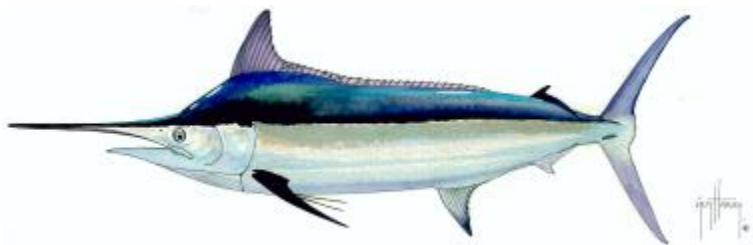


BLACK MARLIN BULLETIN

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Samuel Williams & Dr. Julian Pepperell



Attention all Billfish Anglers Black marlin fin clips needed

In this fifth edition of the Black Marlin Bulletin we report on the steady numbers of juvenile black marlin samples taken along the east coast of Australia, from Southeast Queensland to Port Stephens together with Western Australian anglers impressing with record numbers of fin clips taken during the AIBT and Gamex tournaments. We also announce the winner of our lucky angler draw for signed copies of Dr Julian Pepperell's award winning book "Fishes of the Open Ocean". On a final note we leave you with a teaser from the results our genetic study so far the full results of which will be released in the next newsletters following the submission of our scientific papers.

Fin Clipping Progress

West Coast

With the AIBT and Gamex tournaments in Exmouth combining to record a staggering total of 2399 billfish Raised, 1708 Hooked and 904 tagged over the 9 days. Our program also benefitted with total of 17 finclips taken during the Gamex tournament along with additional clips in the AIBT. The 17 clips taken during Gamex were made up of 4 taken by Goldstrike II, 3 from Sunride, 2 from Ruffunuff, Pussee galore and Tools and single clips from Ceilia and XTSea. On top of the clips taken during the tournament, we also received 12 samples sent over by Len Ventigan and Luke Leech that were taken by King Bay and Nickol Bay clubs. Seven of these samples have been announced to anglers from KBGFC during our September and November newsletters, with fishers James Dedman, Russle Cleaver, Warren Tucker all taking new clips, to add to the final lot of entries for our West Coast Lucky Angler draw.

Overall a tremendous effort taking the grand total of West Australian samples during our 9 month project to 67+ finclips, from ~20 anglers across 4 Game Fishing Clubs. As many of you know Dr. Julian Pepperell was at Gamex undertaking tournament sampling similar to that undertaken in NSW and wishes to personally thank all of the anglers for their support and enthusiasm in his research endeavours.

The Gulf (Weipa to Darwin)

The run of little black marlin hasn't yet kicked off in Weipa for the year, however this didn't stop angler Ben Bright from getting in on the action at Port Stephens while aboard Scott Thorrington's, *Freedom*. Ben managed 4 clips in the 2 weeks leading up to the tournament before attempting to try to tag some billfish on fly gear. Ben's work advocating for the sample collection and taking samples himself has been second to none, which has enabled our genetics work to give indications of where the juvenile black marlin in the Gulf have indeed come from. All of this along with the major findings of our study will be reported in a later edition of the bulletin once results have been under peer-review.



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East Coast



During February the attention of East Coast anglers turned to the Interclub after much of last year's tournament was cancelled due to poor weather condition. This year I was down at the tournament assisting Dr Pepperell with the routine tournament sampling where we were handed 4 black marlin fin clips in addition to those taken by Ben Bright (mentioned earlier). Two samples came from Scott Thorington, while Jay Househam and others also managed to take samples during the first week of the event.

Further up the east coast of Australia in South East Queensland, the juvenile blacks are still on the bite with SCGFC committee member Robert Smith taking 10, Brent Higgins and Barton taking 3 apiece, and Paddy Diamond taking another sample. This effort from the SCGFC has to be commended with the club taking 24 samples during the 9 months of the project in addition to those taken before its commencement.



Lucky Angler Draw

The time has come for the business end of our lucky chance draw giving two anglers a chance to win signed copies of Julian Pepperell's award winning book "Fishes of the Open Ocean". On the West coast the winner from a total of 67 entries was sample number 34 belonging to Scott MacGowen, Skipper of *The Wench*. Scott had three entries into the lucky chance draw, proving that all you have to do is be in it to win it. For the East coast, we pooled the Weipa anglers and the East Coast anglers giving an entry total of 68. The winning entry was sample 16 from the east coast which happened to belong to Ben Bright, which is a fitting reward for the effort put in over the course of this program. However ben already owns a leather bound copy, so has told us he is going to unselfishly allocate the book as a black marlin specific prize in the annual Weipa Billfish Tournament.



A 'teaser' of our research findings

So far our genetic analysis has resulted in the publication and submission of two short research publications. However, the results of our major manuscript which will be of interest to many of you are yet to be published. But in advance of this, I can let you know that we have found some interesting conclusions such as, *where do the fish in Weipa most likely come from? How many black marlin stocks are there in the central indo-pacific? What*

information supports spawning grounds for black marlin and where? The answers to these long-standing questions will be released in the next Bulletin.

Leader Board	
Angler	Clips
Jeda Ellens	15
Rob Smith	14
Ben Bright	11
Mick Mieres	7
Brent Higgins	7
Nick Hill	6
KBGFC	5
Chris Nisbet	5
Josh Bruynzeel	4
Eddy Lawler	4
Goldstrike II	4
Bernie Vale	3
Sunride	3
Scott Macgowan	3
Paddy Diamond	3
Brett Barton	2

Talish Cook	2
Ruffunuff	2
Scott Thornington	2
Tools	2
Pussee Galore	2
Duane Singleton	2
Glen Radon	2
Anthony Tyson	1
Craige McCulloch	1
Chris Davidson	1
Duane Jay	1
Darryl French	1
Dayan Villa	1
Annie B	1
Talisha Cook	1
Darren Lee	1
Adrian Gibson	1
Joanne Tatham	1

Jay houseman	1
Adam Galash	1
Pual Leijser	1
Ceilia	1
XTSea	1
Harrison Weeding	2
Kim Anderson	1
Warren Tucker	1
Russle Cleaver	1
Zuri	1
Chris Thurkettle	1
Graeme Fisher	1
Allan Jackson	1
Tim Richardson	1
Greg Milliken	2
Warren Tucker	2

West Coast Total		Weipa Total		East Coast Total
67		15		53
Grand Total 135				