

SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
FIRST QUARTER REPORT-FY 2002
For the Period October 1 - December 31, 2001

Submitted By: John Hunter, Director, Fisheries Resources Division.

Title of Accomplishment or Milestone: Conduct international billfish survey, billfish tagging, and angler outreach program PacFAAB.

Current Status of Accomplishment or Milestone: Continued collection and analysis of angler fishing catch and effort data for billfish. Tag and release data summarized with that of four major tagging efforts and presented at international forum. Enhanced cooperative projects included collection of DNA tissue collections, increased Pacific wide tagging effort, support for local tag and release tournaments and placement of electronic tag devices on striped marlin for movement and habitat studies.

Background: The SWFSC billfish research programs provide information for the conservation and management of billfish resources in the Pacific. The International Billfish Angling Survey provides angler catch and fishing effort information. The Billfish Tagging Program provides data on the biology, distribution and migration patterns of Pacific billfish. The Federal-Angler Affiliation for Billfish (PacFAAB) is a cooperative program that focused scientific study on the billfish resource while making research results available to anglers on a timely basis. All investigations rely on continued cooperation from billfish anglers, sport fishing clubs, commercial fishers and agencies affiliated with the SWFSC.

Purpose of Activity: Collect and analyze time-series angler fishing data for Pacific billfish and describe billfish movements, habitat and life histories in support of fishery management.

Description of Accomplishment (e.g., to the Center, to Management, and to NMFS Strategic Plan Goals) and significant results: Collection of historical billfish catch and effort information from local sportfishing clubs completed. Additional historical catch and effort data obtained from two major southern California marlin tournaments. Billfish tagging data summarized and combined with that of other major tagging programs throughout the world and presented at the Third International Billfish Symposium in Cairns, Australia in 2001. Cooperative projects with local sportfishing clubs promoted tag and release tournaments and placement of high technology tags on striped marlin. DNA collections archived for later analysis and provided to local university for preliminary analysis.

Significance of Accomplishment: Data collected and analyzed used in formulating options presented in draft FMP for highly migratory species.

Problems: Loss of database manager, Doug Prescott, could result in publication delay of the Billfish Newsletter.

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