



Tournament Guide



Why have IGFA International Angling Rules?

Since its inception in 1939, the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) has been regarded as the international body that governs rules for the sport of angling. The word "angling" is defined as catching or attempting to catch fish with a rod, reel, line, and hook as outlined in the IGFA's International Angling Rules.

The IGFA's International Angling Rules have been formulated to promote ethical and sporting angling practices, establish uniform regulations for the compilation of world game fish records and provide basic angling guidelines for use in fishing tournaments and other angling activities.

The IGFA is a strong supporter of fishing tournaments and other competitive angling events that are executed in a responsible manner, promote ethical angling practices, contribute to game fish research, and utilize the IGFA's International Angling Rules.



The cover wrap image called "Polarizer" is by Harry Hindermarsh.
To see more of his stunning work please visit www.harryhindmarsh.com



IGFA Headquarters

300 Gulf Stream Way, Dania Beach, Florida, 33004

Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. EST

www.igfa.org

Email: hq@igfa.org

Phone: 954-927-2628

International Angling Rules

The following angling rules have been formulated by the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) to promote ethical and sporting angling practices, to establish uniform regulations for the compilation of world game fish records, and to provide basic angling guidelines for use in fishing tournaments and any other group angling activities.

The word "angling" is defined as catching or attempting to catch fish with a rod, reel, line, and hook as outlined in the IGFA International Angling Rules. There are some aspects of angling that cannot be controlled through rule making, however. Angling regulations cannot insure an outstanding performance from each fish, and world records cannot indicate the amount of difficulty in catching the fish. Captures in which the fish has not fought or has not had a chance to fight do not reflect credit on the fisherman, and only the angler can properly evaluate the degree of achievement in establishing the record.

Rules for Fishing in Saltwater

EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS

A. LINE AND BACKING

1. Monofilament, multifilament, and lead core multifilament lines may be used. For line classes, see World Record Requirements.
2. Wire lines are prohibited.
3. Backing is permitted.
4. The catch shall be classified under the breaking strength of the first 5 meters (16.5 feet) of line directly preceding the double line, leader, or hook. This section must be comprised of a single, homogeneous piece of line and may not exceed 60 kilogram (130 pound) line class.

B. DOUBLE LINE

If a double line is used, it must meet the following specifications:

1. A double line must consist of the actual line used to catch the fish.

2. Double lines are measured from the start of the knot, braid, roll or splice making the double line to the farthestmost end of the knot, splice, snap, swivel or other device used for securing the trace, leader, lure or hook to the double line.

In all line classes up to and including 10 kilograms (20 pounds), the double line shall be limited to 4.57 meters (15 feet). The combined length of the double line and leader shall not exceed 6.1 meters (20 feet).

The double line on all classes of tackle over 10 kilograms (20 pounds) shall be limited to 9.14 meters (30 feet). The combined length of the double line and leader shall not exceed 12.19 meters (40 feet).

C. LEADER

If a leader is used, it must meet the following specifications:

The length of the leader is the overall length including any lure, hook arrangement or other device, and is measured to the bend of the last hook. The leader must be connected to the line with a snap, knot, splice, swivel or other device. Holding devices are prohibited. There are no regulations regarding the material or strength of the leader.

In all line classes up to and including 10 kilograms (20 pounds), the leader shall be limited to 4.57 meters (15 feet). The combined length of the double line and leader shall not exceed 6.1 meters (20 feet).

The leader on all classes of tackle over 10 kilograms (20 pounds) shall be limited to 9.14 meters (30 feet). The combined length of the double line and leader shall be limited to 12.19 meters (40 feet).

D. ROD

1. Rods must comply with sporting ethics and customs. Considerable latitude is allowed in the choice of a rod, but rods giving the angler an unfair advantage will be disqualified. This rule is intended to eliminate the use of unconventional rods.

2. The rod tip must be a minimum of 101.6 centimeters (40 inches) in length. The rod butt cannot exceed 68.58 centimeters (27 inches) in length. These measurements must be made from a point directly be-

neath the center of the reel. A curved butt is measured in a straight line. When the rod butt is placed in a gimbal, the measurement from the center of the reel seat to the pivot point of the gimbal can be no more than 68.58 centimeters (27 inches). (The above measurements do not apply to surf-casting rods.)

E. REEL

1. Reels must comply with sporting ethics and customs.

2. Power-driven reels are acceptable under the following situation and configuration.

a) Reels that have power accessories (e.g., electric drill attachments, motors, or other power accessories specifically designed for a reel) that can be physically removed from the reel may be used strictly for the purpose of retrieving a deployed bait or lure at depth all the way to the boat.



b) Power accessories may only be used to retrieve a bait or lure completely to the boat and are not permitted for adjusting the position of a bait or lure in the water column. Once a power accessory is attached to the reel, the bait or lure may no longer be legally used to catch a fish

and the bait or lure must be retrieved all the way to the boat for manual redeployment before it may be legally used to hook or catch a fish. Power accessories may not be attached to the reel during the deployment of a bait or lure.

c) Power accessories must be physically removed from the reel before the act of or hooking or fighting a fish. Any fish that strikes a bait or lure being fished with a reel with power accessories still attached- whether or not under electric operation- will not be eligible for record consideration.

d) Electric reels that do not have removable electronic components that allow them to be completely manually driven are prohibited.

3. Ratchet handle reels are prohibited.

4. Reels designed to be cranked with both hands at the same time are prohibited.

F. HOOKS AND BAIT FISHING



1. For live or dead bait fishing, no more than two single hooks may be used. Both must be firmly imbedded in or securely attached to the bait. The eyes of the hooks must be no less than a hook's length (the length of the largest hook used) apart and

no more than 45.72 centimeters (18 inches) apart. The only exception is that the point of one hook may be passed through the eye of the other hook. A hook may not precede bait, lure or bait/lure combo by more than one hook's length.

2. The use of a dangling or swinging hook is prohibited. Double or treble hooks are prohibited.

3. A two hook rig for bottom fishing is acceptable if it consists of two single hooks on separate leaders or drops. Both hooks must be imbedded in the respective baits and separated sufficiently so that a fish caught on one hook cannot be foul hooked by the other.

4. A photograph or sketch of the hook arrangement must accompany all record applications made for fish caught on two-hook tackle.

G. HOOKS AND LURES

1. When using an artificial lure with a skirt or trailing material, no more than two single hooks may be attached to the line, leader, or trace. The hooks need not be attached separately. The eyes of the hooks must be no less than an overall hook's length (the overall length of the largest hook used) apart and no more than 30.48 centimeters (12 inches) apart. The only exception is that the point of one hook may be passed through the eye of the other hook. The trailing hook may not extend more than a hook's length beyond the skirt of the lure. A hook may not precede bait, lure or bait/lure combo by more than one hook's length. A photograph or sketch showing the hook arrangement must accompany a record application.



