an Ocean City bank where he was cashing his winning check. When asked what he was going to do with the money, he told us that he and his wife had just purchased a new home a few months before the tournament and he was going to pay it off. At the Sunday registration, this angler was looking at a 30 year mortgage. Eight days later on a quiet Monday morning, he was cashing a check and no longer in debt. Only in America and only at the White Marlin Open. Where else can an angler win over \$6 million for catching a billfish or \$2.7 million for catching a tuna? Where else can a state record wahoo earn a new luxury car or a teenager win a Rolex for catching a marlin? Where else can over \$120 million dollars be distributed to thousands of winners over five decades? Only in America and only at the White Marlin Open.

A founding democratic principle near the start of the Declaration of Independence and attributed to Thomas Jefferson is that “All men are created equal”. No where is this truer than in the sport of angling. Is there a more democratic activity than fishing? Not only is it engaged in by Americans across various spectrums, the fish really don’t care who is on the other end of the line. It could be a mechanic, a teacher, a doctor, a man or a woman,

a teenager or a 75-year old, a millionaire or an unemployed construction worker, it is all the same to the fish. Anyone can win the WMO and tournament history is filled with not only expert fisherman but numerous rookie winners. True to the American spirit, the WMO is an Open competition where everyone has a chance. Last year the fifth largest blue marlin in tournament history was caught by Doug Osmeyer who was fishing in his first ever tournament. In fact it was the first fishing tournament for all six of his crew and it was the first marlin Osmeyer ever caught. In 1989, Dr. Jim Daniels’ first ever marlin was a 942 lb. blue that stood as the tournament record for two decades. Doug Remsberg became our first million dollar winner in 2003 with his first ever billfish while fishing in his first ever WMO and in 2017 Glen Frost caught his first white marlin ever which was the third largest in WMO history and won Frost \$1.6 million.

Make no mistake about it, experience and preparation go a long way in the fishing business but the White Marlin Open, like America, is a true democratic exercise and with some pluck and some luck, anyone can succeed.

Happy 250th Birthday to America and Happy 53rd Birthday to the White Marlin Open. Enjoy the 2026 version of this grand experiment. May God Bless our participants, may God Bless the White Marlin Open and may God Bless the United States of America! ■



W. Andrew Motsko

tightlinespublishing@gmail.com



THE BIG ONE

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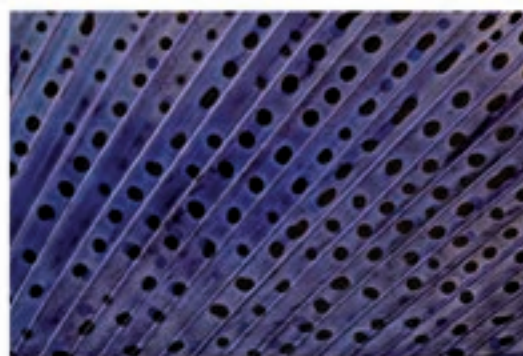
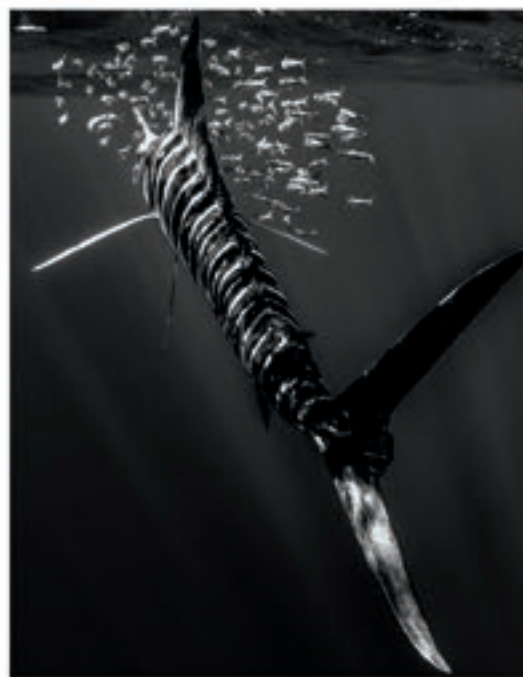
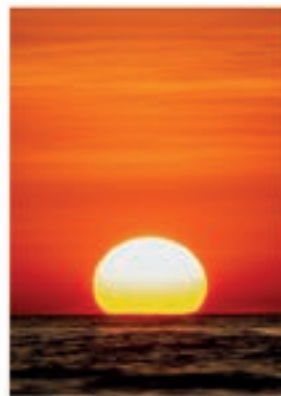
WMO 2025 REVIEW

WMO | 2025 »

What do a professional, a veteran and a rookie all have in common? They were all winners in the 2025 White Marlin Open tournament. As the name describes, an Open tournament is an opportunity for everyone to participate and a chance for anyone to win. Nothing embodied that spirit more than the 2025 edition of the World's Largest and Richest Billfish Tournament.

We will start at the top with the veteran. Dan Gough, from right here in Ocean City, MD, has fished in the WMO every year since 1990, which was a memorable year for the Gough family as their third child, Ashley, was born just two weeks before that tournament. That year he fished on his buddies 36' Albemarle and got hooked on tournament fishing. 35 years later, he is fishing on bigger boats but the thrill has remained, especially when you catch the winning white marlin worth just shy of \$4 million.

Although he had been on winning boats, this was the very first time Gough himself had been to the scales with a billfish. "I had watched weigh-ins for 35 years and



CLOSER LOOK » A tuna doesn't simply see a bait, it analyzes it. Every flash, every vibration, every unnatural movement is processed in an instant before it decides to strike. Fast fish have fast eyes.

often thought, just one day, I would like to be the guy standing there with the winning white", said Gough. "When it finally happened, I went through a whole gamut of emotions. Surreal. Humbling. Exciting. It was an incredible feeling!"

Let's back up and review how after three decades plus, Gough got to this moment. Gough says he has been blessed to have fished with some of the top captains in the sport. Certainly the list is a who's who of the sportfishing world: Spencer, Fields, Tolson, Bayliss, Griffin.

When local captain and boat builder Jon Duffie came calling in 2010, Gough agreed to join the team, except for the WMO. He had fished with his brother Tim in the WMO for 20 years straight, including the last ten with Captain Paul Spencer. The tug of fishing the tournament with blood was just too much to give up. After their boat won the blue marlin category in 2016, Gough thought it was the right time to switch and fish with the Duffies.

Midweek of the 2025 Open, the **"Billfisher"** with Duffie, Gough and the rest of the crew headed out in search of white gold. Right around lunch time, they found a marlin that was ready to eat.

Gough explains, "We do things a bit differently. Many teams work a rod rotation but we have an assigned rod and stay on that rod all day. My rod that Wednesday was the right long. We had a good day and had caught and released a number of smaller whites. It was around noon, when it seemed like something hit my rod. I quickly grabbed it but there was nothing there. Jon instructed me to dump the bait again. Nothing. Finally on the third attempt, the fish swallowed it. The line was way out at this point and as I began reeling, the fish came out of the water for the first time. I didn't get a good look at it, but I heard a few "ooohhs" and I knew at that point we might have something. As we got it to the boat, Jon still wasn't sure it was long enough but Mate Noah Vickers felt it was. Jon made the call, we got a gaff in it and brought it on deck. It measured 71" so we had just made it"

The **"Billfisher"** fished for a few more hours but wanted to be the first to the weigh-in so they headed in early and made it to the scales right after it opened at 4:00 pm. Gough fills in the details. "It measured 70.5" at that point which meant it was going to be weighed. I still wasn't sure it was going to make weight but after some tense moments, the weighmaster announced 72 pounds and the celebration started!"

EYE SEE YOU



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The celebration started, but the tension wasn't over yet. "The rest of the week was so stressful", says Gough. "We watched the action and I was near tears every time a white was weighed. When the "Catch 23" came in on Saturday, the pressure was intense. Once it weighed in at 71 pounds, I could breathe again."

The "Billfisher" has now placed in the white marlin category in 4 of the last 5 tournaments, an enviable run. What is it about Team Duffie that makes it work so well?

"It's not just one thing", relates Gough, "but a variety of things. We are fortunate enough to fish together all year long, the team has been together now for a decade, and everyone is extremely competitive. Everybody gives 100% as not to let the team down. Local knowledge of course helps too."

Gough continues. "Jonny is a genius when it comes to fishing and leaves nothing to chance. We have the best of everything, the best equipment, the best bait. We only use a leader one time before we swap it out and we keep our baits fresh. Our mates work hard and prepare 150 bait rigs for each day we are fishing. We respect the competition and are happy when others win, but make no mistake about it, we are trying to win every time we go out!"

Based on Gough's account, experience would seem to be a necessary requirement to succeed in a tournament like the WMO, but remember the "O" stands for Open. Drew Osmeyer and the crew on the "Barbara B" proved that even rookies can win in this event. His 929.5 lb. blue marlin not only won that category in 2025 but ranks as the 5th largest blue marlin in tournament history and earned the crew of the "Barbara B" a cool \$1.24 million.

Osmeyer, from Timonium, MD had never caught a blue marlin until the 2025 White Marlin Open. In fact, it was the first time that he had ever fished in any kind of billfish tournament. So how did it come to pass that he caught his first ever blue marlin in his first ever White Marlin Open? "This was a bucket list for my father, Mike" says Osmeyer. "My mom (Gail) was a Baltimore County teacher so we would always come down to Ocean City for her last week of summer before she had to get back for meetings and the start of school. It was tradition for us to come to Harbour Island and watch the weigh-ins and to the inlet to watch the



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boats. Over the last 10 years or so, my Dad had talked about fishing in it. Finally last year, for his 70th birthday, we finally pulled the trigger.”

Osmeyer wasn’t the only billfishing neophyte on the boat. It was the first billfish tournament for everyone he brought along that week! How did a bunch of rookies end up fishing on the “**Barbara B**”? “Funny story” relates Osmeyer. “My Dad was insistent that if we were going to do this, it had to be the right boat. We had looked around for a few years and then in a stroke of luck, just one month before the tournament, one of our friends, Daniel, who has connections in the billfishing world, found out the “**Barbara B**” was available. It was exactly what we were looking for, an experienced crew on a well-equipped and comfortable boat. The thing is when we talked to Captain Hunter (Blount), he basically said we had 24 hours to commit. He had to cancel his deposit by the next day if he wasn’t fishing the tournament. Since we had talked about it for a few years, we were ready and got our crew of six together in short order, including my Dad and my sister Sarah.”

Well, for this group of fisherman, the stars seemed to align just in time for the 2025 WMO but there was still this hurdle of actually catching a billfish. That took place on the very first day of the tournament.

Osmeyer describes that fateful day and how he wasn’t quite sure how he ended up on that rod. “I grew up on the Chesapeake. I love boats and I love fishing, but I am happy to have others catch the fish. What I really like to do is film the action. I was up on the bridge, cameras in hand when we saw the fish. We had no idea how big it was, but we knew it was a blue and it was agitated. Daniel called up and said, “It’s your turn in the rotation, get down here.” I was perfectly content to stay on the bridge and film, but he insisted, so I gave up my cameras and climbed down. As soon as my foot

hit the cockpit, the blue hit. Mate Tucker Stetson hooked it and the fight was on.”

Osmeyer continues. “I fought it standing up for a few minutes until it jumped out of the water, about 100 yards out. We all saw the size and Tucker yelled ‘get in the chair’. Once in the chair, they put a headset on me. The first few minutes were a blur, but when Captain Hunter started directing the fight over the headset, it became very real. He along with Tucker and Mate AJ Rizzo were so calm and so skilled. They were all fantastic and really helped me through the process.”

Blue marlin fights can be epic battles taking four, five, six hours or more. But not this monster. Captain Blount was backing down the boat and at the same time the fish was swimming towards them. It was all Osmeyer could do to reel fast enough to keep slack out of the line. Osmeyer picks up the story from there. “We got the leader in a matter of 11 minutes and Tucker got the first gaff in her when she was right up on the side of the boat. She was still green and took off, going around to the other side of the boat and back and forth right at the boat. Over the next 10 minutes we were able to get two more gaffs in her and finally get the fish on board. There were seven of us pulling the fish by the bill through the tuna door. It was quite an effort!”

So you now have a 900-plus pound fish on the deck in the World’s Richest Billfish tournament. What did that feel like? “It was surreal,” says Osmeyer. “It was awesome seeing how happy everyone was. The Captain and Mates do this for a living and seeing their excitement and shock made it even more special for us. I distinctly remember AJ saying ‘our lives have just changed forever’. It was pretty cool!”

So a veteran and a rookie were winners. Where does the professional come into play in this story? That would be John Cianciulli, a commercial fisherman out of





Cape May NJ. Cianciulli got hooked on fishing at a young age, catching his first tuna at 8 years old. The water is now in his blood. He has been fishing for 22 years and has been a commercial fisherman for the last 6 years. He makes his living catching tuna, swordfish, conch and crab off the Jersey coast. But in August he took off from fishing for a living to go fishing for fun.

Cianciulli, fishing aboard the **“Sea Hab”**, stuck to what he knew. “We went after swordfish the first day and had some action but one was a little small and another larger one broke off. After that we largely just went after tuna.”

Anglers most often head out to the canyons 60-70 miles offshore, but some boat trouble and observations kept them closer to home. “We were having transmission issues so we didn’t want to go too far out in case we ran into problems”, explains Cianciulli. “I had seen tuna closer to the shore much of the summer and some intel told us they were near the coastline so that’s where we fished. We were only 13 miles offshore when the tuna hit. We could actually see the shore from there. It may be the first WMO winner that was caught within sight of the beach!”

