

# Official Publication of Bermuda Triple Crown Billfish Championship

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# SCIENCE CLASS

UNDERSTANDING BLUE MARLIN BIOLOGY WILL HELP YOU CATCH MORE FISH





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/// ON THE COVER: Blue Marlin Air Time, Photo by Jon Whittle



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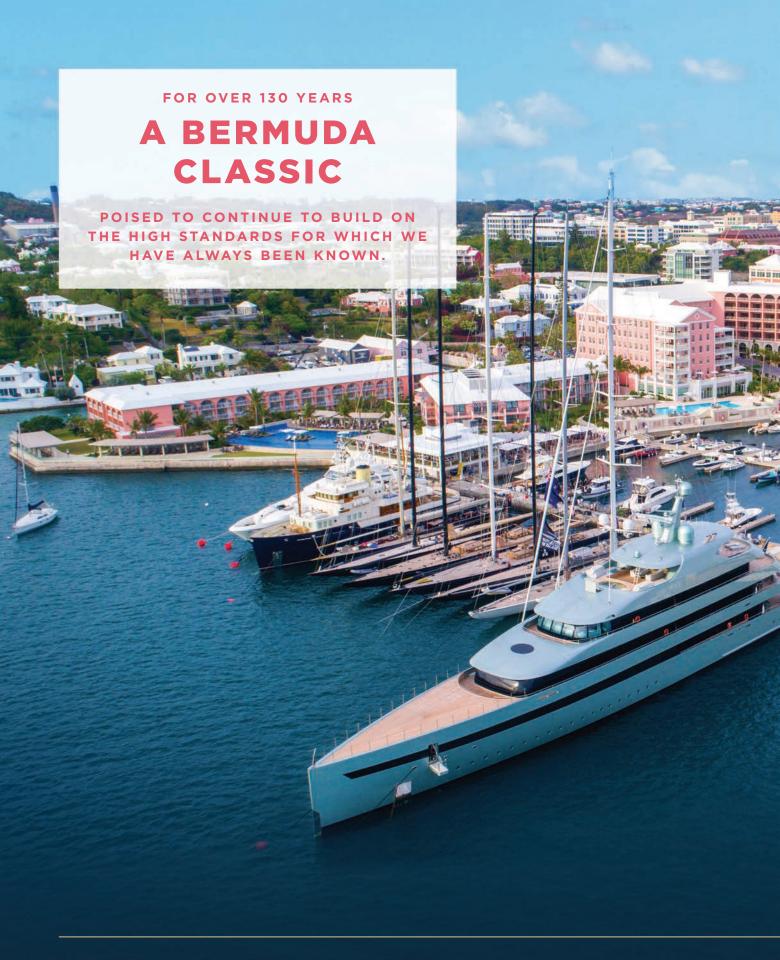














# BERMUDA /// WELCOME

T tretching back centuries, the water has been as essential to who we are as the air we breathe. Our heritage and our future are accentuated by sailing—something that was readily apparent when we hosted the America's Cup recently. The scuba diving and snorkeling here is exquisite, thanks to crystal-clear conditions and underwater discoveries. Kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, cliff diving...it's all part of the aquatic playground that is Bermuda.

I haven't even mentioned the fishing! Out here, you'll find an angler's dream come true with bountiful waters filled with big-game catches. No one knows this better than the competitors in the Bermuda Triple Crown Competition. As you vie for fishing glory this year, we wish you safe voyages and tight lines. We look forward to seeing you with your catches at the weigh station along with the fresh fish tales you'll bring back to shore.

After the competition has come to a close in 2019, don't wait until next summer to experience everything Bermuda has to offer. The island offers adventure, indulgence and relaxation 365 days a yearon the water and off.

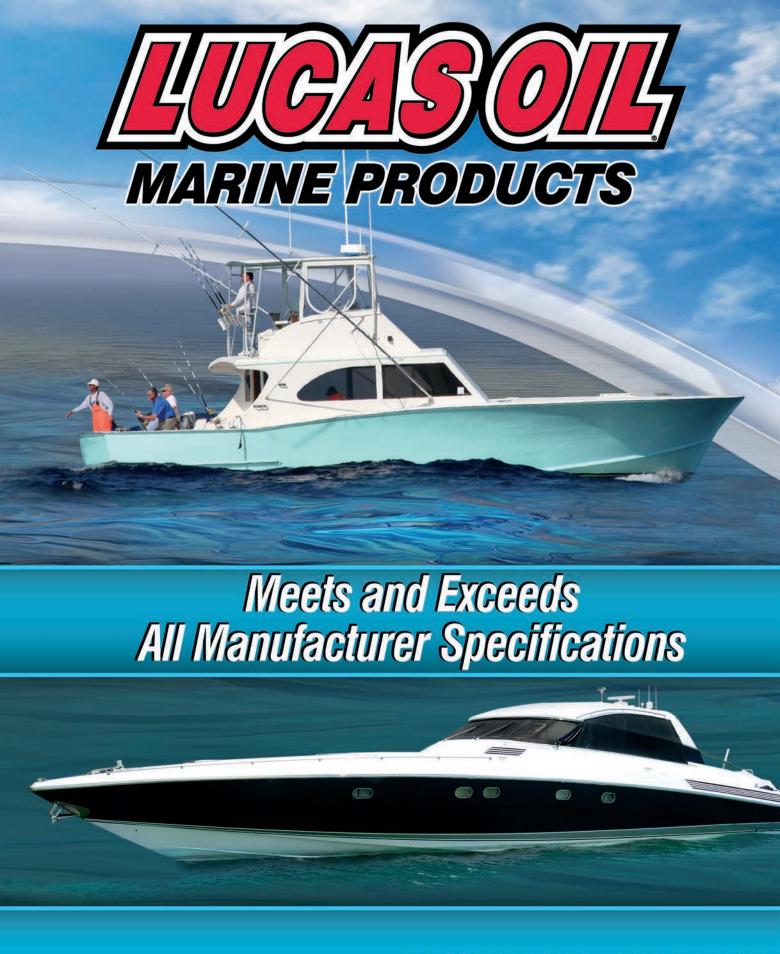


Sincerely,

Kevin Dallas **CEO** 









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# Bermuda: It's Everything

s I pored over the pages of this year's Offshore World: Bermuda Edition, I couldn't help but feel the emotions Bermuda stirs in all of us. Those feelings are sometimes hard to put into words. That's why I believe the jewel of the Atlantic is a destination that must be experienced to fully understand. In 2018, we enjoyed a great blue marlin bite for most of the season. In fact, the season was statistically the best on record in the Triple Crown era with 230 billfish caught, including 198 blues, 31 whites and one spearfish.

For Team Overproof, Capt. Peter Rans and seasoned angler Jason Friedman it was a year they will never forget, landing the largest marlin of the series at 930 pounds after a grueling 4-plus-hour



fight during the Big Game Classic. Last year was also very special for Capt. Bull Tolson on Sea Toy and angler Dan Stephano who battled a sea monster that died during the 9-hour fight. Ultimately, the team landed the 1,011-pound blue marlin the night before the start of the final leg of the 2018 Bermuda Triple Crown, I was out fishing for tuna and wahoo that day and had no clue this was going on until someone told me during dinner. I quickly raced for my weigh scale and met Sea Toy at the park where a huge crowd gathered to see the fish. In the pages of this year's magazine we interview and share the experience of these two great catches, the tournament winners and discuss what to do after you hook up to your dream fish.

The fleet of visiting and local teams that compete in Bermuda represent some of the best on the water. Making the winner's stage in Bermuda during any of our four events in July is very special. Some of those special moments happen during our Bermuda Billfish Release Cup, a tournament that benefits the Bermuda Sloop Foundation Adam Goodwin Master Mariner Scholarship. This fun format tournament allows the kids and novice anglers to get in the game and has provided many memories of first marlin catches and the traditional saltwater baptism. We host this event between the Blast and Classic at the Royal Naval Dockyard and hope more of the teams will take advantage of this tournament in 2019. In 2018, due to the generosity of the participants, we raised a record \$20,000.

Sportsmanship and peer accolades matter in our sport. Competitive fishing today has never been more challenging, so it is important to recognize the winners and cheer their accomplishments. One thing I hate is a poor sport that will only show up to the awards ceremony if they win. Wouldn't you want to have a standing ovation when you finally got the win? Fortunately, in Bermuda, we see great sportsmanship.

Producing competitive fishing competitions has never been more challenging. I am very grateful for the accolades we receive from the participants and sponsors. I must admit when my name is mentioned in interviews, it fills my heart with pride. It takes a team of dedicated hardworking individuals and sponsors to do what we do, and I want to thank them for their countless hours and incredible support. The truth is all of us who get to experience Bermuda are winners.

So why does Bermuda hold such a special place in the world of big-game fishing? It's the people. It's the water. It's the landscape. It's the safety. It's the fishing. In a word, it's everything.