2. Gang hooks are permitted when attached to plugs and other artificial lures that are specifically designed for this use. Gang hooks must be free swinging and shall be limited to a maximum of three hooks (single, double, or treble, or a combination of any three). It is permissible to imbed or securely attach a gang hook to a lure provided that the hook becomes free swinging once the fish takes the lure. Gang hooks may not be used with live or dead baits. A photograph or sketch of the plug or lure should be submitted with record applications.

3. Only one lure containing hooks may be used at a time.

H. OTHER EQUIPMENT

1. Fighting chairs may not have any mechanically propelled devices that aid the angler in fighting a fish.



2. Gimbals must be free swinging, which includes gimbals that swing in a vertical plane only. Any gimbal that allows the angler to reduce strain or to rest while fighting the fish is prohibited.



3. Gaffs (including flying gaffs), tail snares and nets used to boat or land a fish must not exceed 2.44 meters (8 feet) in overall length. In the case of tail snares, overall length is defined as the distance from the beginning of the handle to the apex of the snare when loaded. In using a flying or detachable gaff, the rope may not exceed 9.14 meters (30 feet). The gaff rope must be measured from the point where it is secured to the detachable head to the other end. Only the effective length will be considered. If a fixed head gaff is used, the same limitations shall apply and the gaff rope shall be measured from the same location on the gaff hook. Only a single hook is permitted on any gaff. Harpoons or lances are prohibited. Tail ropes are limited to 9.14 meters (30 feet). When fishing from a bridge, pier, or other high platform or structure, this length limitation does not apply.

4. Entangling devices, either with or without a hook, are prohibited and may not be used for any purpose including baiting, hooking, fighting, or landing the fish.

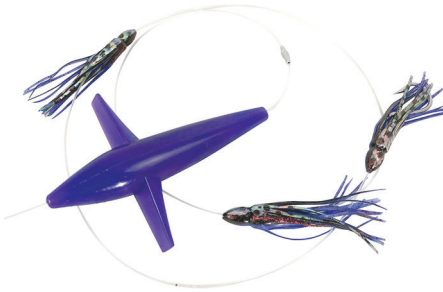
5. Outriggers, downriggers, spreader bars and kites are permitted to be used provided that the actual fishing line is attached to the snap or other release device, either

ANGLING REGULATIONS



directly or with some other material. The leader or double line may not be connected to the release mechanism either directly or with the use of a connecting device. Spreader bars are also acceptable when used strictly as a teaser.

6. Daisy chains, birds, floats and similar devices may only be used if they do not unfairly hamper or inhibit the normal swimming or fighting ability of the fish, thereby giving the angler or crew an unfair advantage in fighting, landing or boating the fish.



7. A safety line may be attached to the rod, reel or harness provided that it does not in any way assist the angler in fighting the fish.



1. From the time that a fish strikes or takes a bait or lure, the angler must hook, fight, and land or boat the fish without the aid of any other person, except as provided in these regulations.



2. If a rod holder is used, once the fish is hooked, the angler must remove the rod from the rod holder as quickly as possible.

3. In the event of a multiple strike on separate lines being fished by a single angler, only the first fish fought by the angler will be considered for a world record.



4. If a double line is used, the intent of the regulations is that the fish will be fought on the single line most of the time that it takes to land the fish.

5. Use of a rod belt or waist gimbal is permitted.



6. When angling from a boat, once the leader is brought within the grasp of the mate, or the end of the leader is wound to the rod tip, more than one person is permitted to hold the leader.



7. One or more gaffers may be used in addition to persons holding the leader. The gaff handle must be in hand when the fish is gaffed.



8. The angling and equipment regulations shall apply until the fish is weighed.

THE FOLLOWING ACTS WILL DISQUALIFY A CATCH:

1. Failure to comply with equipment or angling regulations.
2. The act of persons other than the angler in touching any part of the rod, reel, or line (including the double line) either bodily or with any



device, from the time a fish strikes or takes the bait or lure, until the fish is either landed or released, or in giving any aid other than that allowed in the rules and regulations. If an obstacle to the passage of the line through the rod guides has to be removed from the line, then the obstacle (whether chum, rubber band, or other material) shall be held and cut free. Under no circumstances should the line be held or touched by anyone other than the angler during this process.





3. Resting the rod in a rod holder, on the gunwale of the boat, or any other object while playing the fish.

4. Handlining or using a handline or rope attached in any manner to the angler's line or leader for the purpose of holding or lifting the fish.

5. Shooting, harpooning, or lancing any fish (including sharks and halibuts) at any stage of the catch.

6. Chumming with or using as bait the flesh, blood, skin, or any part of mammals other than hair or pork rind used in lures designed for trolling or casting.

7. Using a boat or device to beach or drive a fish into shallow water in order to deprive the fish of its normal ability to swim.

8. Changing the rod or reel while the fish is being played.

9. Splicing, removing, or adding to the line while the fish is being played.

10. Intentionally foul hooking a fish.

11. Catching a fish in a manner that the double line never leaves the rod tip.

12. Using a size or kind of bait that is illegal to possess.

13. Attaching the angler's line or leader to part of a boat or other object for the purpose of holding or lifting the fish.

14. If a fish escapes before gaffing

or netting and is recaptured by any method other than as outlined in the angling rules.

15. Holding or touching an angler in a manner that assists them in fighting the fish or takes pressure off of the angler. Touching or briefly holding the angler to prevent them from falling does not constitute a disqualification.



THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS WILL DISQUALIFY A CATCH:

1. When a rod breaks (while the fish is being played) in a manner that reduces the length of the tip below minimum dimensions or severely impairs its angling characteristics.

2. Mutilation to the fish, prior to landing or boating the catch, caused by sharks, other fish, mammals, or propellers that remove or penetrate the flesh. Injuries caused by leader or line, scratches, old healed scars or regeneration deformities are not considered to be disqualifying injuries. Any mutilation on the fish must be shown in a photograph and fully explained in a report accompanying the record application.