“We were only 13 miles offshore when the tuna hit. We could actually see the shore from there. It may be the first WMO winner that was caught within sight of the beach!” - Junior Cianciulli

How did that last day of the tournament shape up for the **“Sea Hab”**? Cianciulli describes the situation. “We had run up north with no luck then came back down and put our lines in. I had my hand on one of the rods right after we put in and I felt a hit. At first it was an easy bite, not like a tuna at all. There were sharks in the area so we thought it may be a thresher. After about an hour, we finally saw it was a bluefin, but it looked too big. The biggest bluefin you could capture at that point in the season was 73”. Once we were able to get a measurement, it was only 72” so we were good. I have seen a lot of tuna. This one was a fat, round fish so we knew it might do some damage.”

Damage indeed. Cianciulli’s tuna measured 188 lbs. and took first place. The **“Shorebilly”** came close with a 186.5 pound blue fin weighed later that day, but in the end the **“Sea Hab”** held on and won a jackpot worth \$764,325.

What was it like coming into the scales with a winning tuna? “The White

Marlin Open is the crème de la crème of the sportfishing world”, waxed Cianciulli. “There is nothing like backing into the scales at Harbour Island with a big fish onboard!”

It was touch and go for Cianciulli to even fish in the tournament. His first child was born just three weeks before the 2025 WMO. Cianciulli has recently upgraded his commercial rig purchasing a 42’ Barber in North Carolina. When asked if his winnings helped him to purchase that new boat, the 30-year old Cianciulli was quick to point out, “No, what that money helped to pay for was a new baby!”

Other winners in the 2025 WMO included Trey ‘Cricket’ McMillian who finished second in the white marlin category with a 71-pounder worth \$389,377. McMillian was fishing aboard the **“Catch 23”** owned by NBA legend Michael Jordan.

Other tuna winners were Alex Eason on the **“Shorebilly”** with a second place 186.5 lb. blue fin worth \$85,647 and Tommy Farella on the **“Mama C”**. His third place 95 lb. tuna was worth a total of \$111,529.

In the gamefish divisions, Chris Jones on **“Shooting Star”** won the wahoo category with a 49.5 lb. fish worth \$74,145 and Andrew Schreiber aboard the **“Barbara B”** caught the first place 32.5 lb. dolphin worth \$19,950. **“Barbara B”** is only the third boat to win two categories in a single year in WMO history.

The numbers

WMO 2025 NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

“Taylor Jean” was the Top Boat and Top Release Boat with 1,085 billfish points and won \$59,719. Capt. Blaine Birch was named WMO Captain of the Year and Mates Jarrett Birch and Stephen Birch were named WMO Mates of the Year. Second place boat went to **“Lights Out 62”** with 945 points. **“Catch 23”** finished third with 806 points.

Rob Wagner aboard the **“Taylor Jean”** accumulated 595 points during the week and was declared the Grand Champion Master Angler of the 2025 WMO. Second Place Master Angler went to TJ Ely aboard **“Irish Twin”** with 490 points. Matthew Gessler on **“Boys Toy”** was Third Place Master Angler with 420 points. ■



282

BOATS THAT FISHED

2400

ANGLERS IN CONTENTION

\$3.9m

TOP PRIZE AWARDED

\$7.3m

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY

487

BILLFISH RELEASED



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| • Vivamee Hospitality with local resorts Kent Island Resort & Queenstown Harbor | | |



WHITE MARLIN



World Record: 181 lbs | Evandro Coser - 1979
MD State Record: 135 lbs | George Pierson - 1980
WMO Record: 99 lbs | Steve Bass - 1980

The premier species of fish in the White Marlin Open, this pelagic species migrates north during the warmer summer months from their winter habitat in the southern Caribbean. From July through September they can be found in abundance off of the Mid-Atlantic coast.

A distinguishing feature of the white marlin is its rounded dorsal fin, electric blue in color and often with black spots. When the fish is feeding or leaping, light blue or purple bars may show up on the body, the common "lighting up" of the white marlin. This is produced by specialized cells in the skin.

Sometimes described as the "king" of saltwater gamefish, white marlin are often caught on light tackle making the fight even more thrilling. It is a spectacular jumper, sometimes jumping straight up, tail walking on the water or "greyhounding", leaping sideways with repeated jumps across the ocean. Once hooked, the angler must demonstrate their skill in keeping the line taut at all times in order to catch this magnificent fish.

ROUNDSCALE SPEARFISH



World Record: N/A | N/A
MD State Record: N/A | N/A
WMO Record: N/A | N/A

The roundscale spearfish is often mistaken for a white marlin as they have many of the same physical characteristics. One of the major differences is the placement of the anal vent, which is about 3 inches from the anal fin in white marlin and double that distance for the roundscale spearfish. They were determined to be a different species in 2001 although at that point the white marlin was still thought to be in the same genus, *Tetrapturus*. As of 2006, genetic testing indicated that the white marlin was distinct from the *Tetrapturus* genus and was reclassified to the *Kajikia* genus. Recent studies have shown that about 20% of the "white marlin" caught in Mid-Atlantic tournaments are actually roundscale spearfish. According to the rules of the WMO, for the purpose of identification and prize money eligibility, a roundscale spearfish will be considered a white marlin.

BLUE MARLIN



World Record: 1402 lbs | Paulo Amorim - 1992
MD State Record: 1135 lbs | Billy Gerlach - 2021
WMO Record: 1062 lbs | Bob Farris - 2009

Unlike the white marlin, the dorsal fin is high and pointed anteriorly rather than rounded and does not have spots. The back is cobalt blue and the flanks and belly are silvery white. There may be light blue or lavender vertical stripes on the sides, but these may fade away after capture. As with many of the billfish, the blue marlin uses its bill to stun, injure, or kill while knifing through a school of fish or other prey, then returns to eat the injured or stunned fish.

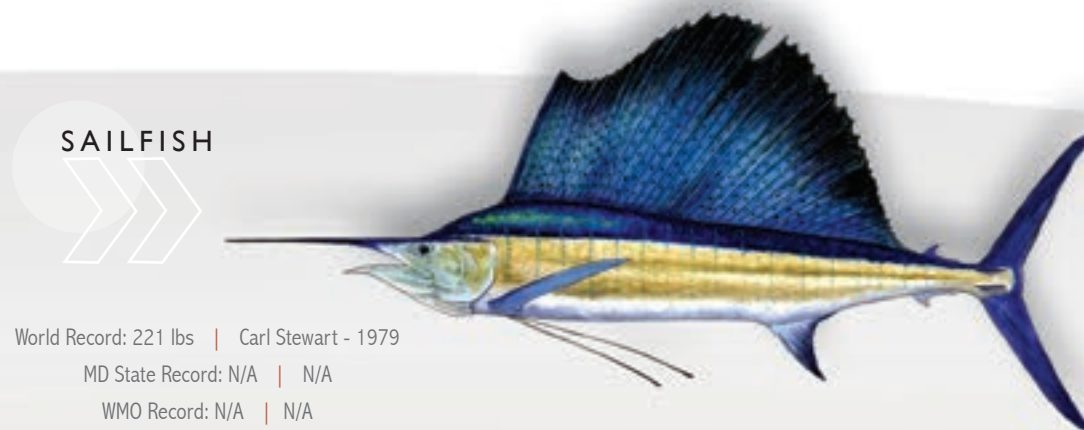
SWORDFISH



World Record: 1182 lbs | Louis Marron - 1953
MD State Record: 393 Lbs | Jeff Jacobs - 2022
WMO Record: 318.5 Lbs | Jake Bertonazzi - 2021

Atlantic swordfish are one of the fastest predators in the ocean. Their streamlined body allows them to swim at speeds up to 50 mph. This pelagic, migratory species usually travels alone. It uses its sword for defense and to kill or stun food. They are considered by some to be the fiercest fish in the ocean. They have even demonstrated attacks on boats as evidenced by broken swords found in wooden hulls.

SAILFISH



World Record: 221 lbs | Carl Stewart - 1979
MD State Record: N/A | N/A
WMO Record: N/A | N/A

Although you are unlikely to see a sailfish weighed in the WMO, they occasionally show up in the Mid-Atlantic and anglers are awarded billfish points for their catch and release. Its outstanding feature is the long, high first dorsal fin which is generally cobalt blue with a scattering of black spots. The sail is normally kept folded down when swimming and only raised when they attack their prey. It is thought that the sail reduces sideways movement of the head which makes the bill less noticeable by the prey.

TUNA



BIG EYE TUNA

World Record: 392.4 lbs | Dieter Vogel - 1996
MD State Record: 375.5 lbs | Cecil Browne - 1977
WMO Record: 326 lbs | Jim Freitas - 1992

Tuna are found in waters all over the world and are prized for their delicious meat and fantastic fight. The tunas most commonly caught during the White Marlin Open are the yellowfin, bigeye and bluefin tuna. While billfish can be finicky and move from bait to bait, tuna often crash baits with little warning. They tend to dive deep when hooked with incredible speed and strength. Unlike most fish, tuna are warm blooded which allow them to efficiently engage in highly aerobic activities such as long migrations and incredible fights. Tuna often travel in schools which can often bring two to three hookups at once along with chaos in the cockpit.

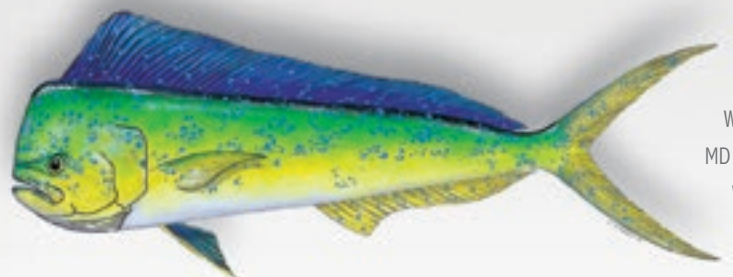
WAHOO



World Record: 184 lbs | Sara Hayward - 2005
MD State Record: 131 lbs | John Schaar - 2014
WMO Record: 110.5 lbs | Kevin Wayson - 1992

The wahoo is a sleek, slender, incredibly strong fighter with a pointed mouth and triangular serrated teeth. It is one of the fastest fish in the ocean reaching estimated speeds of 50-60 mph. Often caught while trolling for marlin, these fish hit hard and can peel off hundreds of yards of line in a matter of seconds. Occasionally the wahoo will take a spectacular leap on the strike in an effort to dislodge the hook.

DOLPHIN



World Record: 87 lbs | Manuel Salazar - 1976
MD State Record: 74.5 lbs | Kristy Frashure - 2019
WMO Record: 73.5 lbs | Matt Wagner - 1980

The dolphin (also known as dolphinfish or mahi-mahi) is one of the most beautiful of all the fish in the ocean. Its iridescent blue, green and yellow color are amazing to see in the bright blue waters of the Gulf Stream. Dolphin are often found hiding under logs, boards or weeds and anglers will often troll near these floating objects or pitch baits to these areas in an effort to snag the dolphin. Dolphin are among the fastest (50+ mph) and most maneuverable fish and when hooked often produce flashy runs and spectacular jumps. They are known to have caught flying fish in midair. Mahi-mahi means 'strong' in the Hawaiian language and is one of the best tasting fish in all of the ocean.

Illustrations by Kevin Brant



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TAIL *walkers*

WHICH BILLFISH IS THE

KING of the sky?

STORY AND PHOTOS BY:
HARRY R. HINDMARSH



Every offshore angler remembers their first jumping billfish. The strike is exciting, the fight is thrilling, but it's the leap that gets burned into memory forever. One moment the ocean is calm, and the next a billfish explodes from the water, shaking its head, twisting through the air, and sending spray in everywhere.

But which species deserves the title of the most impressive jumper: the blue marlin, the white marlin, or the sailfish?

The answer depends on what you value most; power, athleticism, or style.

Before we crown a champion, it helps to understand why billfish jump in the first place.

THE SCIENCE OF THE TAIL WALK

During a tail walk, the fish raises its head and upper body from the water while using rapid tail beats to maintain forward momentum. In essence, the fish runs across the surface.

This behavior serves an important purpose during a fight.

By remaining partially out of the water, the fish reduces the amount of its body submerged and can alter line angles. Rapid head shaking during the maneuver increases the likelihood of dislodging a hook.

White marlin and sailfish are particularly known for tail walking, although blue marlin occasionally perform the maneuver as well.

Few sights in sport fishing generate more excitement than a billfish tail walking directly toward the boat. Their streamlined bodies reduce drag, while their large crescent-shaped tails generate tremendous thrust. Powerful muscle groups along their bodies allow them to accelerate rapidly, often reaching speeds that few other fish can match.

It's a remarkable combination of speed, strength, and hydrodynamics.

THE BLUE MARLIN: THE HEAVYWEIGHT

If the competition is based on raw power, the blue marlin wins without debate. A blue marlin can exceed 1,000 pounds, making its jumps almost difficult to comprehend. Watching a fish that weighs as much as a small car launch itself from the ocean is one of sport fishing's greatest spectacles.

Blue marlin don't typically perform as many consecutive jumps as smaller billfish, but every leap is dramatic. Massive head shakes, twisting bodies, and explosive splashdowns create a display of pure strength.

No fish combines size and aerial ability quite like a giant blue marlin.

THE WHITE MARLIN: THE ACROBAT

White marlin are the gymnasts of the billfish world.

Smaller and lighter than blue marlin, they make up for size with agility. White marlin are famous for repeated jumps, rapid direction changes, and spectacular tail walks across the surface.

Hook a white marlin and you're likely to witness multiple aerial displays during the fight. Their ability to leap repeatedly and change direction in midair makes them one of the most entertaining fish in the ocean.



FLYING HIGH

A marlin doesn't just jump, it turns a fishing trip into a memory. The splash is impressive, but it's the moment suspended in the air that anglers remember forever.





Many experienced anglers consider white marlin the most athletic jumper of all billfish.

THE SAILFISH: THE SHOWMAN

Then there's the sailfish. Widely regarded as one of the fastest fish in the ocean, the sailfish combines speed with elegance. Its enormous dorsal fin, or sail, creates a dramatic silhouette as it launches from the water.

Sailfish often perform long, graceful jumps and acrobatic twists that seem almost effortless. Their brilliant blue coloration and extended sail make every leap a photographer's dream.