All the very best,

Dan Jacobs

Tournament Director/Publisher

Tournament Director/Publisher

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Associate Tournament Director

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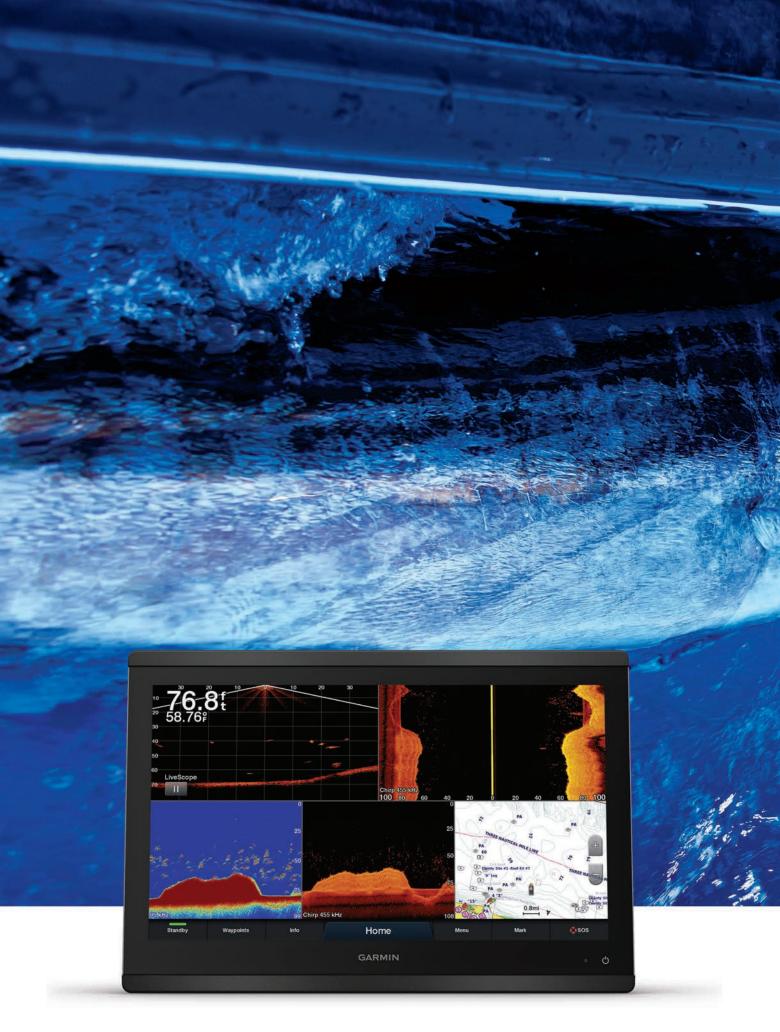
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# New Bermuda Triple Crown Optional Jackpot

By Sam Hudson

he Bermuda Triple Crown winner has always received champions' rings, quality prizes and accolades for their performances in the Bermuda Billfish Blast, Bermuda Big Game Classic and Sea Horse Anglers Club Billfish tournaments. Now winning fishing teams have the opportunity to win extra cash too. Starting in 2019, a new Bermuda Triple Crown Optional Jackpot pays out to the top three winners of the Bermuda Triple Crown.

"We always listen to our participants, and this has been a subject of discussion for a few years now," said tournament director Dan Jacobs. "Feedback so far has been great, and we expect many teams to participate in the optional division."

The entry fee for the Bermuda Triple Crown optional jackpot is \$5,000, with the available purse paying 50 percent, 30 percent and 20 percent to the top three teams. Teams do not have to participate in all three events, but points missed from any of the tournaments are an obvious disadvantage.

Teams must register before the first tournament leg starts, Jacobs points out. An opportune time to sign up is during the final registration and captains meeting for the Bermuda Billfish Blast on July 3.



Owner of the Florida-based *Playmaker*, Phil De Paulis, shows off his Bermuda Triple Crown championship ring.



Team Playmaker won the 2018 Bermuda Triple Crown, scoring tables full of prizes from tournament series sponsors.



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# The Story Behind the 2018 Bermuda Grander

By Sam Hudson

■ he crowd of spectators gathered at Barr's Bay Park on the night of July 17, 2018, were in for a treat. Word traveled quickly earlier in the day that angler Dan Stephano was hooked up to a massive blue marlin aboard North Carolina-based Sea Toy. When Sea Toy finally pulled into the marina, the massive blue marlin was clearly sprawled out across the cockpit.

Capt. Bull Tolson knew it was a good fish from the start.

"A couple of the guys saw the fish jump across three of our lines initially, and they estimated it was 700 to 800 pounds," Tolson recalls. "Then the fish dumped our 130 twice-that's 900 yards of line twice."

In total, the fight lasted 8 hours, in large part because the fish died during the fight.

"I've floated fish up before," Tolson said. "You can't go too fast, or you'll snap the line. You have to face the boat into the current. And put as much pressure on the reel as you can-50, 60, even 70 pounds on the reel. Move the boat forward slightly to get an angle in the line and then back the boat up quickly. That's when the angler can gain 10 or 15 feet of line at a time."

It was after 9 p.m. when Tolson and mate Catlin Peele tail-wrapped the marlin to the Island Construction crane and scale. Tournament director Dan Jacobs was there to weigh the fish with his certified digital scale. After what seemed like minutes—not



Time to celebrate. A dunk in Barr's Bay Park was necessary after Sea Toy landed a grander blue marlin in Bermuda during the 2018 tournament season.

seconds-Jacobs yelled out a weight of 1,011 pounds. The Sea Toy team immediately cheered in celebration, followed by many of them jumping into the harbor's waters on a whim.

Sea Toy's marlin was caught in between the Bermuda Big Game Classic and Sea Horse Anglers Club Billfish Tournament, so it didn't qualify for any tournament prize money. No matter what, it's

a catch Tolson and crew will never forget. Sea Toy's grander measured 137 inches by 76 inches, with a 20-inch tail girth. In fact, it was the only grander caught during the 2018 Bermuda tourney season. Hot Spot's 605-pounder, Blank Check's 611-pounder and Overproof's 930-pounder were the three big fish caught and weighed during 2018 Bermuda Triple Crown events.





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# **IGFA Great Marlin Race Returns to** Bermuda in 2019

By Sam Hudson

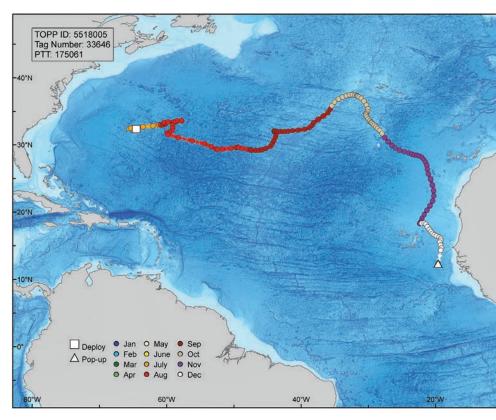
nternational Game Fish Association Conservation Director Jason Schratwieser is proud to announce the IGFA Great Marlin Race, brought to you by Costa sunglasses, will be back in Bermuda in 2019. That means tags and tag sticks will be available to Bermuda fishing teams interested in tagging blue marlin for scientific study.

The tags were highly successful in 2018. "Of the four tags deployed in Bermuda, two of the tags stayed on the full 240-day deployment, and the average number of days at liberty was 208 days," Schratwieser said. "This is exceptionally great tag performance and demonstrates that the crews deploying tags did a fantastic job deploying them correctly."

The tag on Fish 4 (Tag No. 33646)

recorded the longest point-to-point distance of 2,740 nautical miles. The tag was sponsored by Laura and Byron Russell. Second place went to Fish 2 (Tag No. 33641), traveling 2,391 nm and sponsored by Lainey Jones. The third-place marlin sponsored by Mike Verzaleno, Fish 1 (Tag No. 33634), traveled 1,613 nm. Jim Jensen's fourth-place blue marlin, Fish 3 (Tag No. 33644), traveled 1,054 nm.

"Fish 4 was tagged off the southeast coast of Bermuda," Schratwieser said. "The tag popped up approximately 200 nautical miles off the east coast of Africa, south of Cape Verde. The pop-up locations and the available track for Fish 4 indicate the fish followed similar routes as they have in previous years. Generally, fish tend to travel northeast after tagging and circle down toward the east coast of Africa."



The blue marlin tagged with number 33646 traveled the farthest distance, heading northeast then working south toward Cape Verde, a total of 2,740 nautical miles.

IGMR tags are programmed to stay on the fish for eight months, which gives a snapshot of what these fish might do on an annual basis. One future goal of the IGMR is to be able to have tags stay on fish for one full year to document annual migration patterns.

"However, this is difficult to achieve because premature tag releases are fairly common in marlin satellite-tagging research studies," Schratwieser said. "The high-performance nature of blue marlin is akin to keeping an antenna flag on a Ferrari during a race!"

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Overall, MC²X gyros offer unique features that make them different from any other gyro stabilizer in the market. They spin a larger mass at lower RPM, which translates into reduced spool up time (time to stabilization) and less maintenance. The mass spins on a horizontal axis allowing its weight to be evenly distributed on two bearings. Because MC²X gyros are air cooled, they do not require thru hulls and water pumps, significantly reducing installation costs.







# Bermuda Billfish Release Cup 2019 OFFICIAL PRIZES AND AWARDS





ll teams pay a tournament base entry fee of \$1,500 for the billfish division and/or a \$500 entry fee for the game-fish division. Teams may enter one or both divisions. The tournament base-entry-fee prize money will be disbursed to the winners as follows: 50 percent goes to the tournament; the remaining 50 percent goes to the top three team-points leaders in the team billfish and team gamefish divisions.