3. When a fish is hooked or entangled on more than one line.

4. When a catch violates laws or regulations governing the species or the waters where it was caught.

Illustrated Guide to Equipment Regulations

Double Lines and Leaders



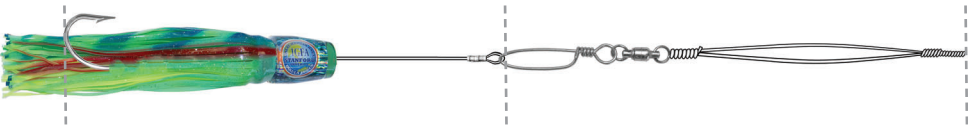
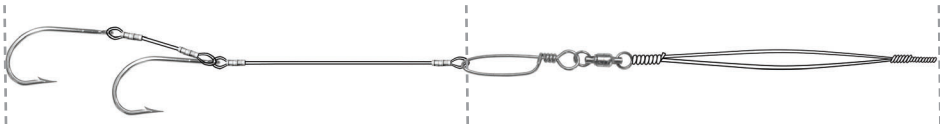
Double lines are measured from the start of the knot, braid, roll or splice making the double line to the farthermost end of the knot, splice, snap, swivel or other device used for securing the trace, leader lure or hook to the double line. A double line must consist of the actual line used to catch the fish. For saltwater species, the double line shall be limited to 4.57 meters (15 feet) for all line classes up to and including 10 kg. (20 lb.); and shall be limited to 9.14 meters (30 feet) for line classes over 10 kg. (20 lb.). For freshwater species, the double line on all classes of tackle shall not exceed 1.82 meters (6 feet).



The leader shall be limited to 4.57 meters (15 feet) for saltwater species in line classes up to and including 10 kg. (20 lb.), and 9.14 meters (30 feet) for all line classes over 10 kg. (20 lb.). For freshwater species, the leader on all classes of tackle shall be limited to 1.82 meters (6 feet).



The length of the leader is the overall length including any lure, hook arrangements or other device.



The combined length of the double line and leader shall not exceed 6.1 meters (20 feet) in line classes up to and including 10 kg. (20 lb.) and 12.19 meters (40 feet) in line classes over 10 kg. (20 lb.) for saltwater species. The combined length of the double line and leader shall not exceed 3.04 meters (10 feet) for freshwater species.

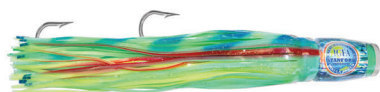
Illustrated Guide to Equipment Regulations

Natural Baits and Artificial

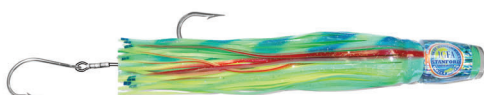


LEGAL if eyes of hooks no more than 45.72 centimeters (18 inches) apart in baits and no more than 30.45 centimeters (12 inches) apart in lures.

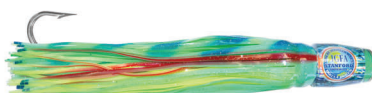
ILLEGAL if eyes further apart than these distances.



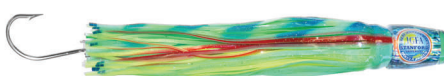
LEGAL as eyes of hooks are no less than a hook's length apart and no more than 30.45 centimeters (12 inches) apart, and the trailing hook does not extend more than a hook's length beyond the skirt.



NOT LEGAL as the second or trailing hook extends more than the hook's length beyond skirt. See also two hook rigs.



LEGAL as hook is contained within the skirt.



LEGAL as hook's eye is contained within the skirt.



NOT LEGAL in bait or lures as eyes of hooks are less than a hook's length (the length of the largest hook) apart.



NOT LEGAL as the single hook extends more than its length beyond the skirt.



LEGAL as eyes of hooks are no less than a hook's length apart and no more than 45.72 centimeters (18 inches) in baits and 30.45 centimeters (12 inches) in lures.



NOT LEGAL as back hook is not firmly imbedded in or securely attached to bait and is a dangling or swinging hook.



LEGAL in baits and lures. The point of one hook is passed through the eye of the other hook.



LEGAL as both hooks are firmly imbedded or securely attached to bait. Would not be legal if eyes of hooks were more than 45.72 centimeters (18 inches) apart.



Flying Gaffs - LEGAL on boats if effective rope length does not exceed 9.15 meters (30 feet).



Fixed and Flying Gaffs - LEGAL on boats if overall gaff length does not exceed 2.44 meters (8 feet).



Snares - LEGAL overall length of tail snares is defined as the distance from the beginning of the handle to the apex of the snare when loaded. Must not exceed 2.44 meters (8 feet) in overall length.

International Fly Fishing Rules

EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS

A. LINE

Any type of fly line and backing may be used. The breaking strength of the fly line and backing are not restricted.

B. LEADER

Leaders must conform to generally accepted fly fishing customs. A leader includes a class tippet and, optionally, a shock tippet. A butt or taper section between the fly line and the class tippet shall also be considered part of the leader and there are no limits on its length, material, or strength. A class tippet must be made of nonmetallic material and either attached directly to the fly or to the shock tippet if one is used. The class tippet must be at least 38.10 centimeters (15 inches) long (measured inside connecting knots). With respect to knotless, tapered leaders, the terminal 38.10 centimeters (15 inches) will also determine tippet class. There is no maximum length limitation. A shock tippet, not to exceed 30.48 centimeters (12 inches) in length, may be added to the class tippet and tied to the

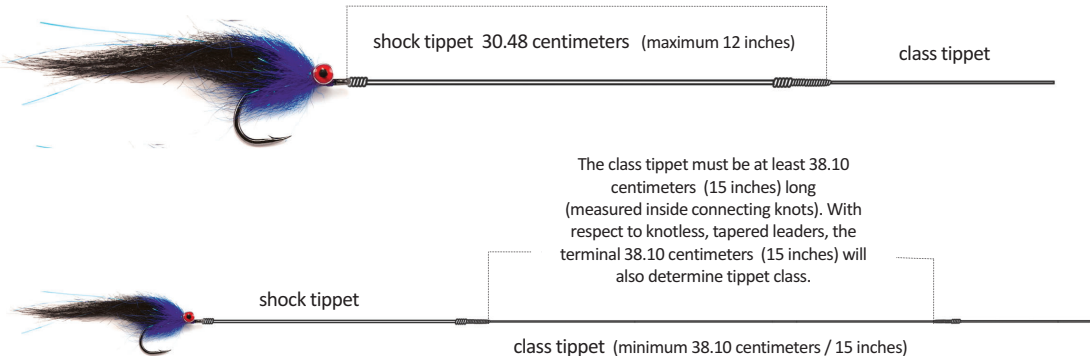
fly. It can be made of any type of material, and there is no limit on its breaking strength. The shock tippet is measured from the eye of the hook to the single strand of class tippet and includes any knots used to connect the shock tippet to the class tippet. In the case of a tandem hook fly, the shock tippet shall be measured from the eye of the leading hook.

C. ROD

Regardless of material used or number of sections, rods must conform and cast according to generally accepted fly fishing customs and practices. A rod shall not measure less than 1.82 meters (6 feet) in overall length and any rod that gives the angler an unsporting advantage will be disqualified. Overall butt length (including any extensions) may not exceed 15.24 centimeters (6 inches) when measured from the center of the reel foot to the end of the butt. Overall butt length for two-handed or spey rods longer than 3.35 meters (11 feet) may not exceed 25.4 centimeters (10 inches) when measured from the center of the reel foot to the end of the butt.

