



Attention all Billfish Anglers

Black marlin fin clips needed

The black marlin have continued to turn up in numbers on Australia's west coast and off Weipa with great numbers of samples being taken. And over on the east coast the run of juvenile blacks is starting to stretch further south while with a big season on adults off the GBR continues. The knowledge of black marlin stocks has also been re-written with the proceedings of the 5th international Billfish Symposium held recently in Taiwan. This third edition of the Black Marlin Bulletin will share an overview of these updates, as well as giving an all-important update on our latest finclip entries.

Stock Structure of Black Marlin

The international billfish symposium is irregular occurring conference where billfish research scientists from around the globe gather to share their work and discuss the future direction of billfish research. The 4th conference in 2005 resulted in the reclassification of the billfish phylogeny and the 5th symposium held over the first week of November 2013 in Taiwan has not disappointed either with some exciting outcomes that are expected to be published in the proceedings. To Recap: Until now black marlin were assumed to be a single global stock with spawning only confirmed to occur off Australia's Ribbon Reef group. Hsiao-Yun Chang, a master's student from National Taiwan University investigated the gonads of mature black marlin from Taiwan and the South China Sea. She was able to confirm the presence of fully hydrated oocytes and post-spawning follicles indicating that spawning does occur in the South China Sea and the southwestern Taiwan region between March and April.

To accompany this finding, Dr. Wei-Chuan Chiang ("Riyar") at the Taiwan Eastern Marine Biology Research Center revealed that from 9 black marlin that were satellite tagged of southeast Taiwan (tag duration up to 360 days), no fish moved out of the waters that comprise the east and south china seas. The movements were seasonal figure of 8 patterns between the two seas. These interesting results raise many questions about the black marlin population structure in particular; Are there other breeding sites? Are the fish spawning in Taiwan the same fish we find off Cairns or two independent populations? Could some of the juveniles we find in Australian waters be from a South China Sea spawning site? Whilst in Taiwan Dr Pepperell and I stayed at Taiwan Eastern Marine Biology Research Center and worked with local researchers collecting samples from the fish markets taken by 'harpoon fishermen' which hopefully in the future can help us to answer some of these questions.



Fin Clipping Progress

West Coast

Since the last newsletter reports of the fishing off Broome throughout October has seen a sensational number of billfish with many little black marlin on the bite within a strong sailfish fishery. Compliments to Jeda Ellen (*Makaira gamefishing charters*) and Chris Nisbet (*Broome Billfish Charters*) who both were able to extend their tallies of fin clips. Jeda managed to top the leader board across the country with a remarkable 15 clips while Chris managed to extend his tally to 5. Elsewhere in WA, Sandra Lymbery reports that Bernie Vale of Coral Bay Ocean game fishing charters has managed 3 fin clips, 2 of which were from 40 kg fish and the other from a 8-10kg black.

Further north at [Nickol Bay Sportfishing Club](#) Luke Leech has collected another two fin clips for the club taken for anglers Greg Milliken and Warren Tucker who, along with all other anglers mentioned, will both receive an entry into the lucky draw. At the *King Bay GFC* in Dampier Len informs me that the club has stayed on 10 clips total since last notice, however they are working on getting the word out through local media to increase awareness. Charter captains in Exmouth Josh Bruynzeel (*On Strike*) and Eddy Lawler (*Peak Sports Fishing*) at last report were on 4 apiece, while during the Exmouth game fishing club tournament Mike Smith managed to take a fin clip. Once again, thanks to Dennis Byran-Smith, Jeni Gates and an anonymous other who are helping to co-ordinate the region.

The Gulf (Weipa to Darwin)

Ben Bright from Weipa Game Fishing Club has been actively engaged in taking fin clips – with great success. The Weipa Game Fishing Club has been able to take 11 clips consisting of 6 from Ben, 2 from Duane Singleton, 1 from Allan Jackson, 1 from Chris Davidson and 1 from Darren Lee. Recent reports saw a number of baby blacks raised in the region on Monday the 18th of November suggesting there are more to come as well. Bomber Farrell has been trying to take fin clips fishing out of Groote Eylandt in the Gulf but has only seen sails so far, and Steve Roberts from Darwin Game Fishing Club also informed us that they weren't able to take any samples from there tournament, but are definitely on the lookout!

East Coast

As the fishing shifted focus to Cairns for the run of adult blacks we would like to give a mention to who we believe was Tim Richardson who took a fin clip from a 950 lb fish off Cairns. Beyond that much of the fin clipping action has moved south with the run of small black marlin down the east coast of Australia. Paddy Diamond increased his tally to 2 after taking a clip when landing the first fish during the Sunshine Coast GFC shootout.

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Leader Board	
Angler	Clips
Jeda Ellens	15
Mick Mieres	7
Ben Bright	6
Nick Hill	6
Chris Nisbet	5
Josh Bruynzeel	4
Eddy Lawler	4
Rob Smith	4
Bernie Vale	3
Scott Macgowan	3
Brent Higgins	3
Talish Cook	2
Paddy Diamond	2
Duane Singleton	2
Glen Radon	2
Anthony Tyson	1
Craige McCulloch	1
Chris Davidson	1
Annie B	1
Talisha Cook	1
Darren Lee	1
Adrian Gibson	1
Joanne Tatham	1
Adam Galash	1
Pual Leijser	1
Harrison Weeding	1

A Big shout out to Doug Sanderson who made the sampling program's presence felt throughout the Hervey Bay Game Fishing Club tournament, collecting 5 finclips from anglers, one clip taken by Chris Thurkettle on his new (broken in now!) boat 'VIKING' – reported to be from a tiny fish of just 3kg (800mm long) being too small to safely tag! The other tournament finclips were taken from 'Foreshore' with Glen Radon getting 2 and Anthony Tyson 1. Also amongst the other Hervey Bay clips was a 20kg black by Graeme fisher aboard Rampage. Over the same weekend Robert Smith was out with 'Ruff and Tuff' owner Matt Collinge, who were able to take 4 clips also on the Fraser coast to kick of their account. On another positive note for the project on the east coast Nick Curry informed us that Moreton Bay GFC are also eager to get involved.

Remember that all participants mentioned have gained entries into the draw to win a signed copy of Dr Julian Pepperell's award winning book "Fishes of the Open Ocean" (one for each coast), which will be drawn at the end of January!

Kim Anderson	1
Kim Dennis	1
Zuri	1
Chris Thurkettle	1
Graeme Fisher	1
Allan Jackson	1
Tim Richardson	1
Greg Milliken	1
Warren Tucker	1
West Coast Total	45
Wiepa Total	11
East Coast Total	30
Grand Total	86