**BERMUDA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM TEAM BILLFISH DIVISION AWARDS** 

THE WEST END FIRST-PLACE **TEAM —25 PERCENT** 

**PIER 41 SECOND-PLACE TEAM** -15 PERCENT

**ROYAL NAVAL DOCKYARD** THIRD-PLACE TEAM —10 PERCENT

FISHING TEASE HIGH-POINT BILLFISH LADY ANGLER —TROPHY AND PRIZE **PACKAGE** 

STEVE GOIONE HIGH-POINT BILLFISH JUNIOR ANGLER —TROPHY AND PRIZE **PACKAGE** 

YETI TEAM GAME FISH DIVISION **AWARDS** 

KING SAILFISH FIRST-PLACE TEAM -25 PERCENT

**BONEFISH BAR & GRILL SECOND-**PLACE TEAM —15 PERCENT

**SOUNDVIEW MILLWORKS THIRD-**PLACE TEAM —10 PERCENT

**LUCAS OIL OPTIONAL DAILY BILLFISH RELEASE JACKPOTS —90 PERCENT PAYBACK** 

The optional daily billfish-release jackpot fee is \$1,000. The daily billfish-release jackpots cover both days of fishing. Each daily billfish-release prize consists of onehalf of the total available jackpot money. If no billfish are released on a given day, the jackpot rolls over to the next day. If on the final day of fishing no billfish are released,

then the final-day jackpot money goes to the previous day's winner. Only teams entered in the daily billfish-release jackpots will be eligible for these cash awards.

**GARMIN OPTIONAL OVERALL BILLFISH RELEASE POINTS JACKPOTS** -90 PERCENT PAYBACK

The optional overall billfish-releasepoints jackpot fee is \$1,000. The top three billfish-release-points teams entered in the jackpot will split the pot as follows:

MILES MARKET FIRST-PLACE **OVERALL RELEASE POINTS** -50 PERCENT OF TOTAL POT

SPAR YARD SECOND-PLACE OVERALL **RELEASE POINTS —30 PERCENT** 

**HAMILTON PRINCESS THIRD-PLACE OVERALL RELEASE POINTS** -20 PERCENT

NOTE: Official rules and awards will be provided at the final registration kickoff party and rules meeting.



The Bermuda Billfish Release Cup is a fun, family-oriented, easy going all release billfish tournament that also benefits the Bermuda Sloop Foundation's Adam Goodwin Mariner Scholarship fund.

Teams can enter the billfish division, game-fish division or both, and compete for cash and prizes and a chance to go to the Offshore World Championship. The Release Cup takes place at the Royal Naval Dockyard and kicks off with a final registration party, Tuesday, July 9<sup>th</sup> at Bermuda Fun Golf. Fishing is Wednesday and Thursday, followed by an awards banquet at Bonefish on Thursday night. So make sure to put the Bermuda Billfish Release Cup on your 2019 tournament schedule!







For Dockage at Pier 41, the host marina, contact Willy Freeman at 441-705-4141, or e-mail dockmaster@pier41.bm. Call our host hotel, The Fairmont Hamilton Princess direct at 441-295-3000 or the Reservation Center at 1-800-441-1414 and mention code FISH0719 to receive the special group rate.

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For more information about the Bermuda Billfish Release Cup, visit BermudaTripleCrown.com or contact Tournament Director Dan Jacobs at 407-571-4680 or e-mail dan.jacobs@bonniercorp.com



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# Bermuda Billfish Blast

# Official Prizes & Awards 2019





ll teams pay a tournament base entry fee of \$3,000. The tournament base-entryfee prize money will be disbursed to the winners as follows: 35 percent goes to the tournament; the remaining  $65\,\mathrm{percent}$  goes to the top three team point leaders.

# **SCORING SYSTEM**

The scoring system grants 500 points for each blue marlin release, 1 point per pound for blue marlin at or over the 500-pound minimum weight (July 4 only) and 200 points for each white marlin release, spearfish release and sailfish release.

**TEAM DIVISION AWARDS: BERMUDA TOURISM AUTHORITY** 

FIRST-PLACE TEAM —35 PERCENT

**MILES MARKET SECOND-PLACE TEAM** -20 PERCENT

**GARMIN THIRD-PLACE TEAM** -10 PERCENT

**PW MARINE HIGH-POINT ANGLER** TROPHY AND PRIZE PACKAGE

**FISHING TEASE HIGH-POINT LADY ANGLER** -TROPHY AND PRIZE PACKAGE

# STEVE GOIONE HIGH-POINT JUNIOR ANGLER (AGE 17 AND YOUNGER) —TROPHY AND PRIZE **PACKAGE**

In the event of a tie, the team reaching the highest score first wins, with the other team assuming the next award position. This is based on the time of release and the boated time for billfish.

# YETI OPTIONAL DAILY BILLFISH **RELEASE JACKPOTS**

There are two levels of optional daily billfish-release jackpots. You must register in level one to be eligible for the level-two jackpot. Level-one jackpot fee is \$1,000; level-two jackpot fee is \$2,000. The daily billfish-release jackpots cover all three days of fishing. The level-one and level-two daily billfish-release-jackpot awards go to the team that scores the most billfish-release points each day. The daily billfish-release prize consists of one-third of the total jackpot money. If no billfish are released on a given day, the jackpot rolls over to the next day. If no billfish are released on the final day of fishing, then the final-day jackpot money goes to the previous day's winner or winners. Only teams entered in the daily billfish-release jackpot will be eligible for these cash awards.

**CAT MARINE GPLINK SAILFISH MOUNTS LEVEL** ONE DAILY BILLFISH RELEASE JACKPOTS -\$1,000 ENTRY FEE, 90 PERCENT PAYBACK

KING SAILFISH -- DAY ONE, LEVEL-ONE **BILLFISH-RELEASE JACKPOT** -ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

BACARDI —DAY TWO, LEVEL-ONE BILLFISH-RELEASE JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

HAMILTON PRINCESS —DAY THREE, LEVEL-ONE BILLFISH-RELEASE JACKPOT -ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

MAUI JIM —LEVEL-TWO DAILY BILLFISH RELEASE JACKPOTS -\$2,000 ENTRY FEE, 90 PERCENT PAYBACK

ISLAND CONSTRUCTION —DAY ONE, LEVEL-TWO BILLFISH-RELEASE JACKPOT -ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

ISLAND GLASS —DAY TWO, LEVEL-TWO BILLFISH-RELEASE JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF **TOTAL POT** 

SOUNDVIEW MILLWORKS -DAY THREE, LEVEL-TWO BILLFISH-RELEASE JACKPOT -ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

## **LUCAS OIL OVERALL BILLFISH RELEASE** POINTS JACKPOTS —90 PERCENT PAYBACK

The fee for this category is \$2,000 and is optional. The overall release-points jackpots will be awarded to the top three teams with the most overall billfish release points for the tournament over the three days of fishing and will be disbursed as follows: first place 50 percent of total pot, second place 30 percent, third place 20 percent. Only teams registered in the overall billfish release-points jackpots will be eligible for these cash awards.

# **GREGORY POOLE MARINE POWER, PANTROPIC** POWER, RING POWER AND FOLEY POWER SYSTEMS CATERPILLAR JULY 4 OPTIONAL WINNER-TAKE-ALL BLUE MARLIN JACKPOTS

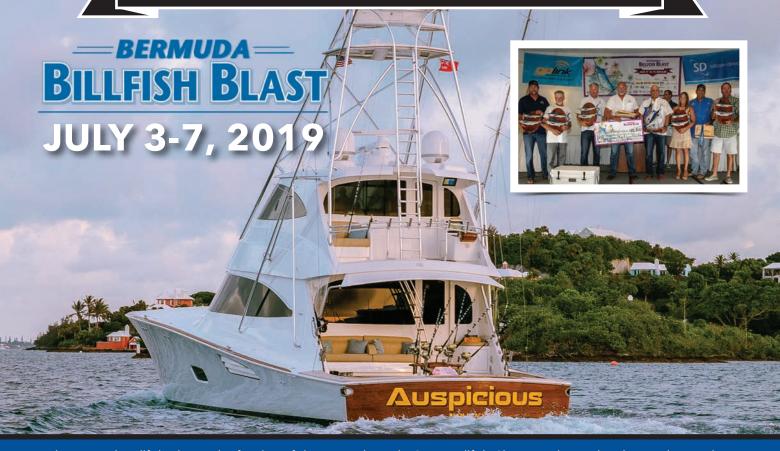
There are two levels of optional July 4 winnertake-all blue marlin jackpots. You must register in level one to be eligible for the level-two jackpot. Level-one jackpot fee is \$1,000; level-two jackpot fee is \$2,000. The team that catches the largest blue marlin over the 500-pound minimum weight will win the entire jackpot. If all teams entered in the jackpot fail to catch a fish over the minimum weight, the jackpot will be awarded to the top three billfish-release-point teams based on all three days of fishing and will be disbursed as follows: first place 50 percent of total pot, second place 30 percent, third place 20 percent. Only teams entered in the July 4 winner-take-all blue marlin jackpots will be eligible for these cash awards.

RELEASE MARINE WINNER-TAKE-ALL LEVEL ONE BLUE MARLIN JACKPOT -\$1,000 ENTRY FEE, 90 PERCENT PAYBACK

VANMARK WINNER-TAKE-ALL LEVEL TWO **BLUE MARLIN JACKPOT —\$2,000 ENTRY FEE, 90 PERCENT PAYBACK** 

Note: Official rules and awards will be provided at the final registration kickoff party and rules meeting.

Double your pleasure and double your fun with two tournaments in the spread this Fourth of July weekend!