Illustrated Guide to Fly Fishing Leaders Class and Shock tippets

Shock tippet is not to exceed 30.48 centimeters (12 inches) in length measured from the eye of the hook to the single strand of class tippet and includes any knots used to connect the shock tippet to the class tippet.



D. REEL

The reel must be designed expressly for fly fishing. There are no restrictions on gear ratio or type of drag employed except where the angler would gain an unfair advantage. Electric or electronically operated reels are prohibited.

E. HOOKS

A conventional fly may be dressed on a single or double hook or two single hooks in tandem. The second hook in any tandem fly must not extend beyond the wing material. The eyes of the hooks shall be no farther than 15.24 centimeters (6 inches) apart. Treble hooks are prohibited.

F. FLIES

The fly must be a recognized type of artificial fly, which includes streamer, bucktail, tube fly, wet fly, dry fly, nymph, popper and bug. The use of any other type of lure or natural or preserved bait, either singularly or attached to the fly, is expressly prohibited. Only a single fly is allowed.

G. GAFFS, TAIL SNARES AND NETS

Gaffs and nets used to boat or land a fish must not exceed 2.44 meters (8 feet) in overall length. In the case of tail snares, overall length is defined as the distance from the beginning of the handle to the apex of the snare when loaded. This limitation does not apply when fishing from a bridge, pier or other high stationary structure. The use of a flying gaff is not permitted. Only a single hook is permitted on any gaff. Harpoons or lances are prohibited. A rope or any extension cannot be attached to the gaff.

ANGLING REGULATIONS

1. The angler must cast, hook, fight, and bring the fish to gaff or net unaided by any other person. No other person may touch any part of the tackle during the playing of the fish or give aid other than taking the leader for gaffing or netting purposes. Anyone assisting a shore-bound or wading angler must be within a rods length of the angler before touching the leader or netting or gaffing the fish.
2. Casting and retrieving must be carried out in accordance with normal customs and generally accepted practices. The major criterion in casting is that the weight of the line must carry the fly rather than the weight of the fly carrying the line. Trolling a fly behind a moving water craft is not permitted. The craft must be completely out of gear both at the time the fly is presented to the fish and during the retrieve. The maximum amount of line that can be stripped off the reel is 36.75 meters (120 feet) from the fly.



3. Once a fish is hooked, the tackle may not be altered in any way, with the exception of adding an extension butt. A harness cannot be attached to the fly rod.

4. Fish must be hooked on the fly in use. If a small fish takes the fly and a larger fish swallows the smaller fish, the catch will be disallowed.
5. One or more people may assist in gaffing or netting the fish.
6. The angling and equipment regulations shall apply until the fish is weighed.

THE FOLLOWING ACTS WILL DISQUALIFY A CATCH:

1. Failure to comply with equipment or angling regulations.
2. The act of persons other than the angler in touching any part of the rod, reel, or line either bodily or with any device during the playing of the fish, or in giving any aid other than that allowed in the rules and regulations. If an obstacle to the passage of the line through the rod guides has to be removed from the line, then the obstacle shall be held and cut free. Under no circumstances should the line be held or touched by anyone other than the angler during this process.
3. Resting the rod on any part of the boat, or on any other object while playing the fish.
4. Handlining or using a handline or rope attached in any manner to the angler's line or leader for the purpose of holding or lifting the fish.
5. Intentionally foul hooking or snagging a fish.
6. Shooting, harpooning, or lancing any fish (including sharks and halibut) at any stage of the catch.
7. Chumming with the flesh, blood, skin, or any part of mammals.
8. Using a boat or device to beach

or drive a fish into shallow water in order to deprive the fish of its normal ability to swim.

9. Attaching the angler's line or leader to part of a boat or other object for the purpose of holding or lifting the fish.
10. If a fish escapes before gaffing or netting and is recaptured by any method other than as outlined in the angling rules.
11. When a rod breaks (while the fish is being played) in a manner that reduces its length below minimum dimensions or severely impairs its angling characteristics.
12. When a fish is hooked or entangled on more than one line.
13. Mutilation to the fish, prior to landing or boating the catch, caused by sharks, other fish, mammals, or propellers that remove or penetrate the flesh. Injuries caused by leader or line, scratches, old healed scars or regeneration deformities are not considered to be disqualifying injuries. Any mutilation on the fish must be shown in a photograph and fully explained in a report accompanying the record application.
14. Holding or touching an angler in a manner that assists them in fighting the fish or takes pressure off of the angler. Touching or briefly holding the angler to prevent them from falling does not constitute a disqualification.

IGFA Release Guidelines

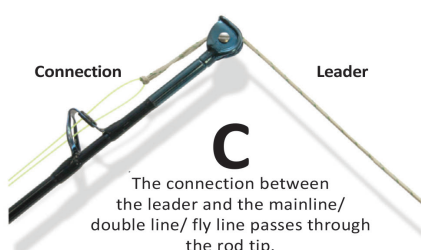
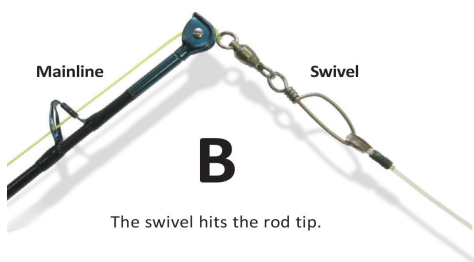
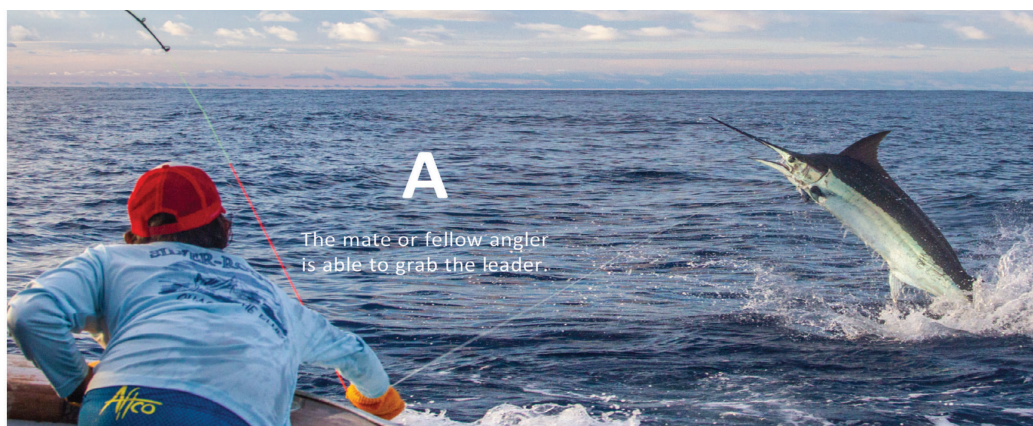
For the purposes of qualifying catches for IGFA Grand Slams and determining releases in recreational fishing tournaments, IGFA will consider a fish officially released when one of the following actions (A, B, C in the diagrams below) occurs.