While they may not match the brute force of a blue marlin or the frantic acrobatics of a white marlin, sailfish are arguably the most beautiful jumpers in the sea.

SO WHO WINS?

The blue marlin is the champion of power.

The white marlin is the champion of athleticism.

The sailfish is the champion of style.

In truth, there may not be a single winner. Each species dominates its own category, and each offers anglers a different kind of magic.

But if the goal is to leave jaws hanging open, the blue marlin probably takes the crown. After all, seeing hundreds of pounds of muscle launch clear of the ocean seems to defy the laws of nature.

Then again, ask a white marlin angler or a sailfish fanatic and you'll probably get a different answer.

Me personally, I'm all in on the sailfish. They're my favorite to photograph and they have the best silhouettes. And that's exactly what makes the debate so much fun. ■



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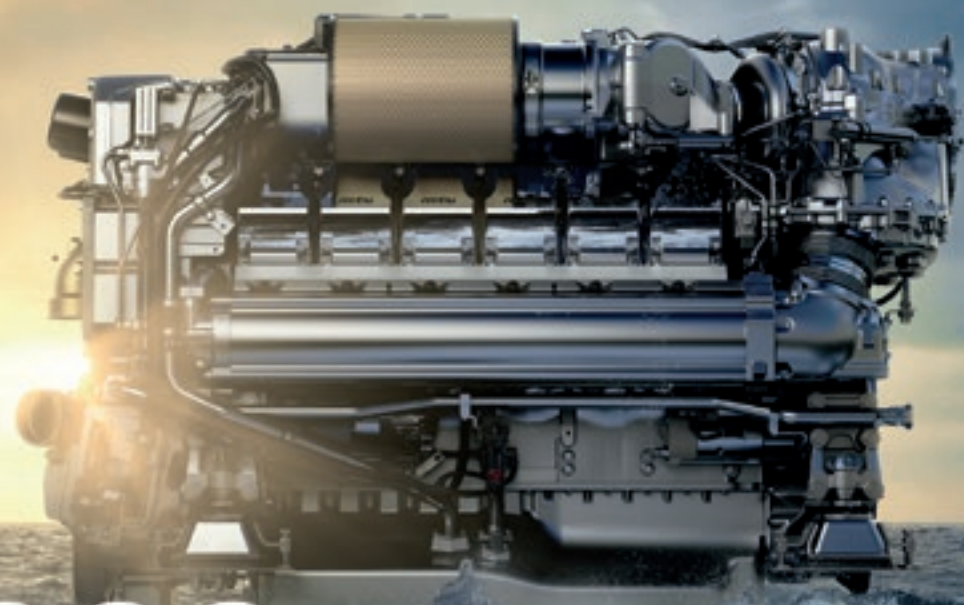
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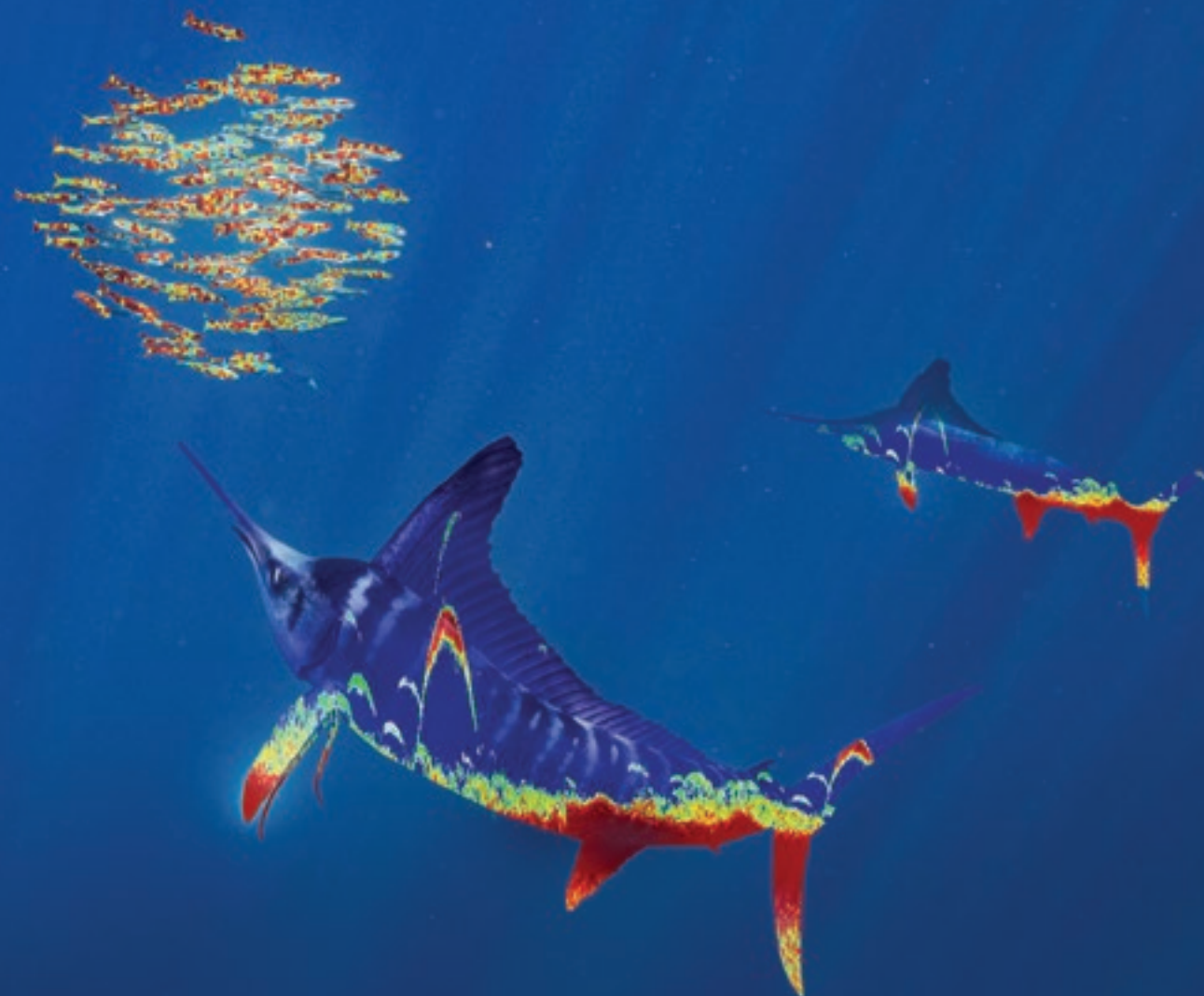
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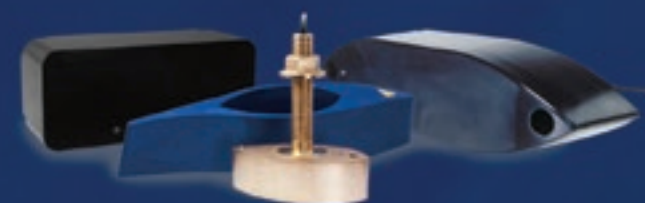
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THE
FISHERMAN
Who Paints
our interview with
GUY HARVEY

FISHING | ART | SCIENCE | CONSERVATION



Few names in the world of sport fishing carry as much recognition as Guy Harvey. Angler, scientist, conservationist, and internationally acclaimed marine wildlife artist, Harvey has spent decades bridging the gap between the ocean and the people who love it. His vibrant paintings have become iconic throughout the fishing community, capturing the power, beauty, and drama of blue marlin, sailfish, tuna, and countless other species that roam the offshore world.

But Harvey's impact extends far beyond the canvas. With a Ph.D. in fisheries biology and a lifelong commitment to marine conservation, he has become one of the most influential voices advocating for the protection of our oceans and the species that inhabit them. Through research initiatives, educational programs, and conservation efforts around the globe, he has worked tirelessly to ensure future generations can experience the same wonders that inspired his art.

In this exclusive Q&A, Guy Harvey shares his thoughts on the evolution of sport fishing, the inspiration behind his artwork, the challenges facing our oceans, and the role anglers play in conservation. From unforgettable encounters with giant marlin to the future of marine science, Harvey offers a unique perspective shaped by a lifetime spent studying, painting, and pursuing the creatures of the sea.

I understand you are a proud Jamaican. Can you share a bit about your upbringing and how it helped to frame your path?

My ancestors immigrated from England to Jamaica 1664, making me an eleventh-generation Jamaican. I grew up on a cattle farm, and from a young age, the outdoors, nature, and fishing were a big part of my life. I started fishing with my Dad in a 20' dugout canoe with a 20

hp Evinrude motor. We largely fished for blue marlin out of Port Antonio. We actually started tournament fishing in that canoe until my Dad got a 31' sportfishing boat from Florida in the early 70's. We found out it was much easier fishing in that vessel! We won the Port Antonio and Montego Bay tournaments in 1973.

Certainly, you have fashioned an amazing career as a marine artist. When did you realize that art





was a possible career path for you?

I read " The Old Man and the Sea as a child and thought the illustrations that accompanied the book were not very accurate. During my time at boarding school in Scotland, I began to create pen and ink illustrations in line with the book and continued them when I was at Aberdeen University in Scotland. I ended up with 44 drawings. I continued to pursue my academic career but in 1985, about 10 years after creating them, my girlfriend Gillian (now my wife) encouraged me to put these drawings into an art show at the Kingston Gallery. They met with immediate success, and a few of them sold. Later that year I took prints of the drawings to the Ft. Lauderdale Boat Show, and they sold out. I realized at that point that an art career was calling to me.

My introduction to your artwork was in the form of a t-shirt. When did you print your first Guy Harvey t-shirt, and what was the inspiration behind that?

Following the early success in 1985, a colleague of mine told me about Raleigh Werking, who was a well-known South Florida fisherman and owner of T-Shirts of Florida. We started working together and printed our first shirts in 1987.

You have painted a wide variety of marine life, but seem to have a particular skill when it comes to billfish. What is it about billfish that inspires you to paint?

Their size, their beauty, the colors, and the color changes all add up to an amazing subject to paint. As my artwork progressed, I spent a lot of time diving to observe them free swimming. It's really important for an artist to see them in their natural surroundings to truly capture them. Billfish in particular lend themselves to this.

You have done painting on canvas as well as large public murals, and even a cruise ship. How do these large-scale projects differ from the more traditional, smaller projects?

I have done several large murals in Florida, which can be seen in Clearwater, Deerfield Beach, and the Fort Lauderdale Airport. The Grand Cayman Airport also has my work. I also collaborated with noted muralist Wyland for several

projects in the Keys. One of the more interesting large scale projects was painting the hull of a Norwegian Cruise Liner. That project took five painters three months to complete. The sailfish on the side of the ship is 150' long and has an eye that is nearly 6 feet in diameter! We have run several educational cruises on that ship to help people better understand the oceans and marine life.

Were there other marine artists who influenced or inspired you?

Ken Ulberg is a lifetime mentor of mine. I helped him with a 40' marlin sculpture he created in Ft Lauderdale, and we have been collaborating ever since. From a technique standpoint, he helped me to soften the lines in my art so as not to be so clinical, like a biological illustrator. His knowledge of marine life is exceptional and we have shared passions. We have been on many diving expeditions together in an effort to continue to learn more about these exceptional animals.

Are there any younger artists that you particularly admire?

My grandkids! Actually, when I give presentations, it is inspiring to me when young people in the audience come up afterwards to show me their artwork. I am amazed at what they produce and encourage them to pursue their work!

Before your art career, you were an accomplished student in the sciences, especially as it relates to marine science. Can you share that academic experience with us?

I received a degree in Marine Biology from

Aberdeen University in Scotland, then returned to Jamaica and earned my PhD in Fisheries Management from the University of the West Indies. Although I put my science career on hold after a few years to pursue art, the sales of the art ultimately helped me to fund several scientific endeavors, including the Guy Harvey Research Institute at Nova Southeastern University in Florida (GHRI) and the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation.

Yes, it seems as passionate as you are about art, you are equally passionate about science and conservation. Can you shed some light on those efforts?

You have to collect data to educate people about issues, which ultimately leads to conservation. It is all based on science. You can't simply say you want to save something; you must convince people with the science and create a workable plan based on the information. We opened the GHRI in 1999 and have published over 180 peer-reviewed papers on fisheries and marine conservation. This work covers areas all over the world, including the Mid-Atlantic. Along with Nova Southeastern University, we have worked with Texas A&M and Stanford. We have recently initiated a study in Panama with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, working on billfish catch rates and ecological variables impacting abundance.

What is your general philosophy when it comes to conservation?

You must create protection where there is exploitation. It is far more economical to protect an area than try to rehabilitate it, and you must





protect the entire wedge of life in those areas. Everything is connected!

Can you speak to the work at the GHRI, especially as it relates to billfish?

The billfish research has included DNA analysis of roundscale spearfish and studies of the vertical and horizontal movement of white marlin. Other research has focused on the post-release behavior, hunting behavior and geographical distribution of billfish among many other studies.

You have been described as a “fisherman who paints” rather than a “painter who fishes”, so let’s talk some fishing. Where are some of your favorite places to fish, and why?

I have been fortunate to fish in some beautiful places! Of course, it depends on what you are looking for but favorite areas include Cape Verde Islands, Venezuela, Isla Mujeres, Galapagos, Madeira, Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico. If I have to pick just one, the Azores would top my list. Stunningly beautiful and lush.

Can you share a few of your favorite fishing stories with us?

Of course! July 27, 1997, while fishing in Madeira, I was able to catch and release two Black Marlin on the same day that were each over a thousand pounds. Two lifetime fish on the same trip! A highlight for sure.

Another was on June 25, 2005, while fishing in Panama. We caught a monster black marlin that took over five hours to land. A friend, Neil Patrick, was on the rod, and at one point they thought the marlin may have died. I was able to dive and observe the fish and found it alive and well down in the green water about 120’ below the surface. It had a three-foot leader from an earlier catch, which allowed me to measure its LJFT length at over 13’. It was fat too. Between the length and the overall size, we know it was 1300 lbs. plus. I was able to dive in every 30 minutes or so to observe the catch until we finally got the marlin to the boat and released it.