The Bermuda Billfish Blast is the first leg of the Bermuda Triple Crown Billfish Championship and is designed to work in concert with the World Cup Blue Marlin Championship. The World Cup winning fish has been caught in Bermuda eight times, and two of the largest fish in World Cup history have been caught in Bermuda including an 1,189- and 1,195-pound marlin. With the Blast, World Cup and Triple Crown up for grabs, there's a real shot at big money and fame. Start the summer season off right and fish the Bermuda Billfish Blast!





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For more information about the Bermuda Billfish Blast, call 407-571-4680 or email Dan.Jacobs@bonniercorp.com.

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# Bermuda Big Game Classic 2019 OFFICIAL PRIZES AND AWARDS

ll teams pay a tournament base entry fee of \$3,000. This is not optional. The tournament base entry fee prize money will be disbursed to the winners accordingly: 35 percent goes to the tournament; the remaining 65 percent goes to the top three team point leaders and largest game fish. The scoring system includes 500 points for each blue marlin release, 1 point per pound for blue marlin at or over the 500-pound minimum weight, 200 points for each white marlin, spearfish release and sailfish release.

**TEAM DIVISION AWARDS BERMUDA TOURISM AUTHORITY FIRST-PLACE TEAM —30 PERCENT** 

**MILES MARKET SECOND-PLACE TEAM** -20 PERCENT

GARMIN THIRD-PLACE TEAM —10 PERCENT **FAIRMONT HAMILTON PRINCESS BIGGEST GAME FISH —5 PERCENT** 

PW MARINE HIGH-POINT ANGLER —TROPHY **AND PRIZE PACKAGE** 

**FISHING TEASE HIGH-POINT LADY ANGLER** -TROPHY AND PRIZE PACKAGE

STEVE GOIONE HIGH-POINT JUNIOR ANGLER (AGE 17 AND YOUNGER) —TROPHY AND PRIZE PACKAGE

# **OPTIONAL JACKPOTS BUTTERFIELD &VALLIS DAILY BILLFISH** RELEASE JACKPOT -90 PERCENT PAYBACK.

The fee to get into the optional Daily Billfish Release Jackpot is \$2,000 and is optional. The Daily Billfish Release jackpot covers all three days of fishing. For example, the jackpot awards go to the team that scores the most billfish release points each day. The daily billfish release prize consists of one-third of the total jackpot money.

QUICK DAY ONE BILLFISH RELEASE JACKPOT -ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

ISLAND CONSTRUCTION DAY TWO BILLFISH RELEASE JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL

KING SAILFISH DAY THREE BILLFISH RELEASE JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

# BACARDI DAILY BLUE MARLIN JACKPOT -90 PERCENT PAYBACK.

The fee to get into the optional Daily Blue Marlin Jackpot is \$2,000 and is optional. The Daily Blue Marlin jackpot covers all three days of fishing. For example, the jackpot awards go to the largest blue marlin (by weight) caught each day that meets





or exceeds the minimum weight requirement of 500 pounds. The daily jackpot prize will consist of one-third of the total jackpot money.

YETI DAY 1 MARLIN JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF **TOTAL POT** 

**VANMARK JEWELRY DAY 2 MARLIN JACKPOT** -ONE-THIRD TOTAL POT

PETIT DAY 3 MARLIN JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD **TOTAL POT** 

**GREGORY POOLE MARINE POWER. PANTROPIC** POWER, RING POWER AND FOLEY POWER SYSTEMS CATERPILLAR LARGEST BLUE MARLIN JACKPOT -90 PERCENT PAYBACK.

The fee for this category is \$3,000 and is optional. The Largest Blue Marlin jackpot will be awarded

to the team catching the largest blue marlin of the tournament over the three days of fishing. If no teams registered in the Largest Blue Marlin Jackpot catch a qualifying marlin over the minimum weight, the jackpot will be awarded to the top three billfish release point teams of the tournament and will be split accordingly: first place 50 percent, second place 30 percent and third place 20 percent.

# **LUCAS OIL OVERALL BILLFISH RELEASE** POINTS JACKPOT -90 PERCENT PAYBACK.

The fee for this category is \$3,000 and is optional. The Overall Billfish Release Points jackpot will be awarded to the top three teams with the most overall billfish release points of the tournament over the three days of fishing and be awarded accordingly. Global Rescue First Place 50 percent, Northern lights Second Place 30 percent, Release Marine Third Place 20 percent.



Even the name conjures up visions of warm tropical seas, friendly island people and lost pirate treasures. One treasure that Bermuda has nurtured and shared with the rest of the world, however, is a dynamic, big-game fishery that ranks among the world's best. Grander blue marlin shadow enormous

numbers of white marlin, yellowfin tuna and wahoo that thrive in the warm nutrient rich waters that pass around this oasis in the vast oceanic plains.

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ll teams pay a tournament base entry fee of \$3,000. This is not optional. The tournament base-entry-fee prize money will be disbursed to the winners as follows: 35 percent goes to the tournament; the remaining 65 percent goes to the top three team-points leaders and to the teams with the largest game fish. The scoring system grants 500 points for each blue marlin release, 1 point per pound for blue marlin at or above the 500-pound minimum weight, and 200 points for each white marlin release, spearfish release and sailfish release.

**TEAM DIVISION AWARDS BERMUDA TOURISM AUTHORITY FIRST-PLACE TEAM —30 PERCENT** 

GOSLING SECOND-PLACE TEAM -20 PERCENT

**GARMIN THIRD-PLACE TEAM —10 PERCENT** 

**HAMILTON PRINCESS LARGEST GAME FISH** -5 PERCENT (SPLIT BETWEEN TUNA, WAHOO AND DOLPHIN)

# **ROYAL BERMUDA YACHT CLUB OPTIONAL DAILY BILLFISH RELEASE JACKPOTS** -90 PERCENT PAYBACK

The fee to get into the optional daily-billfish-release jackpots is \$2,000. These jackpots cover all three days of fishing. Each daily-jackpot award goes to the team that scores the most billfish-release points each day. Each daily-billfish-release prize consists of one-third of the total jackpot money. If no billfish are released on a given day, the jackpot rolls over to the next day. If on the final day of fishing no billfish are released, then the final-day jackpot money goes to the previous day's winner or winners. Only teams entered in the daily-billfish-release jackpots will be eligible for these cash awards.

**CANYON GEAR DAY ONE BILLFISH RELEASE** JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

**PW MARINE DAY TWO BILLFISH RELEASE** JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

C-MART LYTD DAY THREE BILLFISH RELEASE JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

# **CAT MARINE ENGINES DAILY BLUE MARLIN** JACKPOTS -90 PERCENT PAYBACK.

The fee to get into the optional daily blue marlin jackpots is \$2,000. These jackpots cover all three days of fishing. Each daily jackpot award goes to the largest blue marlin (by weight) caught each day that meets or exceeds the minimum weight requirement of 500 pounds. The daily jackpot prize will consist of one-third of the total jackpot money. If no fish that reach the minimum weight are caught on a given day, that day's jackpot rolls over to the next fishing day. If on the final day of fishing, no fish that exceed the minimum weight are caught, then the final day's jackpot money goes to the previous day's winner or winners.

If no qualifying fish are caught, the daily blue marlin jackpots will be awarded to the top billfish-release-points team from each day of competition. If all teams entered in the daily blue marlin jackpots fail to earn billfish-release points during any day of competition, the jackpot rolls over to the next day's winner, or the previous day's winner if it is the final day of competition. Only teams entered in the daily blue marlin jackpots will be eligible for these cash awards.

THE DOCKSIDER DAY ONE BLUE MARLIN JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

**OLIVER'S TRAVEL SERVICES DAY TWO BLUE** MARLIN JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT STEVE GOIONE DAY THREE BLUE MARLIN JACKPOT —ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL POT

# **A&M CONSTRUCTION LARGEST BLUE MARLIN** JACKPOT -90 PERCENT PAYBACK.

The fee for this optional category is \$2,000. The largest-blue-marlin jackpot will be awarded to the team catching the largest blue marlin of the tournament during all three days of fishing. If no teams registered in the largest-blue-marlin jackpot catch a qualifying marlin over the minimum weight, the jackpot will be awarded to the top three billfish-release-points teams of the tournament and will be divided as follows: first place 50 percent, second place 30 percent, third place 20 percent. Only teams registered in the largest-blue-marlin jackpot will be eligible for this cash award.