Leader lengths must conform to current IGFA tackle requirements. For saltwater species caught on conventional tackle, in line up to and including 10 kilograms (20 pound), the leader may not exceed 4.57 meters (15 feet). In lines over 10 kilograms (20 pounds), the leader may not be in excess of 9.14 meters (30 feet). All leader measurements are inclusive of the lure or hook arrangement and are measured to the bend of the last hook. IGFA tackle requirements for fly fishing do not stipulate a maximum overall length for fly leaders. However, since IGFA rules do not allow class tippets heavier than 10 kilograms (20 pounds), IGFA has adopted the convention of allowing maximum fly leader lengths of 4.57 (15 feet) in keeping with the regulations for conventional tackle. Fly leader length will be measured to the eye of the first

hook. Shock tippets may not measure more than 30.48 centimeters (12 inches) in length and class tippets must be a minimum of 38.10 centimeters (15 inches) in length.

The IGFA also recommends the following best practices for safe and ethical release of fish:

- Circle hooks are encouraged when fishing with live or dead natural bait.
- The hook should be removed if possible so that it will not cause additional harm to angler or fish.
- If the hook cannot be removed, the leader should be cut as close to the hook as possible.
- Refrain from breaking or “popping” leaders as this can cause additional harm to fish, especially those not hooked in the jaw.
- Ample time should be taken to revive exhausted fish by gently moving them forward in the water to get water flowing over the gills.
- Knotless, rubber-coated nets should be used on fish that are netted.



World Record Application Quick-Check List

The following check list was designed to assist tournament anglers in the record submittal process. Before submitting a world record application, anglers are encouraged to read the IGFA's International Angling Rules for a complete list of world record requirements and regulations.

THE CATCH

The catch must have been made in accordance with the IGFA's International Angling Rules.

PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

The following photos are required for all World Record submissions:

- ☐ Angler with the fish.
- ☐ Rod and reel used to catch the fish.
- ☐ Scale used to weigh fish.
- ☐ Additional photos of fish that may pose some difficulty to identify (fins, teeth, etc.).

**Videos can be used in place of photographs*

**Photos and videos for world records can be submitted via email to hq@igfa.org*

SCALES

- ☐ The IGFA requires all potential world records to be weighed on a scale that has been certified within the past year.
- ☐ If the scale has not been certified within the past year, it should be certified as quickly as possible after the weigh-in.

**The IGFA can certify scales weighing up to 45 kg (100 lb) for IGFA members for a fee of \$40 USD.*

TACKLE

The following items are required for all world record submissions:

CONVENTIONAL TACKLE

- ☐ Full length of leader/trace including hooks, lures, etc. (if used).
- ☐ Full length of double line including knots, swivels, clips, etc. (if used).
- ☐ Sample of main line (~15-meters/50 feet) immediately following the leader, double line, or hook/lure.
- ☐ Sample(s) of backing (~15-meters/50 feet) (if used).

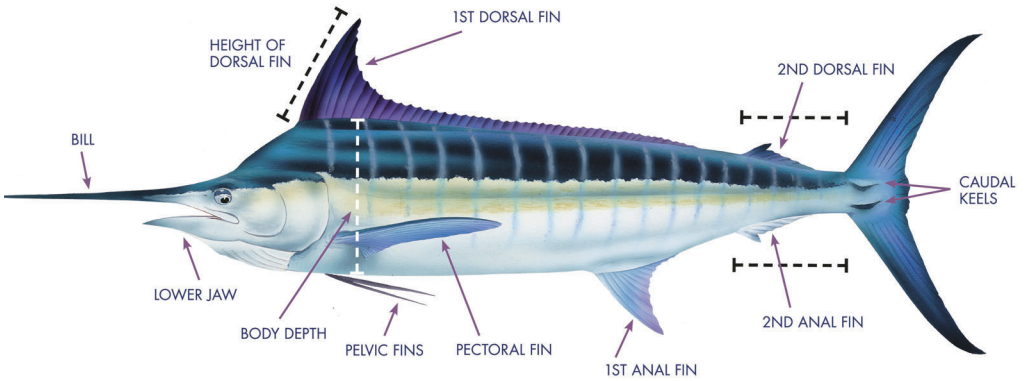
FLY TACKLE

- ☐ The full length of fly leader, including:
- ☐ Shock tippet (including fly).
- ☐ Class tippet.

APPLICATION

- ☐ Every applicable section of the record application must be completed.
- ☐ Contact information for witnesses to the catch and the weighing are required.
- ☐ Every application must be signed by the angler/guardian in the presence of a witness to the signing.

Guide to Billfish Identification

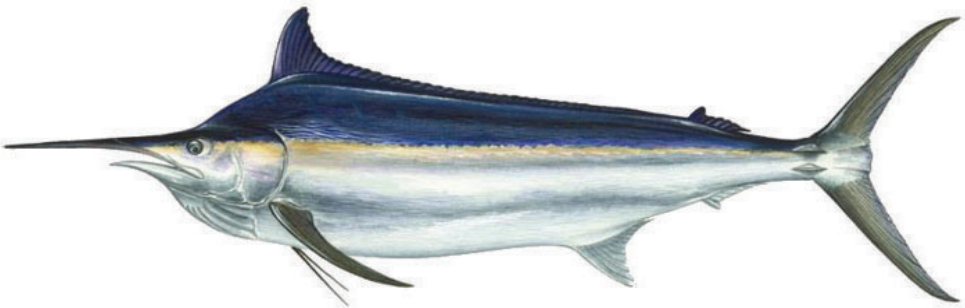


Blue Marlin



- Occur in all oceans of the world
- First dorsal fin is medium/high and pointed
- Pectoral fins are tapered and can fold back against the body

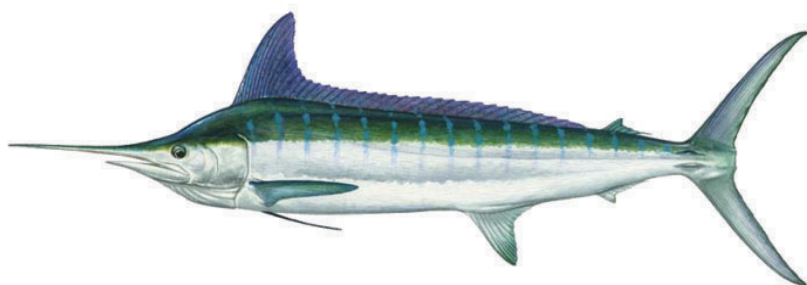
Black Marlin



- Occur in the Pacific and Indian Oceans
- First dorsal fin is the lowest of all billfish (relative to their size), and not pointed
- Pectoral fins are sickle shaped and rigid in adults over 120 lb (cannot fold against body)
- Downward curved lower jaw
- Contain more mass near head and shoulders