One thing about fishing offshore is that you get to see things that most people do not. Can you share a few stories of sights that will remain with you forever?

Two come to mind. Some years ago, we were in Magdalena Bay, Baja, to film the interactions of striped marlin and schools of Pacific sardines for the Blue Planet series. Blessed with calm weather and great visibility, we were able to film hundreds of marlin each day, along with sea lions and Bryce's whales also feeding on sardines. At one point, we watched what must have been well over 100 striped marlin in a big circle, corralling the sardines into a huge bait ball. It was the most amazing sight!

More recently, we were out on an expedition in Panama and saw an estimated 10,000 jack craville schooled together. They were on the rampage, gobbling down a variety of bait species accompanied by mahi, rainbow runners, yellow fin tuna, as well as large black-tip sharks and Galapagos sharks. We are talking about acres of fish. The water was filled with color and the foam and drama of feeding fish. We would get ahead of them by boat, dive in, and allow them to pass by us while we were in the water. It was quite a rush! The jacks would swarm past us at the surface, and the sharks would circle back for a closer look. Once they passed, we would hop back in the boat, get ahead of them, dive, and repeat the process. An unforgettable experience!

Yours has been an interesting career, melding fishing, science, art, and conservation together. What is it about this combination that drives you?

The field work during expeditions is exhilarating. It is so multidisciplinary. You have artists on board, photographers, scientists who know way more about these topics than you do, and experts from various fields. You get inspiration from each of them. It is very exciting and always educational.

Your children are involved in your varied businesses. That must bring you great joy. What are their roles?

My son Alex is in charge of licensing and marketing, and my daughter Jessica is the CEO of the Guy Harvey Foundation. They both live near me, and it is wonderful to have them as part of our business. ■



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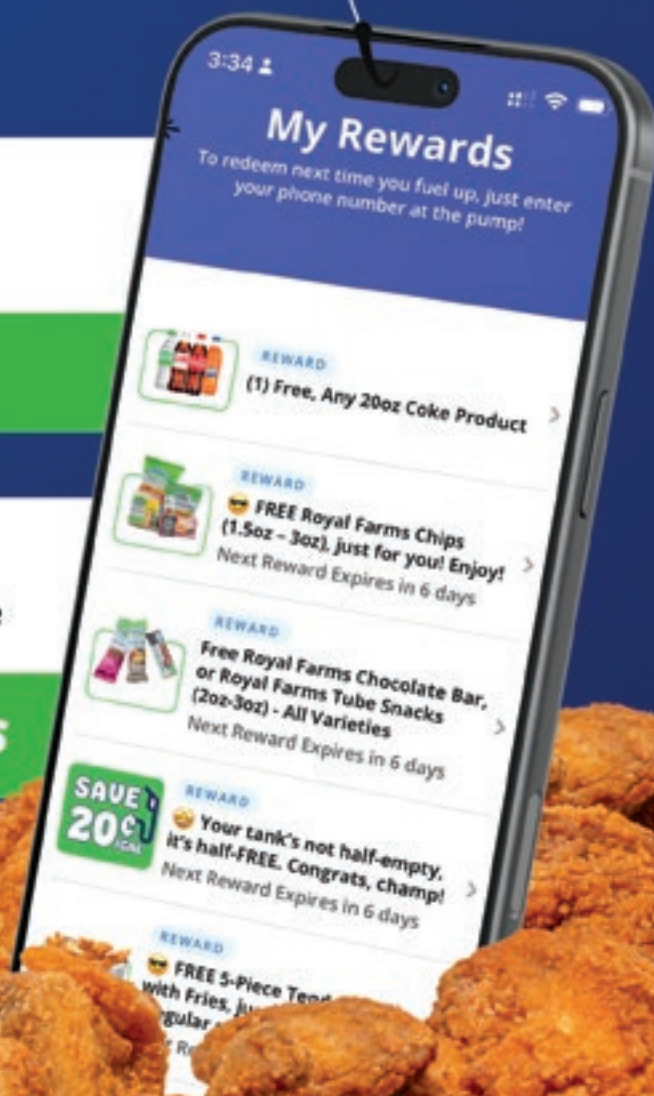


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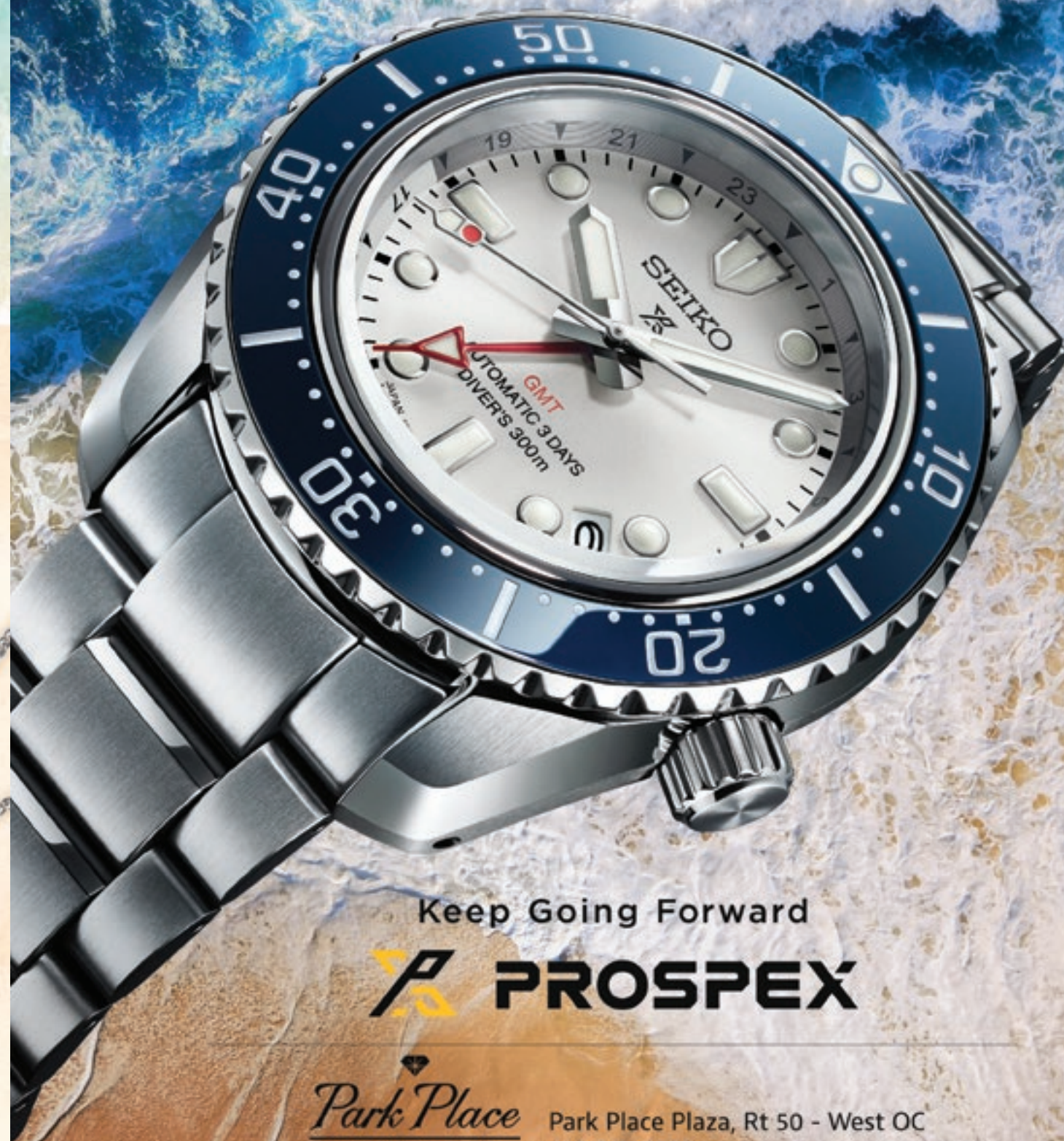
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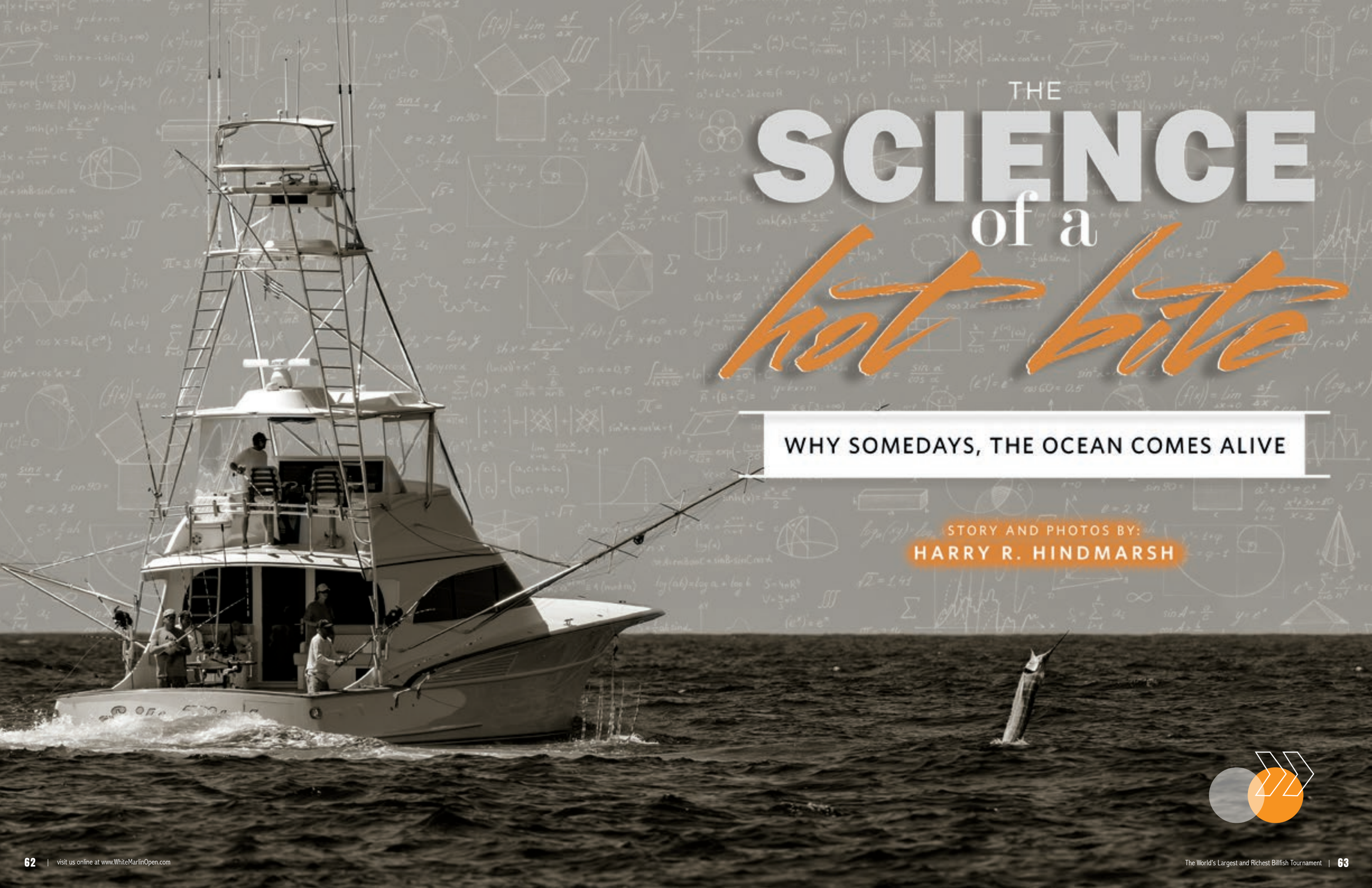


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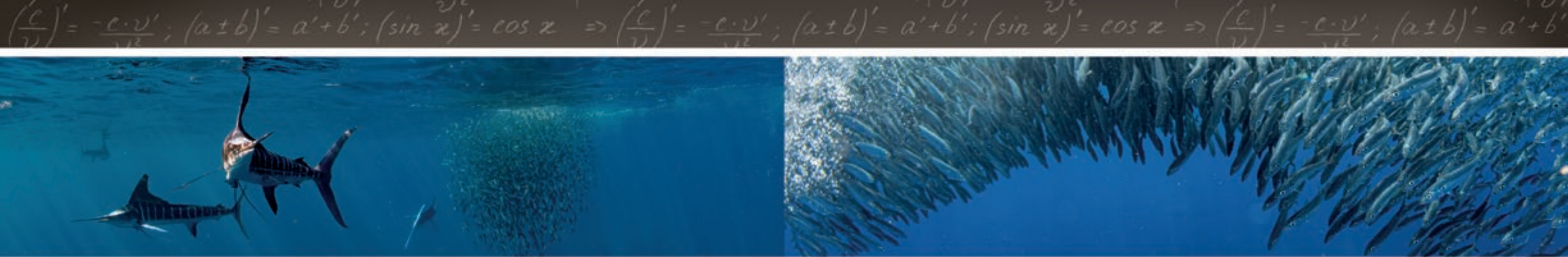


THE SCIENCE of a *hot bite*

WHY SOMEDAYS, THE OCEAN COMES ALIVE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY:
HARRY R. HINDMARSH





One day the ocean feels empty. The spread trolls perfectly, the water looks right, the temperature break is sharp, and yet nothing happens. Then, almost overnight, the switch flips. White marlin appear on every edge. Blue marlin crash teasers. Tuna erupt along weed lines. Radio chatter fills the air. Boats that struggled yesterday are suddenly raising multiple fish.

Fishermen simply call it a “hot bite.”