# ISLAND CONSTRUCTION OVERALL BILLFISH **RELEASE POINTS JACKPOTS —90 PERCENT PAYBACK**

The fee for this optional category is \$2,000. The overall billfish-release-points jackpot will be awarded to the top three teams with the most overall billfish-release points of the tournament over the three days of fishing and will be awarded as follows: **LUCAS OIL FIRST PLACE —50 PERCENT** 

**GPLINK SECOND PLACE —30 PERCENT** 

TEMPERATURE CONTROL THIRD PLACE -20 PERCENT

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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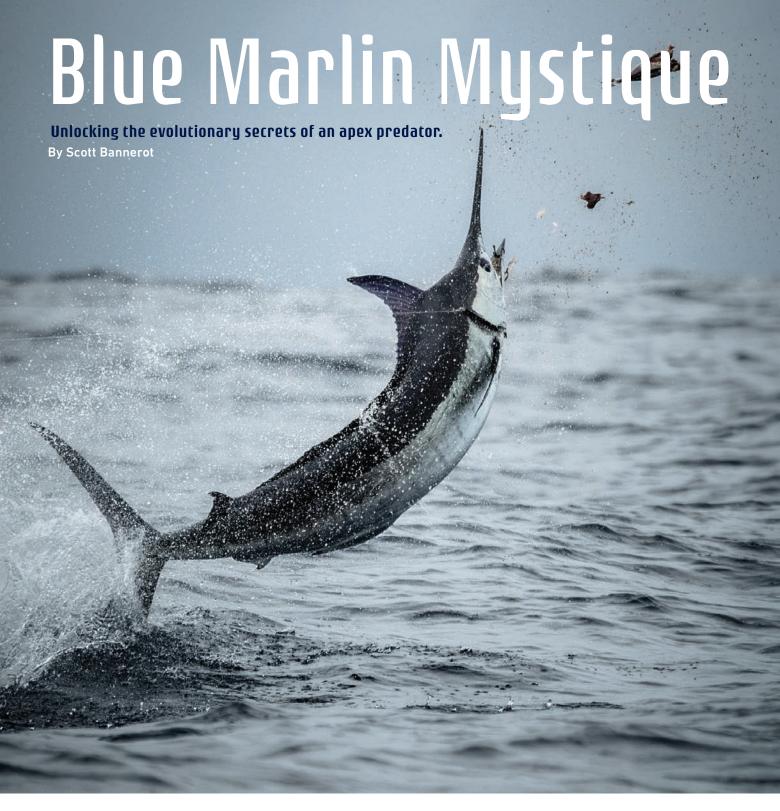
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ost of us are somewhere between infatuated and obsessed with blue marlin, but unless you're a billfish scientist, you probably don't understand how these lightning-fast eating machines are able to swim thousands of miles, populate the vast tropical and subtropical oceans, and detect and chase down the fastest prey species. The short answer is incredibly engineered anatomy and physiology.

While all top-level fish hunters realize that detailed

knowledge about one's quarry is the key to finding it, getting the bites and converting them into captures, most lack exposure to cutting-edge scientific advances that can give them the upper hand.

# The Billfish Evolutionary Tree

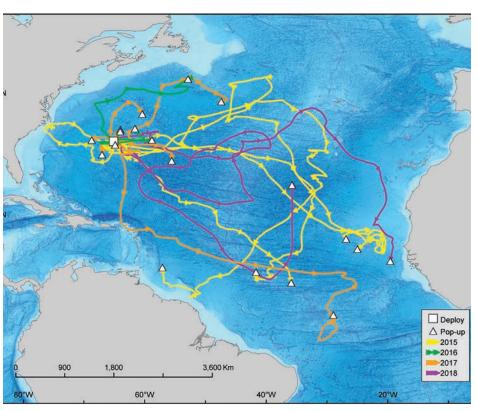
Professor John Graves, of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, shared with me results of DNA and morphological analyses he conducted with colleagues. All

billfish—marlin, spearfishes and sailfish—belong to the family Istiophoridae, with broadbill swordfish the sole species of the offshoot family Xiphiidae. Surprisingly, the closest genetic relative of blue marlin is the sailfish, not the black marlin.

The branch of the billfish evolutionary tree we know as a blue marlin was sufficiently perfect that they are the most common billfish identified in fossil records dating to the late Miocene epoch. This means they were dominating their environment, worldwide, more than 12 million years ago. Sea levels were much higher than they are today. These fossils have been found scattered in locations as varied as Italy, Virginia, North Carolina, California and Mexico.

than sport anglers. PSAT results tell us why and suggest options for thinking outside the box.

We now know that blue marlin spend much of their time easing along at 1 to 3 knots in warm, turbulence-mixed water above the thermocline, within a temperature range of 72 to 88 degrees, preferring a range between 75 and 81 degrees. However, during the daytime, they exhibit what Musyl calls a "W-pattern," frequently diving to depths between 500 and 650 feet, and sometimes as deep as 2,600 feet. Stomach-content analyses show these fish are feeding on squid and deepwater fishes, then surfacing to repay oxygen debts and warm up their muscles.



Tagging studies allow scientists and anglers to better understand blue marlin movements and migrations. From 2015 to 2018, blue marlin tagged in Bermuda often headed east toward Africa, with a couple exceptions swimming toward the United States and South America.

# Satellite Tagging and Open-Ocean Behavior

Research scientist Michael Musyl provided a fascinating look at the incredible capabilities of blue marlin through pop-up satellite archival tags. Everything these creatures do is finely tuned, and the more we understand, the better we can adapt our fishing techniques to encounter them more often. The continuous data produced by tagged individuals tells us their position, depth and ambient-water temperature over considerable periods of time.

By the time Ernest Hemingway wrote The Old Man and the Sea, he was aware that the old Cuban hand liners would set their baits deep-300 to 800 feet-and catch blue marlin as well as big yellowfin and bigeye tuna. Modern-day swordfish and tuna longliners catch large numbers of blues by fishing dead natural baits much deeper

# The Eyes and Ears Have It

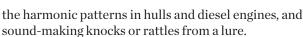
How do blue marlin effectively sense prey? For one thing, they have the biggest eyes in the billfish family, comparable to the enormous eyes of broadbill swordfish. Eye size is proportional to the capacity to gather light and other visual information. In addition, blues have the ability to heat their brains and eyes using a countercurrent-exchange method and special warmth-producing cells contained in tissue located at the base of the cranium. The ability to process "frames per second" is proportional to heat, which gives these predators a huge advantage over schools of deeper-dwelling, slower-reacting prey animals that lack this heater organ.

Two other sensory apparatus also aid feeding capabilities: the inner ear and the lateral line system. The inner ear includes tiny otolith bones, which sense linear accelerations like sound waves, gravitational forces and body motion, and a canal system, which responds to angular accelerations

of the head. The combination confers the ability to hear and also to orient in space. A marlin's lateral line system, like the inner-ear canals, operates by using sensory hair cells that trigger a nerve signal to the brain. These channels containing them run in networks down the sides of the body, and interestingly, the pattern of the network differs between Atlantic and Indo-Pacific blue marlin populations. They function as hydrodynamic receptors of low-frequency wavelengths from 10 to 200 Hertz being emitted within two body lengths of the marlin, which could come from prey, predators or even inanimate objects such as a fishing lure. It is highly likely that blues use their lateral line system to assist in close-range tracking and attacking of prey or lures. The inner-ear system, on the other hand, detects sensations from much greater distances, such as







## **Long-Range Migrations**

Both PSAT and conventional tags have provided incredible advances in our knowledge of movements and migrations of blue marlin, and anatomy and physiology studies tell us how they do it. Worldwide, cyclic movement patterns occur in sync with migratory food sources or to prime feeding areas, followed by travel to spawning areas in which prey items may be relatively scarce. It's interesting that some individuals make large-scale movements, while others might hang around a given area for extended periods of time.

One blue marlin tagged off of Delaware was recaptured in the Indian Ocean, near Mauritius. Another moved from the Tasman Sea off southeastern Australia to the Indian Ocean off southeastern India. Another individual tagged near Puerto Rico had its PSAT pop up 120 days later, 4,776 miles away, offshore of Angola, Africa.

Bermuda marlin tagged during the International Game Fish Association's Great Marlin Race generally headed east, with several fish historically traveling to west Africa in the vicinity of Cape Verde. "This indicates some connectivity in the marlin fisheries in Bermuda and Cape Verde," says IGFA's Jason Schratwieser. "At least one of the tagged marlin has traveled east and then moved back south and west, hinting at an annual migration pattern that may bring it back to the western Atlantic and, potentially, to the vicinity of Bermuda."

And then there are marlin homebodies, PSAT-marked

blue marlin that stayed in limited areas, such as Hawaii, the Gulf of Mexico, the Kuroshio Current system and the Caribbean Basin, for extended time periods.

What are the secrets that enable these incredible fish to accomplish all of this? Biologist Nick Wegner explained to me that seawater is far more viscous and oxygen-poor than air. Blues utilize ramjet ventilation of seawater entering the mouth and flowing aft through the millions of tiny leaflike structures called lamellae stacked in rows along each gill filament. Blood pumps countercurrent (or forward, opposite to the water flow) through these highly vascularized structures to maximize oxygen extraction.

The efficiency of this arrangement is unequaled in the animal kingdom.

Blue marlin anatomy contributes enormously both to efficient distance swimming and to burst speeds as high as 72 mph. Elongated tail lobes reach undisturbed water beyond the turbulence created by the body. The bill may provide a hydrodynamic advantage, and certainly, the grooves and depressions for folding the dorsal, pectoral and pelvic fins against the marlin's body help significantly.

# Marlin Feeding Behavior

We know from assorted studies that blue marlin are flexible, opportunistic feeders. Stomach analyses from around the world often indicate that blues have been feeding primarily on a single species, whatever they are following or timing their migrations with which to coincide. Documented examples include chub mackerel off southern Portugal, skipjack tuna off southwestern Japan and bullet



Blue marlin are apex predators, drawing attention from tournament fishing teams across the globe. The blue marlin's lateral line helps in close-range tracking and attacking of prey (left).

the jaws. Nonetheless, there were also instances of marlin firing in and drilling the baits in the head with their bills.

Color Schemes and Vision
Scientist Kerstin Fritsches,
a leading authority on
vision in billfish, enlightened me about key aspects
of the way blue marlin see
their world. The ability to
detect, track and capture
often very fast and elusive
prey items contributes
heavily to their evolutionary success. Blue marlin
have eye muscles essentially
identical to those of
humans, which allow

them to swivel and focus

multidirectionally, yet their eyes are located on the sides of their head, so their vision is less binocular. They track items more often one eye at a time, and they possess high flicker-fusion frequency, which means they can process a very fast rate of frames per second.