Species illustrations by Diane Rome Peebles and Les Gallagher

Striped Marlin



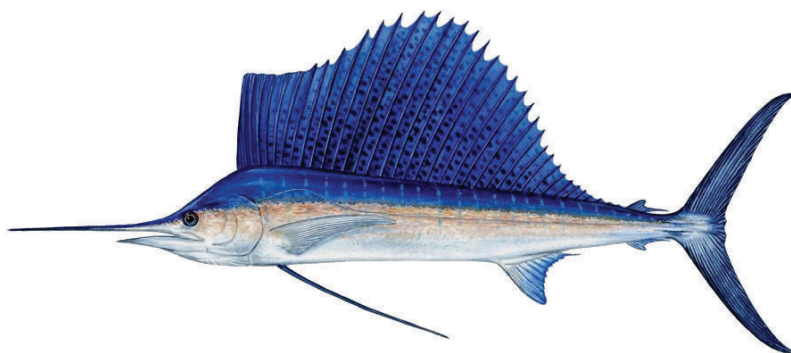
- Occur in the Pacific and Indian Oceans
- First dorsal fin is as high as the depth of the body, contains spots, and appears clipped at the top
- Pectoral fins are tapered and flat, and can fold back against the body
- Anal fin is deep and very large
- Can have a pronounced vertical bar system and strong lateral line

White Marlin



- Occur in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea
- First dorsal fin is high and rounded, and contains spots
- Pectoral fins are long, rounded and can fold back against the body
- Anal fin is rounded

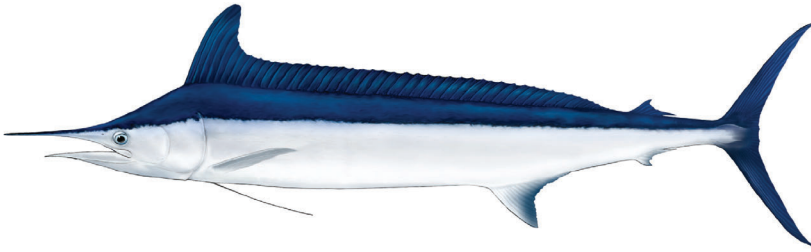
Sailfish



- Occur in all oceans of the world
- First dorsal fin is very high and pronounced throughout its length
- Pectoral fins are tapered and can fold back against the body
- Pelvic fins are the longest of all billfish (relative to their size)

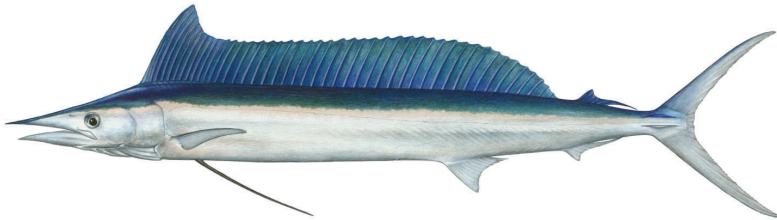
Species illustrations by Diane Rome Peebles

Atlantic, Roundscale and Mediterranean Spearfish



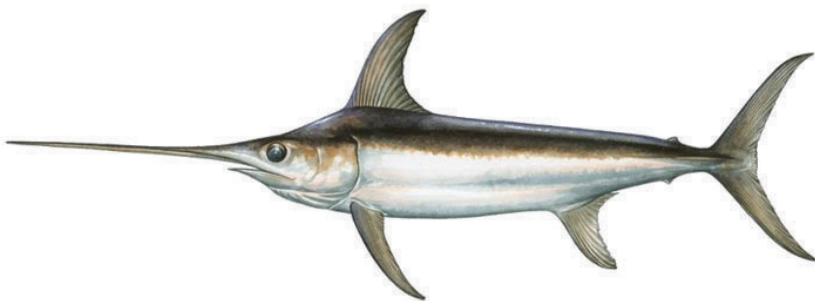
- Occur in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea
- First dorsal fin is generally the same height throughout its length
- The anal opening and the anal fin is separated by more than four inches
- Visible lateral line with a very compressed body

Shortbilled Spearfish



- Occur in the Pacific and Indian Oceans
- Only spearfish to occur in these waters
- Bill is very short and appears to have been broken at the base
- First dorsal fin is generally the same height throughout its length

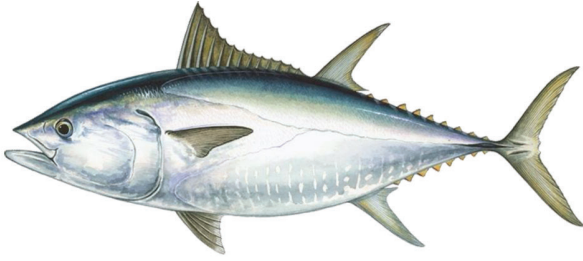
Swordfish



- Occur in all oceans of the world
- Bill is the longest and flattest of all billfish
- The eyes are the largest of all billfish
- The dorsal fin is high, sickle shaped and immovable in adults
- The pectoral fins are fixed and immovable
- Single caudal keel

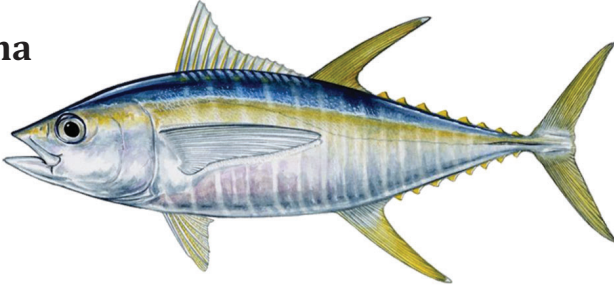
Guide to Tuna Identification

Bluefin Tuna



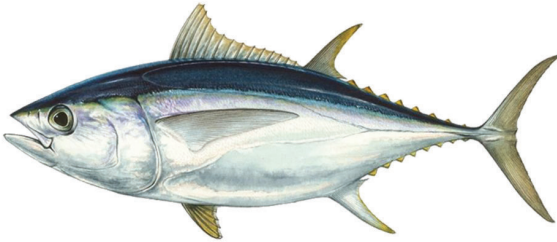
- Pectoral fin does not reach second dorsal fin
- Yellow colored dorsal and ventral finlets
- Pattern of broken lines and spots on belly