But beneath every great bite lies a remarkable combination of oceanography, biology, weather, and migration. What anglers experience on the surface is actually the final result of countless scientific factors aligning beneath the waves.

Along the East Coast from the waters off Morehead City, North Carolina, to the canyons off Ocean City, Maryland, and all the way to New England and Maine, the timing of these hot bites is so predictable that major tournaments have built entire traditions around them.

Events such as the White Marlin Open, The Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament, the MidAtlantic, the Pirate’s Cove Billfish Tournament, and numerous others are strategically scheduled to coincide with seasonal peaks in billfish activity. The tournament dates are not random, they are

rooted in science. The story begins with the Gulf Stream.

Flowing northward from the Florida Straits, the Gulf Stream acts as a biological superhighway connecting tropical waters to the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. This immense current transports warm water, nutrients, bait-fish, and migratory pelagic species thousands of miles every year. For marlin, sailfish, tuna, mahi, and wahoo, the Gulf Stream provides the perfect migration corridor.

As spring transitions into summer, warming water temperatures trigger movements throughout the offshore food chain. Flying fish, squid, sardines, mackerel, and other forage species begin shifting northward. Predators follow closely behind.

White marlin winter in tropical and subtropical waters before moving north each year. Blue marlin undertake similar migrations, although their movements can cover even greater distances.

Scientists tracking billfish with satellite tags have documented migrations spanning entire ocean basins. Individual fish tagged in the Caribbean have later been detected off the Mid-Atlantic coast. Others have crossed portions of the Atlantic. The fish aren’t simply wandering.

They’re following favorable temperatures, food availability, and ocean conditions. The result is a predictable northward progression that tournament organizers have studied for decades.

Ask a tournament captain what creates a great bite and temperature will likely be one of the first answers. That’s because billfish are highly sensitive to water temperature. White marlin are most commonly associated with water ranging from approximately 72 to 82 degrees Fahrenheit. Blue marlin often prefer similar conditions, though they can tolerate a broader range.

When those temperatures push northward during summer, the migration advances with them. In May and June, some of the first significant concentrations of blue marlin appear off North Carolina’s Outer Banks and Morehead City regions.

By June, The Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament often finds itself positioned perfectly within this seasonal window. The waters off Morehead City and Cape Lookout are among the first locations along the East Coast where Gulf Stream waters move close to shore. The continental shelf drops rapidly, placing productive bluewater habitats within reach of tournament fleets.

As summer progresses, those ideal temperature zones continue moving north. By July, the productive waters off Virginia and Maryland begin to light up. By August, Ocean City’s canyon system often reaches peak white marlin abundance.

This seasonal progression explains why the White Marlin Open traditionally occurs during early August, when decades of catch records indicate some of the highest concentrations of white marlin available to the fleet.

Tournament organizers may not control the fish, but they certainly understand the patterns.

One of the greatest misconceptions in offshore fishing is that fish simply relate to warm water. In reality, they often relate to change. Oceanographers refer to these transition zones as “edges.”

An edge may form where warm Gulf Stream water collides with cooler shelf water. It may develop around chlorophyll breaks, salinity changes, current boundaries, or temperature gradients. To anglers, these edges frequently represent the difference between an average day and an unforgettable one.

When different water masses collide, they concentrate



plankton. Small baitfish gather to feed. Larger predators arrive shortly afterward. Think of an edge as an underwater fence line that funnels life.

Marlin are not randomly scattered throughout the ocean. They are often positioned where food becomes concentrated. The most productive canyons off Ocean City, such as the Baltimore, Poorman's, Washington, Wilmington, and Norfolk Canyons, frequently become hotspots because they combine bottom structure with dynamic oceanographic features.

When a favorable edge intersects a canyon, the results can be spectacular. Tournament-winning days are often born from these intersections.

A hot bite is impossible without groceries. Every predator depends on forage. White marlin feed heavily on squid, small tunas, mackerel, dolphin fish, flying fish, and various pelagic bait species. Blue marlin consume many of the same prey items but are capable of targeting much larger meals.

The abundance of bait often determines whether fish merely pass through an area or remain there.

Throughout the Mid-Atlantic, anglers monitor reports of squid concentrations, flying fish activity, and schools of small tuna. These observations provide clues regarding where marlin may concentrate.

Ocean City captains often speak about finding “life.” The term encompasses everything from bait schools and bird activity to porpoises and floating weed lines.

A canyon devoid of bait may hold few billfish. A canyon loaded with forage can suddenly become the epicenter of a regional bite. This is why fishing reports sometimes

seem unbelievable.

One day a fleet struggles to raise fish. The next day multiple boats release double-digit white marlin. Simply put, the bait arrived and then the predators followed.

Another factor frequently discussed among tournament anglers is the moon. While moon phase alone does not create a hot bite, it can influence feeding activity. Many captains believe major and minor feeding periods correspond with lunar positioning.

Research on pelagic predators suggests moonlight may affect the behavior of bait species and alter feeding opportunities throughout the water column.

“The moon doesn’t make marlin feed, it changes the environment that influences when and how they feed. Tides, current velocity, and bait movement all shift with the lunar cycle, and marlin simply respond to those changes” says Dr. Emily Carter, Marine Fisheries Biologist with NOAA.

Full moons often produce excellent nighttime feeding conditions. As a result, fish may feed heavily after dark and become less aggressive during daylight hours. New moon periods sometimes concentrate feeding activity during the day.

While opinions vary, decades of tournament observations suggest lunar cycles can influence catch rates. It’s one more piece of a very complicated puzzle.

Not every season is created equal. Anglers often compare one year to another and wonder why the bite seems dramatically different.

The answer frequently lies in large-scale climate patterns. Phenomena such as El Niño, La Niña, changes in Gulf

Stream positioning, and regional temperature anomalies can influence migration timing.

A northward shift in the Gulf Stream may place prime water farther offshore. A cooler spring may delay migrations. An unusually warm year may accelerate movements throughout the ecosystem.

These changes affect everything from plankton production to baitfish abundance and predator distribution. Tournament directors understand that long-term averages matter more than individual years.

The dates chosen for major tournaments are based upon decades of observations rather than a single season.

The goal is to place the fleet on the water during the period with the highest probability of encountering peak fish abundance.

Ocean City occupies one of the most productive positions on the East Coast. The region's canyon system provides exceptional habitat for pelagic species throughout summer.

By early August, several favorable factors often align simultaneously:

- Peak white marlin migration

- Warm Gulf Stream influence
- High bait concentrations
- Stable weather patterns
- Active canyon ecosystems

These conditions help explain why the White Marlin Open has grown into one of the world's most famous billfish tournaments.

The event occurs during a period when the biological odds favor outstanding fishing. That doesn't guarantee easy fishing. Weather, currents, and daily conditions still matter.

But historically, the timing places anglers directly within the heart of the Mid-Atlantic marlin season.

As summer progresses, the migration continues. By late August and September, significant numbers of pelagic species reach waters farther north. The canyons off New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and eventually portions of the Gulf of Maine can experience remarkable offshore action.

Yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, bluefin tuna, mahi, and billfish all benefit from the continued northward expansion of favorable water.

The Northeast's offshore fishery exists because the Gulf

Stream continues delivering warmth and life far beyond where many people expect tropical species to occur.

The same fish that thrilled anglers off Morehead City in June may influence fisheries hundreds of miles farther north later in the season.

The migration never truly stops. It simply keeps moving.

Modern anglers possess tools that tournament captains from previous generations could scarcely imagine.

Satellite sea-surface temperature charts reveal temperature breaks in near real time. Chlorophyll imagery identifies productive water masses. Current models track eddies spinning off the Gulf Stream.

Fish-tagging studies provide unprecedented insight into migration routes. Yet despite all this technology, the fundamentals remain unchanged.

Fish still follow food. Food still follows favorable conditions. And successful anglers still search for places where those conditions converge.

Technology simply helps them find those intersections faster. The science has become clearer. The fish remain wild.

Every great fishing story eventually comes back to timing.

A hot bite occurs when ocean conditions, bait availability, predator behavior, migration patterns, and feeding opportunities align simultaneously.

It is the moment when thousands of biological decisions made by countless organisms create a brief window of extraordinary fishing.

The white marlin crashing a teaser off Ocean City.

The blue marlin exploding behind a bait off Morehead City.

The yellowfin tuna charging through a canyon edge off New Jersey.

None of these events happen by accident. They are the visible result of a vast ecological machine operating across hundreds of miles of ocean.

The evolution of tournament sport fishing along the East Coast has not just been a pursuit of wealth and prestige; it has also been a powerful driver of marine conservation science. The White Marlin Open and The Big Rock have worked hand-in-hand with marine biologists and organizations like The Billfish Foundation and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The transition from traditional J-hooks to mandatory circle hooks in billfish tournaments



is a prime example of science driving policy to protect a resource.

Extensive data collection showed that circle hooks significantly reduce instances of deep hooking or “gut hooking” in pelagic species. Because of their unique design, circle hooks slide out of the fish’s throat and catch securely in the corner of the jaw, ensuring a clean hookup and a safe release.

Today, the vast majority of billfish caught during these massive summer events are released unharmed. Tournaments utilize rigorous video verification systems to confirm species identification and successful releases, ensuring that millions of dollars in prize money can be awarded without decimating the local fish populations.

Furthermore, satellite tagging programs funded by tournament proceeds continue to refine our understanding of these incredible creatures. Pop-up Satellite Archival Tags (PSATs) attached to released marlin provide scientists with invaluable data regarding post-release survival rates, fine-scale depth preferences, and long-term migratory paths. This data ensures that the oceanographic models used by captains to catch fish are also used by conservationists to protect them for generations to come.

When the clock reaches the final second on the final day of the White Marlin Open, and the winning boats steam back to Sunset or Harbour Island with tournament flags flying proudly from the outriggers, the celebration begins. The crowds on the docks cheer for the massive payouts and the giant fish brought to the scales. But behind every historic victory, there is a complex foundation of science that made it possible.

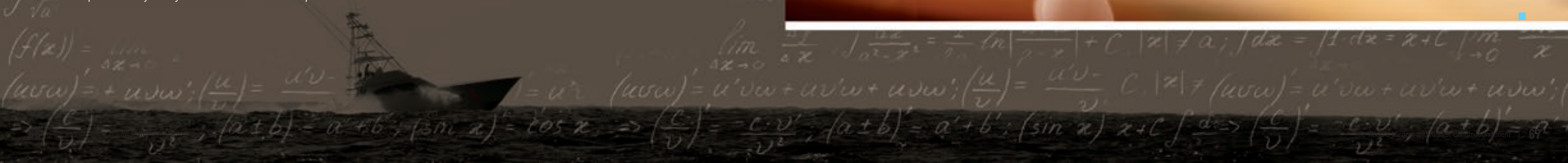
The captain who found the winning fish didn’t just stumble upon it. They analyzed the sea surface temperature charts

to find the perfect thermal window. They studied the satellite altimetry to identify the exact edge of a warm-core eddy pressing against a submarine canyon. They monitored the chlorophyll levels to ensure their spread was swimming in clean, high-visibility blue water right on the boundary of a nutrient-rich green front. They noted the dropping barometer and the phase of the moon, timing their heaviest fishing efforts to coincide with peak predatory windows. And finally, they deployed a precisely engineered spread that perfectly mimicked the natural forage of the Atlantic canyons.

Today’s forward-facing sonar technology has transformed the way offshore captains search for fish. Instead of relying solely on water color, temperature breaks, and surface signs, captains can now see schools of bait suspended in the water column, identify structure beneath the boat, and gain a clearer picture of the ecosystem below the surface. But like any tool, technology only provides data, it doesn’t make decisions.

The difference between an average day and a tournament-winning day still comes down to the person behind the helm. The best White Marlin Open captains understand that sonar doesn’t find marlin—it helps confirm that they’re fishing in the right neighborhood. Success comes from interpreting what the technology and having the experience to know when to stay and when to move.