Perception of specific different colors requires the possession of a pigment, housed in a rod or cone, which is stimulated by the specific wavelength of the color, and this signal transmits to the giant optic lobes of the marlin brain. This has all been examined and tested with fresh eyes from specimens brought to the dock. The bottom line is that blue marlin see essentially in black and white with the dorsal portion of the retina (the portion that looks down, into the darkened depths), and they can see mostly shades of violet, blue and green with the ventral part of the retina (the part that looks up into the sunlit layers).

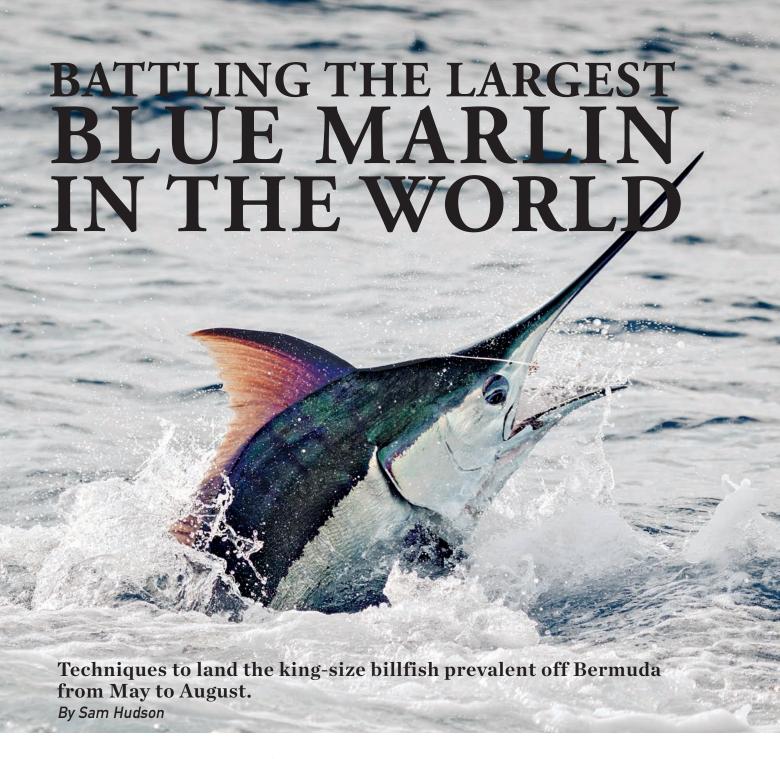
Now armed with a sound scientific blue marlin background, it's up to you to utilize this information in your next blue marlin tournament.

About the Author: Capt. Scott Bannerot has worked in professional fishing since 1976. He earned his Coast Guard captain's license in 1982 and a Ph.D. in marine biology from the University of Miami in 1984, and has worked as a charter captain, author and scientist in the Caribbean, Central America, South Pacific and Australia. Bannerot recently wrote a blue marlin biology and ecology chapter for Capt. Steve Campbell's thorough book, Blue Marlin Magic, a must-read for any serious blue marlin fishermen.

tuna off the Pacific coast of Mexico. However, the presence of other species indicates flexibility and opportunism, with some individuals found packed with tiny filefish, puffers or triggerfish, or loaded up with deepwater fishes and squid.

I experienced the other end of the scale working as a guide for Nomad Sportfishing, a seaplane fly-in mothership operation in northeastern Australia, where we put to good use the scientific fact that blue and black marlin have the jawbone adaptations and stomach elasticity and size to consume prey up to 10 percent of their body weight. We targeted school yellowfin, narrow-barred mackerel and dogtooth tuna from 8 to 50 pounds for both live- and dead-rigged baits, and did not shy away from baits on the larger end of the scale. We regularly slow-trolled live yellowfin weighing 40 pounds and more, and had them slammed by huge fish. We also did things like drill longitudinal holes through full-size Boone Lu Lu teasers and rig them with 400-pound stainless-steel cable and a 12/0 single Mustad 7692 to form what was in effect a giant fat version of a cedar plug. They got crushed even by smaller blues, particularly around the sunken reefs and atolls out in the Coral Sea.

How do blue marlin handle such large baits? One key element is a cap, called the predentary bone, that joins the tips of the two lower jawbones. Unique to billfish, this bone allows the jaws to open much wider than otherwise possible without coming apart. We observed big marlin flashing in and attacking whole live tuna, open-mouthed, like predators without bills. The hits were so hard that the bait would have to be stunned just from contact with



ason Friedman was hooked up to the largest blue marlin of his life during the 2018 Bermuda Big Game Classic. Friedman was no slouch, he had fished for Bermuda blue marlin many times before, but this fish was different, something he wasn't quite prepared for.

No matter how much pressure he applied, the blue marlin pulled drag off his 130. After its second run, the blue marlin sounded deep into the abyss. Then the line stopped dancing erratically and just started to inch off the reel. If something didn't change quickly, Friedman would be spooled in slow motion.

That's when Overproof captain Peter Rans recognized the marlin died. Rans jumped into action. He had to quickly angle the boat away from the fish in order to stop the line from sliding off the spool.

"Peter told me exactly what we had to do to plane the fish to the surface," Friedman said. "There was a lot of communication between myself, mate Morgan Outerbridge and the captain. I would hold on to the spool as hard as I could, and Peter would plane the fish until I couldn't hold on any longer. He would then put the boat in reverse, and I would retrieve as much line as possible."

Friedman first tried the technique in high gear but couldn't get the reel to budge. Then, he tried it in low gear and started to gain some line. A working low gear is a must when trying to move a big live or dead blue marlin. The Overproof team followed the same







Massive blue marlin require an entire fishing team to catch, subdue and pull into the cockpit (left). This angler palms the spool with his gloved hand as he adds more drag pressure to a hooked blue marlin (above).

process for the next three hours until the fish surfaced 200 feet behind the boat. Then the line went slack as the fish floated toward the boat.

"I was freaking out, reeling as fast as I could, as I was still in low gear," he said. Outerbridge grabbed the leader and pulled the fish to the boat, where he hit it with the flying gaff.

There was huge excitement on the boat which turned into a bit of a panic. The marlin was so massive that Outerbridge and Friedman couldn't pull the fish through the door. After about 25 minutes, Rans threw the boat in forward, then popped it in neutral, and the three of them pulled the fish into the boat. Back at the docks at Barr's Bay Park in Hamilton, the fish weighed 930 pounds.

Giant Bermuda blue marlin are a whole different animal than average-size blue marlin. In the following pages, veteran captains offer tips to land Bermuda giants that can easily surpass 1,000 pounds. While the right tackle for grander blue marlin is important, most tournament fishing teams already have their gear and spreads dialed in, so that won't be covered here. Instead, these tips explain what to do when that monster blue marlin won't budge from the depths. A boat can't chase down a fish that's 1,000 feet below the water's surface.

# PREPARATION PAYS OFF

"When blue marlin fishing in Bermuda, my spread is always set for large fish," said Capt. Andrew Dias, of Triple Play. "Remember, elephants also eat peanuts, but the Triple Play is almost always looking for the biggest thing swimming."

Around the Rock, grander blue marlin definitely associate in the same areas as smaller blues and whites. "It is not uncommon to have a double strike, and one fish be much larger than the other," he said. "When catching a small fish, I've seen large blues follow them right to the back of the boat."

Dias explained that he's not looking for specific big-fish conditions when targeting granders. Location and the time of year definitely matter, but he's not sure more nuanced variables like surface conditions or water movement truly affect the bite.

"Calm versus rough. Seaweed or no seaweed. Current vs no current. My theory is that every day is a fishing day," Dias said. "I think the most important thing is to observe the way your spread looks. Are the lures swimming or popping the way they should? Some days you might need to adjust your trolling speed or distance the lures are from the boat."

When it comes down to it, larger fish either eat or don't eat, there's really no in-between, Dias said. "Most of the larger fish we have caught rush in and pile on. The larger fish we see window-shopping are doing just that. Yes, they are beautiful to watch, but lack of interest in our lures can be very frustrating."

# **DURING THE FIGHT**

Bermuda's Capt. Alan Card, of the Challenger, points out there isn't a whole lot a captain can do after the initial hook up. Backing down or chasing

after the fish are the obvious first moves if the fish stays on top.

If the fish stays up, the captain can maneuver the boat favorably, Card said. "It is much easier to gain line when the fish is at the surface. Still, the captain should make the blue marlin work hard by forcing the fish to pull drag." Maneuvering the boat so that the marlin is fighting against the current and the angler's drag also helps shorten the fight time.

Assuming the angler survives the initial run and remains tight, the main thing they should do is stay hydrated, not panic and focus on getting line back on the reel. "Use enough drag to keep everything tight and ensure vou get a turn on the handle every time the opportunity is presented," Dias said.

The fight time depends on two main considerations, said Bermuda's Capt. Allen DeSilva, of Es Mucho. The first is how your blue marlin fights. "Is she a jumper and uses up lots of her energy? An angler might get lucky with a shorter fight. But if she decides to go deep, then expect the fight to last for the long haul."

The second consideration is whether the fish will be boated or released. A captain can be very aggressive with boat handling, leading to a shorter fight, when releasing the fish. Touching the end of the 30-foot leader is an official release.