Yellowfin Tuna



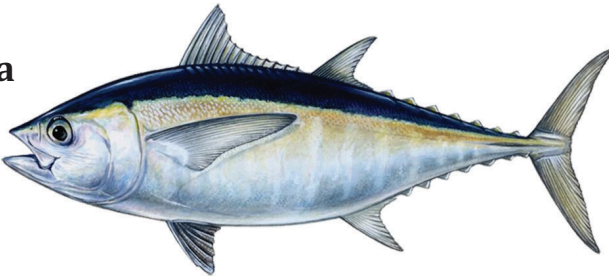
- Pectoral fin extends beyond second dorsal fin
- Second dorsal and anal fin become curved with age/size
- Yellow colored dorsal and ventral finlets
- Pattern of alternating lines and spots on belly

Bigeye Tuna



- Pectoral fin reaches base of second dorsal fin
- No pattern of alternating lines and spots on belly in adults, juveniles have faint solid lines along belly
- Yellow colored dorsal and ventral finlets
- Lateral iridescent blue band fades after death

Blackfin Tuna



- Pectoral fin reaches base of second dorsal fin
- Bronze stripe on sides
- Second dorsal fin and all finlets dark. Finlets sometimes with white edges
- Pectoral fin nearly reaches the beginning of the second dorsal fin

How to Properly Handle Released Billfish

Follow these critical steps to ensure released billfish survive to fight another day

By IGFA Conservation Director Bruce Pohlot, Ph.D.

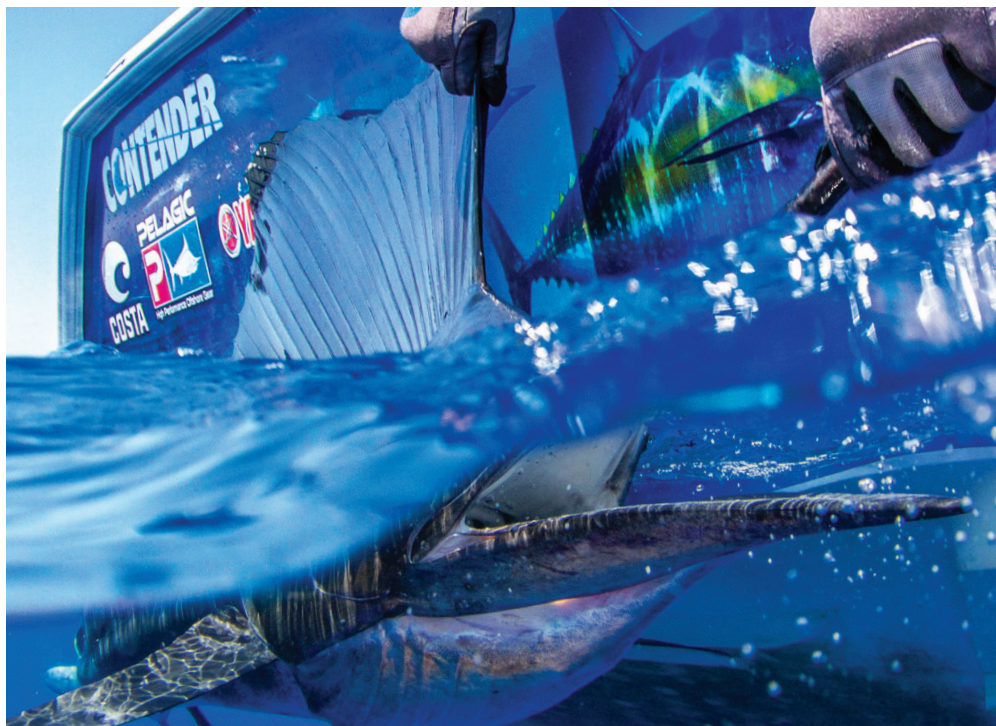


Photo by Adrian Gray

There's no experience in the world of fishing more exciting and adrenaline-producing than hooking and landing a large billfish. These beautiful, acrobatic fish are chased by millions of anglers every year, all hoping to capture and photograph the fish of a lifetime. Though most anglers mean no harm by simply wanting to soak in the moment of one of these incredible experiences, how a billfish is handled after being caught means the difference in whether it survives after release.

A billfish exerts most – sometimes all – of its energy when fighting back against an angler, which is also the reason they are so acrobatic and fun to watch. However, if a billfish is pulled from the water, even for a short time, the lack of oxygen can be extremely harmful. Even if the fish seems to be healthy boat-side, it could die within a few hours or days after release.

In 2015, research showed that 86% of billfish caught in recreational fisheries survive the catch-and-release process. That means 14% of the billfish caught do not survive. With billfish populations continually declining globally, collective conservation efforts by all anglers who chase these amazing fish are highly needed.

Thankfully, a lot of time and effort have gone into studying billfish post-release behavior, leading to significant changes in both recreational and commercial billfish fishing. Dr. John Graves' lab at Virginia Institute of Marine Science conducted studies on air exposure and the use of circle hooks, and how each affects billfish.

By studying white marlin, Dr. Graves' lab found that billfish were 20 times more likely to die when caught using J-style hooks than when using circle hooks. The lab also found that when removing the billfish from the water, the likelihood of death increased to 29% compared to



**Use non-offset
circle hooks.**





Photo by Adrian Gray

less than 2% when keeping the billfish in the water.

In the U.S., anglers are only allowed to remove a billfish from the water if they plan to keep it under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit regulations. NOAA federal regulations state that Atlantic marlin and sailfish “must be released in a manner that will ensure maximum probability of survival, but without removing the fish from the water.”

How to Properly Handle a Billfish

Anglers worldwide can collectively do a better job at conserving billfish by properly handling fish after catching them. Below is a list of steps anglers can take to ensure a billfish swims away healthy. These simple but essential steps go a long way in recovering a caught billfish.

- **Use non-offset circle hooks.** These hooks allow a clean removal from the corner of the mouth, which minimizes harm to the fish.
- **Minimize rough handling.** Remove the circle hook with a de-hooker. If not possible, cut the line at the hook.
- **DO NOT remove the fish from the water.** Keep the fish upright and its head below the water.
- **If the fish is at all lethargic, take extra time to revive it.** Hold the fish in the water while the boat is in motion so oxygen can flow through the fish’s gills. Wait until the fish has more energy and better color before releasing it.

Careful Handling Works

Eleven years ago, the IGFA Great Marlin Race (IGMR) launched as a partnership with Dr. Barbara Block's lab at Stanford University's Hopkins Marine Station to study billfish behavior and ecology through satellite tagging. To date, more than 446 satellite tags have been deployed on seven species in 21 countries, logging nearly 240,000 nautical miles of billfish tracking and making the IGMR the world's largest billfish tracking database.