A hot bite is the ultimate synthesis of the natural world. It is a moment where the geology of the ocean floor, the physics of global currents, the biology of an apex predator, and the technology of the modern angler all lock together in perfect harmony. For those who understand the science, the ocean ceases to be a mystery. It becomes a vivid, predictable roadmap to the greatest sport fishing action on earth. ■





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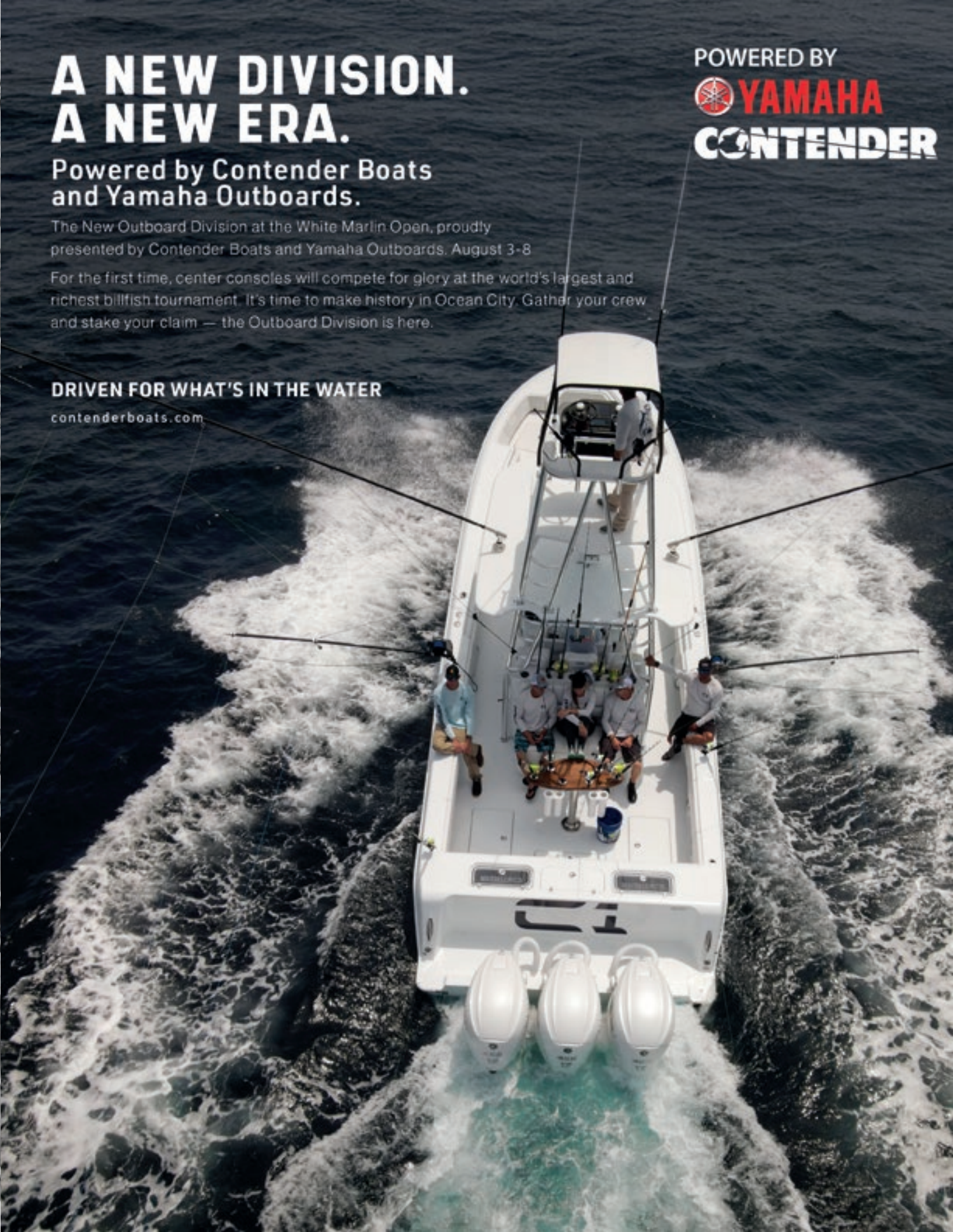
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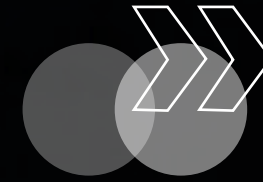
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SHADOW *hunters*

HOW SHARKS RESHAPE

the Behavior of Every Fish in the

O C E A N

STORY AND PHOTOS BY:
HARRY R. HINDMARSH



The ocean is often portrayed as a place of endless freedom. Thousands of square miles of open water stretch beyond the horizon, seemingly offering limitless space for marine life to roam. But beneath the surface, every movement is governed by a force as powerful as hunger itself: fear.

In the bluewater world, sharks are the ultimate shadow hunters. They are not merely predators that remove fish from the population. Their presence changes the behavior, movement, feeding habits, and even physiology of nearly every species around them. From tiny baitfish to giant blue marlin, life in the open ocean is shaped by the constant possibility of becoming a meal.

Scientists call this phenomenon the “ecology of fear.” Predator-induced stress creates a cascade of effects that influence entire ecosystems.

LIVING UNDER CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE

For most fish, survival depends on balancing two competing needs: finding food and avoiding becoming food.

Every time a school of baitfish moves toward a floating weed line or a tuna rushes into a bait ball, there is risk involved. The same concentration of prey that attracts feeding opportunities also attracts predators.

Sharks are masters at exploiting these situations. Equipped with an extraordinary sense of smell, acute hearing, electroreception, and the ability to detect vibrations from long distances, they are uniquely designed to locate vulnerable prey.

The result is an ocean where many species are constantly making decisions based on perceived danger.

Research has shown that prey animals often alter their behavior even when predators are not actively hunting. The mere presence of a shark can reduce feeding activity, change migration routes, and force fish to occupy less productive habitats.

Fear, in many cases, becomes just as important as direct predation.

MAHI: MASTERS OF MOBILITY

Most anglers associate mahi with floating objects, weed lines, and debris. These structures provide food and shelter, but they also create ambush points for predators. Sharks frequently patrol these same areas, searching for an easy opportunity.

When sharks are present, mahi often become more cautious. Schools may fragment, dive deeper, or abandon productive feeding zones altogether. Their greatest defense is mobility.

For mahi, survival is not about standing their ground. It is about staying one step ahead of the sharks that patrol the same waters.

TUNA: POWER MEETS VIGILANCE

Yellowfin and bigeye tuna occupy a fascinating position in the bluewater hierarchy.

They are formidable predators capable of hunting flying fish, squid, and baitfish across vast distances. Yet they are also prey for larger sharks, particularly when injured, exhausted, or isolated from the school.

Tuna have evolved several strategies to reduce their vulnerability. Perhaps the most important is schooling behavior.

Large schools create what biologists call the “dilution effect.” When thousands of fish move together, an individual tuna’s chance of being singled out decreases dramatically. The synchronized movements of the school also make it difficult for predators to focus on a single target.

Sharks frequently test these schools, looking for weak or injured individuals. The fish respond by tightening their formation and increasing vigilance.

For tuna, speed is not merely a hunting advantage. It is a survival strategy.

MARLIN: THE APEX PREDATOR THAT WATCHES ITS BACK

Many anglers view marlin as the kings of the offshore realm. A mature blue marlin can exceed 1,000 pounds and possesses few natural enemies however, even marlin are influenced by sharks.

Juvenile marlin face significant predation risk from large sharks and other apex predators. During these vulnerable years, they must navigate an ocean filled with dangers while developing the size and strength that eventually place them near the top of the food chain.

Adult marlin encounter fewer threats, but they are not completely immune. Large tiger sharks, great hammerheads, and certain species of mako sharks are capable of challenging weakened or injured billfish. More importantly, marlin frequently alter their feeding behavior based on predator activity in an area.

Studies using satellite tags have revealed that billfish often adjust depth preferences and movement patterns in response to changing predator distributions.

During the White Marlin Open, sharks are always a factor. Fish brought to the scales must not be mutilated in anyway, including shark bites. Each year, crews lose winning tuna, mahi, and marlin to the “tax man”.

STRESS BENEATH THE SURFACE

One of the most fascinating discoveries in modern marine biology is that predator-induced stress creates measurable physiological changes.

Fish living in areas with elevated predator activity often experience increased levels of stress hormones. These hormonal responses influence metabolism, growth, immune function, and reproductive success.

In practical terms, a fish that spends more time avoiding sharks spends less time feeding.

Less feeding can mean slower growth. Slower growth can increase vulnerability. Increased vulnerability creates even greater pressure from predators. This feedback loop shapes entire populations.

Scientists have documented situations where predator presence reduced prey abundance not because sharks consumed large numbers of fish, but because prey species changed their behavior so dramatically that their overall fitness declined.

The ocean is filled with invisible costs associated with fear.

THE BAITFISH FOUNDATION

At the bottom of the offshore food web, the influence of sharks becomes even more pronounced.

Their movements determine where larger predators feed. When sharks push baitfish deeper, tuna may fol-





low. When baitfish abandon an area, mahi may leave as well. When prey species become concentrated in a defensive bait ball, marlin often move in to take advantage.

This interconnectedness means sharks are not simply removing fish from the ecosystem. They are actively shaping how energy flows through the entire bluewater environment.

WHY HEALTHY SHARK POPULATIONS MATTER

Healthy shark populations often contribute to healthier ecosystems by preventing any one species from dominating the food web. Their presence encourages movement, diversity, and balance throughout marine communities.

Without top predators, prey populations can expand rapidly, overconsume resources, and trigger ecological instability. The ocean evolved with sharks at the top. Their role extends far beyond direct predation. They influence where fish feed, how they migrate, when they reproduce, and even how entire ecosystems function.

THE OCEAN'S SHADOW HUNTERS

Every fish in the bluewater environment lives with the possibility of becoming prey. Whether it is a baitfish avoiding a tuna, a tuna avoiding a shark, or a juvenile marlin navigating a dangerous ocean, survival depends on constant adaptation. Sharks sit at the center of this system.

Their influence extends far beyond the fish they consume. They create an environment where vigilance, speed, schooling, camouflage, and intelligence become essential tools for survival.

The next time a shark appears behind the boat or steals a prized catch from the line, consider the larger story unfolding beneath the surface. That shark is not merely a predator passing through. It is one of the architects of the offshore ecosystem, shaping the behavior of nearly every creature around it.

In the bluewater world, the shadow hunters are always present, and every fish knows it. ■

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White Marlin Open

PAST WINNERS

HALL OF FAME » Despite the big pay days, anglers will tell you that winning the White Marlin Open is worth more than any prize money. Below are the winning anglers who have secured their place in WMO history.



Photograph by: Harry R. Hindmarsh

1974

White Marlin • 68.5 lbs. • Vince Sorenson
Blue Marlin • 291 lbs. • Don Leek
Wahoo • 51 lbs. • Dave Bond
Tuna • 19 lbs. • Vince Sorenson
Dolphin • 40 lbs. • Don Leek
Shark • None caught
Billfish Points • 231.5 pts. • Harry Rogers

1975

White Marlin • 84.5 lbs. • Dan Healy
Blue Marlin • 569 lbs. • Henry Stojowski
Wahoo • 73 lbs. • Robert Decola
Tuna • 70.5 lbs. • Bernard Ruck
Dolphin • 34.5 lbs. • Don Leek
Shark • 167 lbs. • Richard Bostrom
Billfish Points • 330 pts. • Dale White

1976

White Marlin • 89 lbs. • Joe Brodesser
Blue Marlin • 250 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Wahoo • 49 lbs. • Tom Casey
Tuna • 114 lbs. • Marion Krasowski
Dolphin • 29 lbs. • Terry Hough
Shark • 199 lbs. • Victor Scheibolk
Billfish Points • 280 pts. • Dr. George Peck

1977

White Marlin • 79 lbs., Buster Day
Blue Marlin • 590 lbs. • Harry Hales
Wahoo • 75 lbs. • George Stephenson
Tuna • 149 lbs. • Don Leek
Dolphin • 44 lbs. • Dr. George Peck
Shark • 187 lbs. • Ralph Harley
Billfish Points • 350 pts. • Bud Markl

1978

White Marlin • 93.5 lbs. • Jerry Johnson
Blue Marlin • 349 lbs. • Pete Boinis
Wahoo • 77.5 lbs. • Edward Dyas
Tuna • 171.5 lbs. • Bob Galamaga
Dolphin • 29 lbs. • Sam Kenney
Shark • 231 lbs. • Ed Berry
Billfish Points • 525 pts. • Pete Boinis

1979

White Marlin • 83.5 lbs. • Dr. William Hagen
Blue Marlin • 411 lbs. • Jack Conrad
Wahoo • 85.5 lbs. • Frank Visceglia
Tuna • 63 lbs. • Errel Johnson
Dolphin • 23.75 lbs. • Dan Healy
Shark • 153 lbs. • Robert Richard
Billfish Points • 300 pts. • Bob Donovan

1980

*** White Marlin** • 99 lbs. • Steve Bass
Blue Marlin • 250 lbs. • minimum (not met)
Wahoo • 71 lbs. • Charles Pishock
Tuna • 280 lbs. • Betty Sorace
Dolphin • 44 lbs. • George Murphy
Shark • 198 lbs. • Marche Rothlisberger
*** Billfish Points** • 1949 pts. • Hank Manley

1981

White Marlin • 90 lbs., Ron Evans
Blue Marlin • 250 lbs. minimum (not met)
Wahoo • 51 lbs. • John Lerch
Tuna • 241 lbs. • Chris Robbins
Dolphin • 37 lbs. • Ted Wojotech/Al Bernstein
Shark • 197 lbs. • Ken Stevenson
Billfish Points • 525 pts. • Dr. George Peck

1982

White Marlin • 76 lbs. • Rick Petshauer
Blue Marlin • 326 lbs. • Hank Manley
Wahoo • 40 lbs. minimum (not met)
Tuna • 19.5 lbs. • John Livingston
Dolphin • 34 lbs. • Rick Joy
Shark • 100 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Billfish Points • 375 pts. • Bob Herder

1983

White Marlin • 78.5 lbs. • Bud Hurlock, III
Blue Marlin • 870 lbs. • Butch Zigman
Wahoo • 69 lbs. • Mike Barcus
Tuna • 266 lbs. • D.W. Griffith
Dolphin • 33.5 lbs. • Robert Tigani
Shark • 192 lbs. • Laus Olbers
Billfish Points • 150 pts. • Alan Hopkins

1984

White Marlin • 75 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Blue Marlin • 345 lbs. • Brooke Gernet
Wahoo • 69 lbs. • Jim Cory
Tuna • 172 lbs. • John Dioles
Dolphin • 44 lbs. • Buster Day
Shark • 710 lbs. • Tom Carlock
Billfish Points • 366 pts. • Bill Hardimo

1985

White Marlin • 70 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Blue Marlin • 310 lbs. • Mike DeVito
Wahoo • 84 lbs. • Susan Day
Tuna • 206 lbs. • Tony Civca
Dolphin • 41 lbs. • Doug Anderson
Shark • 262 lbs. • Jerry Johnson
Billfish Points • 280 pts. • Paul Kincheloe, Jr.
High Boat • 280 pts. • "Crack O Dawn"

1986

White Marlin • 70 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Blue Marlin • 713 lbs. • George McNab
Wahoo • 40 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Tuna • 96 lbs. • John Olansen
Dolphin • 71 lbs. • Jeff Rice
Shark • 100 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Billfish Points • 236 pts., George McNab
High Boat • 274 pts. • "Viking 48"

1987

White Marlin • 65.5 lbs., John Bosley
Blue Marlin • 549 lbs. • D.W. Griffith
Wahoo • 63 lbs. • Dan Boy
Tuna • 272 lbs. • Don Rabenold
Dolphin • 39 lbs. • Steve Harman
Shark • 105 lbs. • Jay Phillips
Billfish Points • 490 pts. • Buster Day
High Boat • 560 pts. • "Seven Days"