"Should you plan on boating your prized catch, it is better and safer to take your time and not blow your chance," DeSilva said. "The fish needs to be brought alongside the boat. Flying gaffs are necessary. People can





get hurt if not careful. And the angler and team have probably waited for this moment their whole lives."

Every boat captain has a different style, but Dias also likes slow and steady.

"Captains need to remember that when tight to the fish, the angler is the lead person," Dias said. "When the leader comes up, then it's time for the mate to become the lead. The captain's job is to make the fight as easy and comfortable as possible for whoever is leading. Not every angler is the same, so the captain needs to adjust their game."

A captain's actions can definitely help the angler during the fight. "Change the fighting angle by moving the boat and getting in front of the fish, or to the other side of the fish," DeSilva said. "A captain shouldn't just follow behind the fish like a dog on a leash. Force the fish to turn, giving the angler some opportunity to gain line."

When the fish is straight down below the boat, the captain needs to get away from her. This is a stark change from fighting smaller billfish that can be coaxed to the surface, at times, by doing circles directly above them.

"This has to be done very slowly to lose as little line as possible until an angle of 45 degrees or more is created," DeSilva said. "Then, the captain



A massive blue marlin whooped this angler, requiring some rest time after the fight was over (left). Jason Friedman, aboard Overproof, landed a 930-pounder in 2018 with help from Capt. Peter Rans and mate Morgan Outerbridge (above).

can back the boat quickly so the angler can gain more line than was lost from the boat's initial forward motion."

The angler also needs to conserve energy, drink plenty of water, eat high-energy foods and wait for opportunities to gain line. "When she is down and dirty, save your energy," DeSilva said. "Slow down your motions. An angler needs to be a marathon runner most of the time and a sprinter when the time is right."

Dias believes a captain should respect their angler. "Push them, yes, but not to the point where you lose the fish or ruin the experience," Dias said. "Marlin fishing is a team sport, it is awesome when all players work together in harmony."

When the fish is finally in sight of the boat, don't panic or change what was working.

"Why race and pull a hook? Or have

to dump the leader and wind her back again?" Dias said. "I am not saying the leader man should be weak. Yes, hold her if you can. But don't be a cowboy to be cool for the camera."

# THE DREADED DEATH **SPIRAL**

Capt. Alan Card, of the Challenger, has been a part of more 1,000-plus-pound catches than most captains.

"I've been fortunate to catch seven fish over 1,000 pounds," Card said. "It's important to really get an idea of how big the fish is after the hookup. A fishing team's actions all depend on the fish, and how the fish is acting, to dictate what the team will do."

Don't bring a large marlin to the boat too quickly as it's likely still green and wildly dangerous. Thankfully, anglers can't force a big fish to the boat unless she's worn out. If fishing near





Capt. Bull Tulson and mate Caitlin Peele, of *Sea Toy*, broke the grander mark with this 1,011-pound blue marlin caught in Bermuda on July 17, 2018, by angler Dan Stephano. The blue was caught in between fishing tournaments.

Bermuda's popular bank hotspots, don't let the fish reach the bank either, as they can actually break off on the structure, Card said.

Card's last grander weighed 1,289 pounds and took five hours to get to the boat after it died. Big blue marlin dying during the fight happens, but it's not all that common. The majority of Card's granders were fought to the boat alive. Still, fishing teams better be prepared if their marlin dies on the line.

"You can get spooled by a grander blue marlin, both alive or dead, if you're not careful," he said. "Use a downrigger ball as an example. You can drag it or pull it up an incline, but lifting it straight up is the most taxing physically. That's what it's like pulling a heavy dead marlin to the surface straight up and down."

A hard-fighting blue marlin might swim 500 to 1,000 feet deep. But a

blue marlin will never swim as deep as a dead fish sinks. Recognize if the fish is sinking. Notice the signs. An obvious sign the fish is swimming is the line moving in different directions.

"If a fish dives deep or runs, the captain can make the fish work by stopping the boat when the fish is pulling line," Card said. "When the boat's not moving, there's a way to tell if the fish is dead. If the line is exiting at a constant 45-degree angle, it means the fish is sinking not swimming."

Card actually learned how to land dead marlin while tuna fishing. A massive tuna they hooked years ago off Bermuda died during the fight. He says they tried techniques that are common today during that fight to successfully land the fish.

When marlin fishing, 20 to 30 pounds of drag is where most anglers feel most comfortable. But if the

marlin dies, shifting the drag to 50 pounds or more might be necessary. That puts incredible strain on the angler, especially with a 130 reel and 130-pound line. An angler might have to palm the spool to add drag when helping plane the fish up.

There is no exact science for how much pressure an angler must put on the line. Instead, the drag pressure is dictated by how much the angler can handle and adding enough pressure to prevent losing line when the captain maneuvers the boat. This is very strenuous for the angler, as they have to max out the drag as much as possible.

Boat maneuvering and line cranks are the only way to pull the fish to the surface. A good angle is 45 to 60 degrees, Card said. The captain's job is to keep the fish behind the boat—and that means staying in gear and moving the boat forward. At times, the captain can face into the current to help plane a fish, but that's not absolutely necessary.

"It might not be obvious which way the current is moving, or the current might have changed directions," Card said. Instead of spending time trying to figure out the current and face into it, the captain should maneuver the boat in different directions, until one direction finally allows the angler to start gaining line. Keep in mind, that direction might change throughout the fight.

Those actions in conjunction together allow the boat to pull the fish up from the depths. When the angler can't hold on to the line any longer, then the captain can back down on the fish. That's when the angler can reel down and gain line. This process repeated takes hours.

"Try to get 10 to 25 turns or so before repeating the process," Card said. "Only at 150 to 200 yards left to reel will the marlin finally float to the surface."

Sane big-game blue marlin captains never want a big blue marlin to die during the fight. A dead blue marlin extends the fight time and ratchets up the level of difficulty for everyone. When targeting Bermuda blue marlin, any day during tournament season can be that moment when the grander hits. Be prepared, be steady and patient, and be ready to gruel out a fight that will leave you aching for days.

# **2018 WRAP UP**

We chatted with the winners of 2018's Bermuda fishing tournaments.

**Bv Sam Hudson** Photos by Michelle Gaylord

or the 2018 Wrap Up, we talked with captains, anglers and boat owners about their exceptional performances in the 2018 Bermuda Triple Crown tournaments. If you're looking for summary results from the 2018 events, all that information is readily available online. The following Q&A sessions covered everything from emotions to winning tactics and favorite Bermuda activities.



Bermuda Billfish Blast, Owner Joe Rahman of the winning team **Auspicious** 

Offshore World: You guys started the Bermuda Triple Crown off with a bang in 2018 by winning the Bermuda Billfish Blast. Can you talk a little about what you did to be successful?

I think it was the luck of the draw. Sometimes you're all over the fish. The year before we didn't catch any, and we had problems with our props. There's truly very little you can control in fishing, so we control what we can. You also need to have a great team, and we have an awesome crew with Capt. Cookie Murray.

Offshore World: You guys landed an 881-pound blue marlin at the White Marlin Open in 2018. Did you bring some Bermuda mojo with you to the White Marlin Open?

We had a very successful year. We

also placed second in the Marina Casa de Campo Open, taking first in the money. Our plan for the White Marlin Open was to specifically target blue marlin. That fish bit 3 1/2 hours after lines in. It won the blue marlin division, especially since there were no other qualifying blue marlin. The blue marlin was the 6th largest in White Marlin Open history, and I won Top Angler for the blue marlin catch.

Offshore World: What makes fishing in Bermuda different than many of the other destinations you guys visit?

When fishing is on in Bermuda, it is truly excellent. There were a ton of marlin caught in 2018, and we love to fish there during the tournament season. It's also a great place to be when competing in the global Blue Marlin World Cup.

Offshore World: When visiting Bermuda, are there any places you guys



Team Auspicious won the Bermuda Billfish Blast in 2018.

try to visit, things you try to do or any other must-dos while on the island?

We like to spend an entire month in Bermuda. We love the culture. We love the tournaments because they are well organized. Dan and staff do a great job with them. The docking is excellent. Fishing can be extremely superb. When we're not fishing, we love to anchor offshore and swim in the beautiful waters. We like to explore places, such as the caves near the airport. We love the local restaurants.

Offshore World: *The number of boats* traveling to Bermuda is expected to be high in 2019. The bite in 2018 is likely a big reason why. Do you think the 2019 bite will hold strong?

You always want to believe that the next year will be better. History shows a cycle of fishing being up and down in Bermuda. I believe that we are cycling up and the 2019 season will be another great year of fishing.





Team Waste Knot won the Bermuda Billfish Release Cup in 2018.

# Bermuda Billfish Release Cup. **Owner Scott Poole of the** winning team Waste Knot

Offshore World: What was it like fishing in Bermuda in 2018? Tons of blue marlin were caught throughout the Bermuda Triple Crown, and Waste Knot caught a great amount of fish.

By far, in the 12 years of going, 2018 was the best marlin bite we've experienced. We were there for two weeks and fished more days than ever before. We had even more shots than the fish we hooked, so we're still learning as well. We've never had a bad experience in Bermuda, and there's definitely been some other great years in the past.

Offshore World: Competing against other great teams, Waste Knot placed third in the Blast and first in the Release Cup. What did you do differently than some of the other teams to be successful on tournament days?