Data from the IGMR has resulted in eight peer-reviewed publications and was also used to accomplish potentially the most crucial legislation to help protect billfish in U.S. conservation history, the Billfish Conservation Act of 2012 and a subsequent amendment in 2018.

This legislation has been called, "the most important thing that has ever happened to billfish" by Bill Shedd, IGFA Trustee, CEO of AFTCO, and renowned marine conservationist.

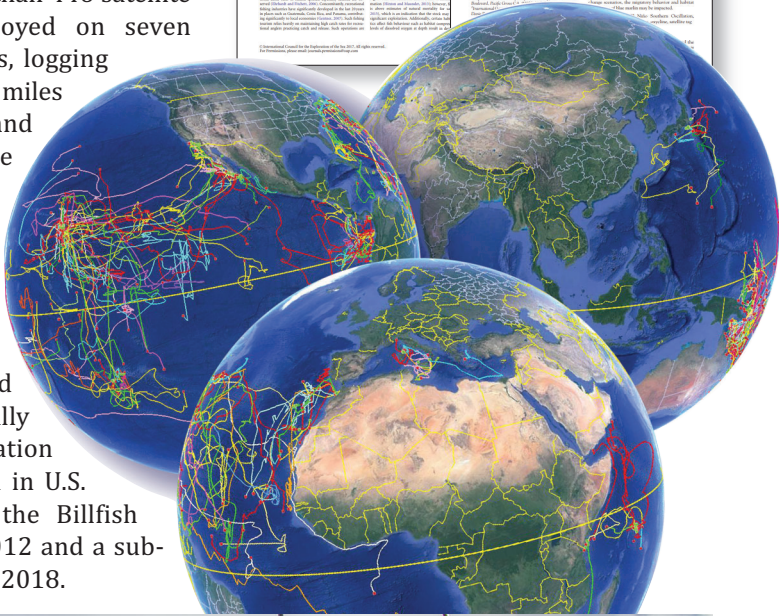


Photo by Adrian Gray

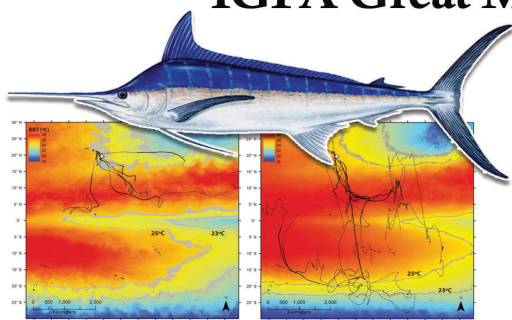
In the early days of the IGMR program in 2011, IGFA President Jason Schratwieser was aboard a vessel in Puerto Rico when a large blue marlin was caught and brought in tail wrapped, colorless and nearly dead. The captain was sure the fish would die, but after working to revive the fish for nearly 15 minutes, it began regaining its color and showing signs of life. The crew decided to risk a \$4,500 satellite tag on the fish, hoping it would indeed survive. Forty-six days later, the tag popped off the fish 419 nautical miles from where it was caught.

Reviving the fish had worked.

This success story proves that no matter how lethargic the billfish may be, anglers can dramatically decrease the possibility of post-release billfish mortality with the proper handling and care.

Enjoy chasing these beautiful fish and getting the picture of a lifetime, but make sure to follow the steps above so that the fish can swim away healthy, ready to fight another lucky angler.

Interesting findings made possible by the IGFA Great Marlin Race



Blue marlin

migrations can be restricted by temperature and oxygen barriers along the equator in the Central Pacific.



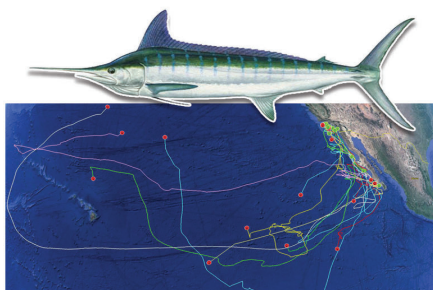
Mediterranean spearfish

first-ever satellite tagging data ever collected on the species suggests they spend 93% of their time in the top 30 meters of the water column.



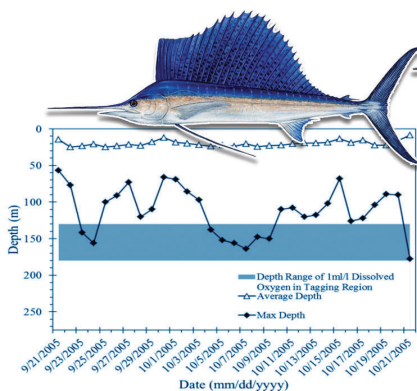
Shortbill spearfish

spend most of their daylight hours in surface waters and undertake regular dives to forage at night.



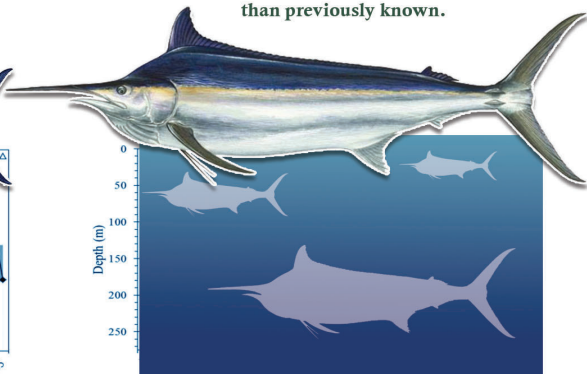
Striped marlin

populations in the Pacific are more connected than previously known.



Sailfish

are limited to surface waters in the Eastern Pacific due to a lack of available dissolved oxygen at depth.



Black marlin

size off Australia determines their diving behavior with larger fish undertaking deeper dives and spending more time in deep waters.

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The background is a clean, solid white color.

Help Support Cutting-Edge Billfish Science



The IGFA Great Marlin Race, presented by Costa Sunglasses, is a research collaboration between IGFA and Stanford University. It is sponsored by AFTCO, Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund, EdgeWater Boats, and Release Boatworks that pairs recreational anglers with cutting-edge science to learn more about the biology of marlin and how they utilize the open ocean habitat.

Data from the IGFA Great Marlin Race was used as testimony before the US Congress in the passage of The Billfish Conservation Act which prohibited the importation and sale of billfish in the continental United States. This legislation has been called



**"the most important thing that
has ever happened to billfish"**

Bill Shedd, IGFA Trustee, CEO of AFTCO, and renowned marine conservationist

We need YOUR HELP to continue this great work
for the next decade and beyond. Please visit



igfa.org/the-great-marlin-race

or email bpohlot@igfa.org to learn how you can help.



Stanford
University



Mission

The IGFA is a nonprofit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices, through science, education, rule making, record keeping and recognition of outstanding accomplishments in the field of angling.