88

White Marlin • 79 lbs. • Manny Goetz
Blue Marlin • 504 lbs. • Lou Cimaglia
Wahoo • 53 lbs. • Robert Phillips

1988

Tuna • 196 lbs. • Bob Eichner
Dolphin • 38 lbs. • Katie Riffe
Shark • 182 lbs. • Bill Zimmerman
Billfish Points • 420 pts. • Turk Hemseri
High Boat • 490 pts. • "Pemra Lynn"

1989

White Marlin • 69 lbs. • Al Bednarik/
Dennis Neus (tie)
Blue Marlin • 942 lbs. • Dr. Jim Daniel
Wahoo • 55.25 lbs. • Butch Evans
Tuna • 72 lbs. • Sue Wangel
Dolphin • 33.25 lbs. • Jim Motoko
Shark • 425.5 lbs. • Steve Flynn
Billfish Points • 600 pts. • Dan Deer
High Boat • 75 pts. • "True Grit"
Captain of the Year • Jim Farlow
Mate of the Year • Chris Farlow

1990

White Marlin • 67 lbs., Jim Byrd
Blue Marlin • 563 lbs. • Smitty Gray
Wahoo • 40 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Tuna • 282 lbs. • Marc Wangel
Dolphin • 53.5 lbs. • Don Henderson
Shark • 672 lbs. • Hank Schrott
Billfish Points • 515 lbs. • Katie Riffe
High Boat • 585 pts. • "Sea Toy"
Captain of the Year • Bill Tolson
Mate of the Year • Mike Day

1991

White Marlin • 83 lbs. • Kevin Cooney
Blue Marlin • 387 lbs. • Terry Layton
Wahoo • 55.5 lbs., Rich Roegeist
Tuna • 61.25 lbs. • Jim Strain
Dolphin • 39 lbs. • Rob Belcher
Shark • 650 lbs. • Dennis Killoran
Billfish Points • 375 pts. • Kitty Falk
High Boat • 450 pts. • "Dream Water"
Captain of the Year • Ralph Beatty
Mate of the Year • Jim Weaver

1992

White Marlin • 80.5 lbs. • Bob Bell
Blue Marlin • 321 lbs. • Willie Etherridge
Wahoo • 87 lbs. • John Main
*** Tuna** • 326 lbs. • Jim Freitas
Dolphin • 60 lbs. • Randy Worthington
Shark • 100 lbs. minimum - (not met)
Billfish Points • 300 pts. • Bob Henley
High Boat • 450 pts. • "Dixie Lady"
Captain of the Year • Scott Walker
Mate of the Year • Corey Davis

1993

White Marlin • 74 lbs. • Tommy Gessler, Jr.
Blue Marlin • 413 lbs. • David Taylor
Wahoo • 46 lbs. • Joe Desormeaux
Tuna • 251.5 lbs. • Tony Gagnino
Dolphin • 32 lbs. • David Barnes
Shark • 840 lbs. • Craig Williams
Billfish Points • 20 pts. • Mike Fletcher
High Boat • 295 pts. • "Bobbin' Jean"
Captain of the Year • Buddy Henley
Mate of the Year • Bill Henley

1994

White Marlin • 77.5 lbs. • Claude Dilks
Blue Marlin • 709.5 lbs. • Grant Connellee
*** Wahoo** • 110.5 lbs. • Kevin Wayson
Tuna • 257.5 lbs. • Jim Boyes
Dolphin • 49 lbs. • David Cieslak
Shark • 650 lbs. • Gary King
Billfish Points • 525 pts. • Al Bednarik
High Boat • 692.83 pts. • "Sea Toy"
Captain of the Year • Bull Tolson
Mate of the Year • Charles Locke

1995

White Marlin • 69.5 lbs. • Rod Rippin
Blue Marlin • 522.5 lbs., Warren Halle
Wahoo • 75 lbs. • Tom Jones Jr.
Tuna • 107 lbs. • Ron Howard
Dolphin • 35 lbs. • Bert Augustensen
*** Shark** • 931 lbs. • Jerry Fish
Billfish Points • 375.67 pts. • Mark Wenzlaff
High Boat • 580 pts. • "Reel Machine"
Captain of the Year • Paul Daisey
Mate of the Year • Charlie Grinath

1996

White Marlin • 73.5 lbs. • John Brown
Blue Marlin • 446 lbs. • Robert Ham
Wahoo • 77 lbs. • Steven Gore
Tuna • 235.5 lbs. • Anthony Williams
Dolphin • 47 lbs. • Marc Beaubien
Shark • 315 lbs. • John Dolmetsch
Billfish Points • 370 pts. • Carlos Bentos
High Boat • 370 pts. • "Caribena"
Captain of the Year • Carlos Bentos
Mate of the Year • Carlos Bentos

1997

White Marlin • 76 lbs. • Tom Carlock
Blue Marlin • 691 lbs. • Kevin Oppen
Wahoo • 40 lb. minimum (not met)
Tuna • 192.5 lbs. • Jesse Buckwater
Dolphin • 39.5 lbs. • Jeff Derr
Shark • 176 lbs. • George Beam
Billfish Points • 388.83 pts. • Mike Hushen
High Boat • 580 pts. • "Bluewater Edition"
Captain of the Year • Capt. John Bayliss
Mate of the Year • David Graham

1998

White Marlin • 79.5 lbs. • Roger Viens
Blue Marlin • 840 lbs. • Webb St. Clair
Wahoo • 71 lbs. • Darren Terzi
Tuna • 98 lbs. • Clint Murrell
Dolphin • 40 lbs. • Phil Cianelli
Shark • 100 lb. minimum not met
Billfish Points • 1270 pts. • Scott Knoff
High Boat • 1480 pts. • "South Jersey Champion"
Captain of the Year • Capt. Mike Adkins
Mate of the Year • Keith Greenberg

1999

White Marlin • 81.5 lbs. • Richard Benn
Blue Marlin • 578 lbs. • Stan Shapiro
Wahoo • 48.5 lbs. • Tom Mauro
Tuna • 148 lbs. • Rex Johnson
Dolphin • 39.5 lbs. • Betsy Aikaterinidis
Shark • 101.5 lbs. • Wayne Hurst
Billfish Points • 550.83 pts. • Daryl Reinke
High Boat • 735.83 pts. • "Strokin"
Captain of the Year • Capt. Mark Hill
Mate of the Year • Chris Giordani

2000

White Marlin • 71 lbs. • Don Wagner
Blue Marlin • 781 1/2 lbs. • Joe Schwab
Wahoo • 76 1/2 lbs. • Bruce Hall
Tuna • 109 lbs. • Skip Roberts
Dolphin • 48 1/2 lbs. • Brian Schaeffler
Shark • 158 lbs. • J.B. Jennings
Billfish Points • 575 pts. • Judd Black
High Boat • 1425 pts. • "Bluewater"
Captain of the Year • John Bayliss
Mate of the Year • Scott Fawcett

2001

White Marlin • 79 1/2 lbs. • John Raimondo
Blue Marlin • 450 lbs. • minimum not met
Wahoo • 46 1/2 lbs. • Barry Clatterbuck (tie)
Wahoo • 46 1/2 lbs. • Cathi DeChant (tie)
Tuna • 267 lbs. • Rich Rittermann
Dolphin • 44 lbs. • John Ward

01

Shark • 211 1/2 lbs. • Pace Fonville
Billfish Points • 450 pts. • Joe Aiello
High Boat • 595 pts. • "Viking 65"
Captain of the Year • Don Gemmell
Mate of the Year • Rich Stallings

2002

White Marlin • 78 lbs. • Bob Hughes
Blue Marlin • 688 lbs. • Garvan McColgan
Wahoo • 80 lbs., Janet Smith
Tuna • 113 lbs. • Keith Davis
Dolphin • 38 1/2 lbs. • Jay Barnett
Shark • 100 lbs. minimum (not met)
Billfish Points • 980 pts. • Susan Selian
High Boat • 1,625 pts. • "Hatterascal"
Captain of the Year • Terry Stansell
Mate of the Year • Jason Parker

2003

White Marlin • 78 1/2 lbs. • Doug Remsberg
Blue Marlin • 485 lbs. • James Adams
Wahoo • 69 lbs. • Jeff Howell
Tuna • 175 1/2 lbs. • Robert Ham
Dolphin • 50 1/2 lbs. • Gary Sansbury
Dolphin • 50 1/2 lbs. • Guy Herring
Shark • 162 1/2 lbs. • Bill Butler
Billfish Points • 315 pts. • Jim Rodgers
High Boat • 420 pts. • "Dream Catcher"
Captain of the Year • Mike Bennett
Mate of the Year • Luke Hickey

2004

White Marlin • 84 lbs. • Bret Jamison
Blue Marlin • 895 lbs. • Allen Roys
Wahoo • 108 1/2 lbs. • Greg DiGiovanni
Tuna • 163 lbs. • Jack Dougherty
Dolphin • 42 lbs. • Dennis King
Shark • 283 1/2 lbs. • John Adams
Billfish Points • 770 pts. • Tim Belcher
High Boat • 910 pts. • "Bohica"
Captain of the Year • John Duffie
Mate of the Year • Jeremy Duffie

2005

White Marlin • 78.5 lbs. • Ken Coffey
Blue Marlin • 656 lbs. • Greg Reynolds
Wahoo • 73 lbs. • Alan Downs
Tuna • 254.5 lbs. • Fred Renaud
Dolphin • 50.5 lbs. • Russell Franklin
Shark • 163 lbs. • Craig Nitterhouse
Billfish Points • 770 pts. • Kenneth Ashlin
High Boat • 945 pts. • "Canyon Express"
Captain of the Year • Capt. Greg Span
Mate of the Year • Brett Jamison

2006

White Marlin • 82 lbs. • Jack Hotz III
Blue Marlin • 737 lbs. • Jim Lummis
Wahoo • 79.5 lbs. • Stewart Merritt
Tuna • 135.5 lbs. • John Ols
Dolphin • 54.5 lbs. • Chris Evans
Shark • Open
Billfish Points • 700 pts. • Bob Nabrzewski
High Boat • 980 pts. • "Ditch Digger"
Captain of the Year • Keith Greenberg
Mate of the Year • Heath Brown

2007

White Marlin • 83 lbs. • John Frankos
Blue Marlin • 632.5 lbs. • Carl Hurlebus
Wahoo • 83.5 lbs. • Stephan Lewis
Tuna • 259 lbs. • Jonathan Stallings
Dolphin • 32 lbs. • Eric Bjorklund
Shark • 111 lb. • Michael Brennan
Billfish Points • 695 pts. • James Adams
High Boat • 820 pts. • "Billfisher"
Captain of the Year • Jon Duffie
Mate of the Year • John Prather

WINNERS WHITE MARLIN OPEN

2008

White Marlin • 81 lbs. • Tommy Hinkle/
Roger Mooney (tie)
Blue Marlin • 935.5 lbs. • Robert Lockwood
Wahoo • 47 lbs. • Bob Hoste
Tuna • 172 lbs. • Jimmy Hahn
Dolphin • 67 lbs. • Stephan Lewis
Shark • 110.5 lb. • Donnie Scrivener
Billfish Points • 595 pts. • Peter Cherasia
High Boat • 700 pts. • "Judge"
Captain of the Year • Blaine Champlin
Mates of the Year • Steve Scharf/Heath Brown

2009

White Marlin • 93.5 lbs. • Sean Healey
*** Blue Marlin** • 1062 lbs. • Robert Farris
Wahoo • 47 lbs. • John Green
Tuna • 249 lbs., Doug Salter
Dolphin • 37.5 lbs. • Ronald Bennett
Shark • 254 lb. • Jamie Gill
Shark Points • 385 pts. • John Dougherty
Billfish Points • 700 pts. • "Viking 68"
Captain of the Year • Ryan Higgins
Mates of the Year • Rhett Bailey/Scott Adams

2010

White Marlin • 97.5 lbs. • Brian Roberts
Blue Marlin • 1010.5 lbs. • James Kontos
Wahoo • 47.5 lbs. • Zachary Gelacek
Tuna • 77.5 lbs. • Trey Little
Dolphin • 53.5 lbs. • Cory Bubb
Shark • Open
Billfish Points • 631.5 pts. • Jeff Citron
High Boat • 1263 pts. • "Fin Ness"
Captain of the Year • Josh Farr
Mate of the Year • Ryan Greenway

2011

White Marlin • 88.5 lbs. • Paul Coen
Blue Marlin • 699.5 lbs. • John Schindler
Wahoo • 71 lbs. • William Bayne
Tuna • 279 lbs. • Chip Caruso
Dolphin • 41.5 lbs. • Gordon McNamara

2011

Shark • 107.5 lbs. • Matt Cusamano
Billfish Points • 945 pts. • John Janaskie
High Boat • 1435 pts. • "Alexis"
Captain of the Year • Andy Morris
Mate of the Year • Matt Serafin

2012

White Marlin • 72 lbs. • William Woody
Blue Marlin • Open
Wahoo • 70.5 lbs. • Jamie Greer
Tuna • 238 lbs. • Norman Pulliam
Dolphin • 33 lbs. • Arthur Kontos
Billfish Points • 840 pts. • Susan McCart
High Boat • 1855 pts. • "Trophy Hunter"
Captain of the Year • Kenneth Brown
Mates of the Year • Joey Belton/Israel Medina

2013

White Marlin • 83 lbs. • Tommy Jones
Blue Marlin • Open
Tuna • 276 lbs. • Jim Czaban
Wahoo • 70 lbs. • John Simmons
Dolphin • 34 lbs. • Jeff Collins
Shark • 133.5 lbs. • Mike Peet
Billfish Points • 770 pts. • Jeff Citron
High Boat • 707 pts. • "Sea Toy"
Captain of the Year • Bull Tolson
Mate of the Year • Shelby DeJarnette

2014

White Marlin • 78 lbs. • John Bayliss
Blue Marlin • 738.5 lbs. • Sam Lancelotta
Tuna • 183.5 lbs. • Doug Mazzullo
Wahoo • 66 lbs. • Kenny Lord
Dolphin • 38 lbs. • Jeff Collins
Shark • 156 lbs. • Eric Seigel
Billfish Points • 455 pts. • Joseph Roberts
High Boat • 945 pts. • "Sea Toy"
Captain of the Year • Bull Tolson
Mate of the Year • DJ DeJarnette

2015

White Marlin • 94 lbs. • Cheryl McLeskey
Blue Marlin • 551 lbs. • Larry Hesse • Jr.
Tuna • 200.5 lbs. • Mark Donahue
Wahoo • 45 lbs. • Jay Mascaro
Dolphin • 46.5 lbs. • Andy Shelton
Shark • Open
Billfish Points • 655 pts., John Gudelsky
High Boat • 1295 pts. • "Fishaholic"
Captain of the Year • Joe Zerbo
Mate of the Year • Bill Meyer

2016

White Marlin • Open
Blue Marlin • 790 lbs. • Jim Conway
Tuna • 236.5 lbs. • Rich Kosztzu
Wahoo • 79 lbs. • Richard Hammond
Dolphin • 39 lbs. • Josh Sharp
Shark • 260.5 lbs. • JD Messler
Billfish Points • 945 pts. • Marc Verzaleno
High Boat • 1890 pts. • "Bullwinkle"
Captain of the Year • Daniel Spencer
Mate of the Year • Bennett Griffin

2017

White Marlin • 95.5 lbs. • Glen Frost
Blue Marlin • Open
Tuna • 68.5 lbs. • Joseph Sadler
Wahoo • 55 lbs. • Gary Capuano
Dolphin • 23 lbs. • Andrew Cohen
Shark • 126 lbs. • Frank Snover
Billfish Points • 630 pts. • Jack Owens
High Boat • 735 pts. • "Bar South"
Captain of the Year • Jim Mulcahy
Mate of the Year • Tyler Princinsky

2018

White Marlin • 83 lbs. • Pascual Jimenez
Blue Marlin • 881 lbs. • Joe Rahman
Tuna • 75.5 lbs. • Gary Sansburry
Wahoo • 63 lbs. • Kevin Graybill
Dolphin • 50 lbs. • Lewis Genello
Shark • Open
Billfish Points • 560 pts. • Ron Kawaja
High Boat • 875 pts. • "Viking 72"
Captain of the Year • Ryan Higgins
Mates of the Year • Hector Torres/Steven Ehrbar

2019

White Marlin • 79.5 lbs. • Tommy Hinkle
Blue Marlin • 465.5 lbs., • Craig Dickerson
Tuna • 201 lbs. • Russell Garufi
Wahoo • 91 lbs. • Anne Aramendia
Dolphin • 41 lbs. • John Kreiner
Shark • 277.5 lbs. • Greg Robinson
Billfish Points • 1190 pts. • Ed Russo
High Boat • 1960 pts. • "Big Deal"
Captain of the Year • Brian Rabbitt
Mates of the Year • Ben Zifar/Sergio Lobo Vargas

2020

White Marlin • 97 lbs. • Brandon Golueke
Blue Marlin • Open
Tuna • 121 lbs. • Frank Whirley
Wahoo • 60.5 lbs. • Mark Hutchinson
*** Dolphin** • 73.5 lbs. • Matt Wagner
Shark • Open
Billfish Points • 665 pts. • Harris Huddle
High Boat • 1,155 pts. • "Wave Paver 77"
Captain of the Year • Russel Sinclair
Mates of the Year • Doug Southworth/
Garett Van Orman

2021

White Marlin • 85.5 lbs., Butch Wright
Blue Marlin • 775 lbs. • David Cash
Tuna • 137 lbs. • Lawrence Morejon
Wahoo • 84 lbs. • Ormonde Mahoney
Dolphin • 34 lbs., • Charles Dishman
Shark • 132.5 lbs. • Anthony Sapanero

2021

*** Swordfish** • 318.5 lbs. • Jacob Bertonazzi
Billfish Points • 700 pts. • William Haugland
High Boat • 770 pts. • "Reelin Feelin"
Captain of the Year • Howard "Hook" LeConey
Mate of the Year • Sean Singley

2022

White Marlin • 77.5 lbs. • Jeremy Duffie
Blue Marlin • 511 lbs. • Bill Britt
Tuna • 247 lbs. • Jason Hersh
Wahoo • 71 lbs. • Chris Thompson
Dolphin • 59 lbs. • Frank Sinito, Jr.
Swordfish • Open
Billfish Points • 490 pts. • William Haugland
High Boat • 708 pts. • "Billfisher"
Captain of the Year • Jon Duffie
Mate of the Year • Noah McVicker

2023

White Marlin • Open
Blue Marlin • 640.5 lbs. • Johnny Ols
Tuna • 265 lbs. • Brian Stewart
Wahoo • 57 lbs. • John Harris
Dolphin • 50.5 lbs. • Andrew Spangenberg
Swordfish • Open
Billfish Points • 770 pts. • Brian Demile
High Boat • 1,190 pts. • "Fin Planner"
Captain of the Year • Chris Gorrell
Mate of the Year • Chris Storrs

2024

White Marlin • 77.5 lbs. • Ven Poole
Blue Marlin • 897.5 lbs. • Lance Blakemore
Tuna • 220.5 lbs. • Rob Jones
Wahoo • 70 lbs. • Ian Horowitz
Dolphin • 32.5 lbs. • Patrick Field
Swordfish • Open
Billfish Points • 753 pts. • Hershel Martin
High Boat • 1,033 pts. • "Bobojo"
Captain of the Year • Patrick Byrd
Mates of the Year • Catlin Peele/Tyler Sudbrink

2025

White Marlin • 72 lbs. • Dan Gough
Blue Marlin • 929.5 lbs. • Drew Osmeyer
Tuna • 188 lbs. • Jonathan Cianciulli
Wahoo • 49.5 lbs. • Chris Jones
Dolphin • 32.5 lbs. • Andrew Schreiber
Swordfish • Open
Billfish Points • 595 pts. • Rob Wagner
High Boat • 1,085 pts. • "Taylor Jean"
Captain of the Year • Blaine Birch
Mates of the Year • Jarrett Birch, Stephen Birch



* Tournament Record



WHITE MARLIN

99
Pounds

1980

- There have been several 90-plus pound white marlin brought to the scales over the last five decades, but the 99 lb. white caught by Steve Bass aboard the Top Hat in 1980 has stood the test of time. Forty-five years later, it remains as the largest white marlin in our history.



Photograph by: Dale Timmons

BLUE MARLIN

1,062
Pounds

2009

- There have only been two granders caught in the 52 year history of the WMO and that occurred in back-to-back years of 2009-2010. The first of those granders, and the first ever caught off the coast of Maryland, was brought in by Bob Ferris fishing on No Problem. The giant blue had an overall length of 15 feet 9 inches and weighed in at 1062 lbs.



Photograph by: Larry Jock

WHITE MARLIN

24

White Marlin Releases

1980

- In what many consider the greatest and most unbeatable WMO record, Hank Manley fishing on the Escapade caught 26 white marlin in three days in 1980 which earned him 1949 billfish points.



Photograph by: Dale Timmons

DOLPHIN

73.5
Pounds

2020

- Matt Wagner caught this 73.5 lb. bull dolphin in 2020 fishing aboard the Backlash out of Virginia Beach, VA. Wagner's catch beat the long standing record 71 lb. dolphin caught by Jeff Rice in 1986.



Photograph by: Dave Messick

BIG EYE TUNA

326
Pounds

1992

- Jim 'Slim' Freitas of Port St Lucie, FL caught this 326 lb. bigeye on the Moderation in 1992. It is the only tuna in our history which topped 300 lbs. and has stood as a WMO record for 33 years.



Photograph by: Paul Winner

WAHOO

110.5
Pounds

1994

- Kevin Wayson caught this 110.5 lb. state record wahoo aboard the Kristy Lee in 1994. That year the WMO was part of the Volvo Penta Legend Series which awarded a Volvo 850 Turbo Volvo to anyone catching a state record. The Volvo representative was there that night and handed Wayson the keys to the car.



Photograph by Dale Timmons

TIGER SHARK

931
Pounds

1995

- Jerry Fish poses with his massive 931 lb. tiger shark caught in 1995, the largest shark and the 5th largest fish of any kind ever caught in the WMO. Shark is no longer a category in the tournament so Fish's record will be forever etched into tournament lore.



Photograph by Dale Timmons

SWORDFISH

318.5
Pounds

2021

- Jacob Bertonazzi set a tournament and state record with his 318.5 lb swordfish caught in the 2021 Open. Bertonazzi was fishing on Jersey Boys which caught the largest swordfish in the WMO in back to back years.



Photograph by Dave Messick



TOP 5 WINNERS

» WHITE MARLIN

- 99 lbs. • Steve Bass • 1980
- 97.5 lbs. • Brain Roberts • 2021
- 97 lbs. • Brandon Golueke • 2020
- 95.5 lbs. • Glen Frost • 2017
- 94 lbs. • Cheryl McLeskey • 2015

» BLUE MARLIN

- 1,062 lbs. • Robert Farris • 2009
- 1,010.5 lbs. • James Kontos • 2010
- 942 lbs. • Dr. Jim Daniel • 1989
- 935.5 lbs. • Robert Lockwood • 2008
- 929.5 lbs. • Drew Osmeyer • 2025

» TUNA

- 326 lbs. • Jim Freitas • 1992
- 282 lbs. • Marc Wangel • 1990
- 280 lbs. • Betty Sorace • 1980
- 279 lbs. • Chip Caruso • 2011
- 276 lbs. • Jim Czaban • 2013

» WAHOO

- 105.5 lbs. • Kevin Wayson • 1994
- 108.5 lbs. • Greg DiGiovanni • 2004
- 91 lbs. • Anne Aramendia • 2019
- 87 lbs. • John Main • 1992
- 85.5 lbs. • Frank Visceglia • 1979

» DOLPHIN

- 73.5 lbs. • Matt Wagner • 2020
- 71 lbs. • Jeff Rice • 1986
- 67 lbs. • Stephen Lewis • 2008
- 60 lbs. • Randy Worthington • 1992
- 59.5 lbs. • Frank Sinito Jr. • 2022

» SWORD FISH

- 318.5 lbs. • Jacob Bertonazzi • 2021
- 273.5 lbs. • Kyle Gagliardi • 2020

» BILLFISH POINTS

- 1949 lbs. • Hank Manley • 1980
- 1270 lbs. • Scott Knoff • 1998
- 1190 lbs. • Ed Russo • 2019
- 980 lbs. • Susan Selian • 2002
- 945 lbs. • Marc Verزالeno • 2016

» MONEY WINNERS

- \$6,235,436 • Johnny Ols • 2023
- \$4,536,926 • Jeremy Duffie • 2022
- \$3,914,198 • Dan Gough • 2025
- \$3,699,631 • Ven Poole • 2024
- \$3,238,160 • Butch Wright • 2021



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Captain Chris Donato

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Captain Mike King - Angler Troy Irvine
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Team Akimaru - 1,093 lb Blue Marlin
Captain Fumitake Ono

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Record \$3.4

Ngor Marlin Cup Senegal
Winner 1,181 lb Blue Marlin
Team Desire - Captain Jacques

2017 Bisbee East Cape
Winner - Team Andrews
Captain Tony Andrews

2016 Big Rock Blue Marlin
Winner Blue 621 lbs - Team Ashley Lauren
Captain Mark Annis

2016 White Marlin Open
Winner Blue 790 lbs - Team Get Real
Captain Brian Amis

2016 Bermuda Sea Horse Open
Winner Blue Marlin - Team Es Mucha
Captain Alan Desera

2016 Mardis Et Galle Tournament
Largest Blue Marlin - Team Makaira
Captain John Cochrane

2016 Old Salt Loop Billfish
Winners - Team On Cause
Captain Bill Curry

2016 Grandeur Horta Azores
1254 lbs - Team Habitat
Captain Lucas Folks

2016 Eastern Open
Winner Blue 629 lbs - Team Cap Baby
Captain John Hardy

2016 Harlowway International
Winners Blue Marlin - Team Unbelkred
Captain Mark Bigden

2016 Hawaiian Lure Masters Challenge
Winner Blue Marlin - Team Captain
Captain Robby Brown

2016 JBT Japan International Billfish
Winners - Team Apache
Angler - Yoshinori Hamamoto

2016 Grandeur La Gomeria Canary Islands
1160 lbs Blue Marlin - Team Sea Sprint
Captain Mark Lee

2016 XV Salinas Yacht Club Billfish
Winners - Team Amramar
Captain Ken Ross

2016 Old Salt Loop Tournament
Winner - Team On Cause
Captain Bill Curry

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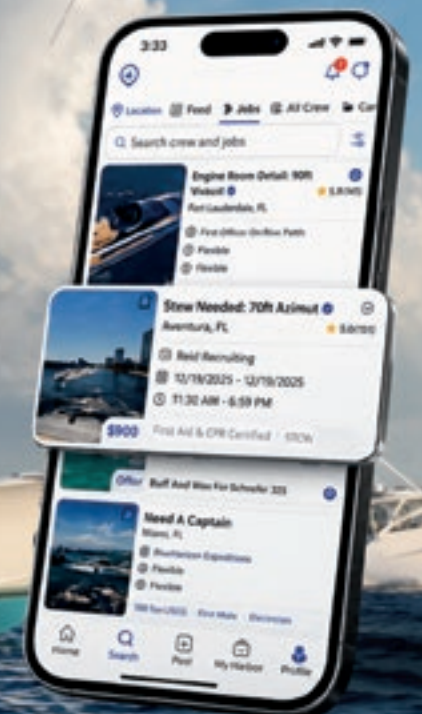
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