We had a new mate, Mike Tickle, who fished the Dominican Republic and St. Thomas. I thought he brought experience that helped us. Also, we

experimented with a couple things. The most important was our drag setting at strike. We also played around with different breakaway rigs out of the outriggers, trying to find a consistent way to get line out of the rigger and keep pressure on the fish.

Offshore World: A number of junior anglers had great success on your boat during the Release Cup. How do you think their experiences will affect their love for fishing?

It really is a family experience for us. My daughter caught her first blue marlin. My wife and niece also caught blue marlin. My son was the juniorangler winner this year. The Release Cup is more relaxed and allows my kids and family to fish with me. I practice with my son at the docks, he loves fishing. When you consider the drag pressure, it's hard for a kid to move the rod from the rod holder to the chair when getting ready to fight fish.

Offshore World: Waste Knot landed a last-minute blue marlin on day one of the Billfish Release Cup that helped

win the entire tournament. What was the boat atmosphere like after you released that fish?

Most of the time, we handle things calmly. But you're always on the end of your chair, never sure what will happen. That fish came up, he was all over the place. Ended up hitting the right rigger. We were fishing near the boat *Treasure Isle*, and I guess they brought us some good luck.

Offshore World: Bermuda might be an island out in the middle of nowhere, but it's definitely worth the trip. What does your fishing team look like when you're not in Bermuda?

We spend the summer months in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. My brother and I love to fish together. There are about seven of us that fish together as a team. Some of these friends I've known since we were in diapers. And I think it's a pretty good team, we've been going on 10 years now. On any given tournament, it depends on who is available, but we're pulling from that group of seven, including my brother and myself.



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# Bermuda Big Game Classic, Angler Jason Friedman caught a 930-pound blue marlin aboard Overproof

Offshore World: When you guys initially hooked up to that giant blue marlin, did you realize how big it was? Have you ever fought fish of that magnitude?

We did not realize how big the fish was when we hooked up. All I saw was a large surge behind the lure. I have fought big fish before, and I am a pretty seasoned angler, but never one that size before.

Offshore World: What was the fight like? How long did the fight last? Did you get into a rhythm during the fight, or was it grueling the entire time?

For the first 45 minutes I could not stop the fish and was slowly moving up the drag till we were close to the corner. When the fish finally calmed down, we had maybe 10 to 15 wraps left on the reel. We were not certain if this was a very large fish or was just foul hooked. The fish went straight down behind the boat. Once the fish stopped, we were able to get into a good rhythm and retrieve about three-quarters of the line back on the spool.

At the same time the boat *Reel Steel* was also hooked up to a large fish and their bow was about 100 feet off of our bow. All of a sudden. Reel Steel threw the boat in reverse and our fish sounded off. Once again, the fish went straight down. I started again, moving the drag closer and closer to the corner. I started to put my right hand on top of the spool and my left hand under the bridge of the reel holding the spool. I just could not stop line from coming off the reel. At this point, Capt. Peter Rans knew the fish was dead, and he had to figure out how to stop the fish. The total fight was 4 hours, 15 minutes and 20 seconds.

Offshore World: Your boat Overproof landed the heaviest marlin during the 2018 Bermuda Big Game Classic. How did it feel to be the champs going against other great fishing teams?

Yes, we landed the largest fish in the tournament. It was a huge accomplishment for everyone involved, especially Capt. Peter Rans and his mate Morgan Outerbridge. Overproof



Capt. Peter Rans, of Overproof, guided angler Jason Friedman to a 930-pound blue marlin during the 2018 Bermuda Big Game Classic.

has been in every Bermuda Big Game Classic since its inception. Although we were one of the smallest boats in the fleet, I had one of the most experienced Bermuda tournament captains. We also had the smallest crew with captain, mate, angler, my wife, Leesa, and Peter's wife, Leslie.

Offshore World: Had you fished Bermuda before 2018? Have you fished the Bermuda Triple Crown events in the past? Did you feel like you were ready to *go when that monster blue marlin hit?* 

I have been fishing in Bermuda since 1997. Usually, I'm there with my family for the tournaments and also when we can for the fall and spring wahoo run. I went to Rollins College with Peter's brother Brooks from 1990 to 1994. We have been very close to the Rans family for more than 20 years. I have fished several Bermuda Triple Crown events over the years with both Peter and his brother, Brooks, One of my biggest accomplishments was in 2016 when I won Top Angler on Overproof.

The 930-pounder in 2018 was on the last day of the tournament. We had not seen as many fish as the other boats were catching. I do not believe anyone on the boat expected the battle we were getting into, but we were ready for it.



Offshore World: How did it feel standing on the dock at Barr's Bay Park that night after the battle?

I wish I could say I was standing, but I was sitting down on a bench near the crane watching the excitement as Peter and Morgan were being congratulated by all their friends and family. It was their moment. I was very numb and in complete awe of what the entire crew accomplished that day, especially when Dan announced the fish weighing 930 pounds. To experience an accomplishment like this and get to share it with great friends in a spectacular location is nothing but an incredible feeling.





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Capt. Dave Fields, and the fishing team aboard Hit 'N' Run, won the 2018 Sea Horse **Anglers Club Billfish** Tournament.

# Sea Horse Anglers Club Billfish Tournament, Capt. Dave Fields of the winning team Hit 'N' Run

Offshore World: You guys won the final leg of the Bermuda Triple Crown. How does it feel to be reigning Sea Horse champs?

The Sea Horse Anglers Club is so deeply enriched in the history and tradition of Bermuda. We were extremely honored and fortunate to be a part of this tournament, much less winning the final leg. It made the whole experience that much sweeter. Our entire team thoroughly enjoyed participating in the tournament-it was definitely one for the books. The tournament was very organized and professionally run, and Bermuda is quite the destination spot for fishing and vacations.

Offshore World: How would you describe your overall BTC performance?

With it being my first time fishing in Bermuda. I had a lot of advice from some friends and captains who fish there frequently, specifically Capt. Bull Tolson of Sea Toy and Capt. Jason Parker of Reel Steel. Their insight and knowledge were extremely helpful.

That being said, I believe we had plenty of blue marlin bites to win the whole Triple Crown, just not enough luck in 2018. Looking forward to returning again this year.

Offshore World: Was Bermuda a welcoming destination for anglers?

Yes, I believe Bermuda is very welcoming. The seas are mostly calm, and the runs to the fishing destinations are very convenient. The various hotels, restaurants and amenities are some of the most inviting anywhere we have traveled. The people are extremely hospitable, and the island is truly captivating. There is always plenty to do when you have a lay day.

Offshore World: Are there any other destinations your fishing team visits that compare to Bermuda?

The team on the *Hit 'n' Run* has been very fortunate to have traveled to various fishing destinations, frequently traveling to the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas and the British Virgin Islands. In the Dominican, we have experienced more blue marlin bites, but generally those fish average 100 to 300 pounds. In the Bahamas, you

might get one to two blue marlin bites a day on average at 200 to 400 pounds. In the British Virgin Islands, a good day would be three to five bites a day with fish up to 500 pounds or more. Ultimately, I feel like Bermuda offers the best chance to catch a grander more so than anywhere we have traveled, which is what a fishing team always wants to add to their bucket list.

Offshore World: Besides blue marlin fishing, do you guys spend any days fishing in Bermuda for other species like tuna or wahoo?

Yes, we have fished for wahoo and tuna on the banks and were very successful. We have also fished inshore with Capt. Ian Linnell for tailing hogfish and bonefish. Don't forget to try his cornbread and barbecue, but you better call in advance to order it! The tailing hogfish are a rare sight to behold!

Offshore World: Have any favorite lures or baits you like to pull when fishing Bermuda sea mounts?

Yes, of course we do, but I'm not going to give away our secrets. But you can't go wrong with a purple and black soft-head wide-range in your left long rigger.

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Team Playmaker came out on top in 2018, winning the Bermuda Big Game Classic and entire Bermuda Triple Crown series.

# Bermuda Triple Crown, Angler Andrew De Paulis of the winning team *Playmaker*

Offshore World: How does it feel to be the reigning Bermuda Triple Crown winners?

It feels great! I couldn't be prouder of our team. Everyone knew and did their job really well, and we were able to capitalize on that. Our goal going to Bermuda was to win the Bermuda Triple Crown, and we knew in order to do that we had to average at least one fish a day. Luckily, with a few multiple-fish days, we were able to achieve our goal.

Offshore World: How would you describe the atmosphere in Bermuda? How does it compare to Florida?

In our opinion, Bermuda is really the ultimate location to spend July. Bermuda is a beautiful and safe island and certainly has proven that it can produce great fishing. We witnessed multiple three-catch days, and the *Sea Toy* hung a grander. It doesn't get much better than that.

Offshore World: You guys also won the Bermuda Big Game Classic in 2018. It was a great blue marlin bite. Can you tell us about your experiences during the tournament?

The bite during the Bermuda Big Game Classic was great. I believe we were 7 for 9, catching six blues and one white marlin over three days of fishing. We have had many good fishing experiences, but this was certainly one that we will remember for a while.

Offshore World: Learn any new fishing techniques in Bermuda that you took back to the states and other fishing destinations?

To be honest, not really. I think part of the key to our success was that we really did not change much compared to our normal spreads. We fished more or less the same way we would for blue marlin anywhere else in the world.

Offshore World: How does Bermuda compare to other fishing destinations you've fished?

In terms of fishing, we felt that Bermuda was very similar to what you can expect to see in the Abacos. You will most likely have one shot a day at a blue marlin, and it is vital that you capitalize on it.



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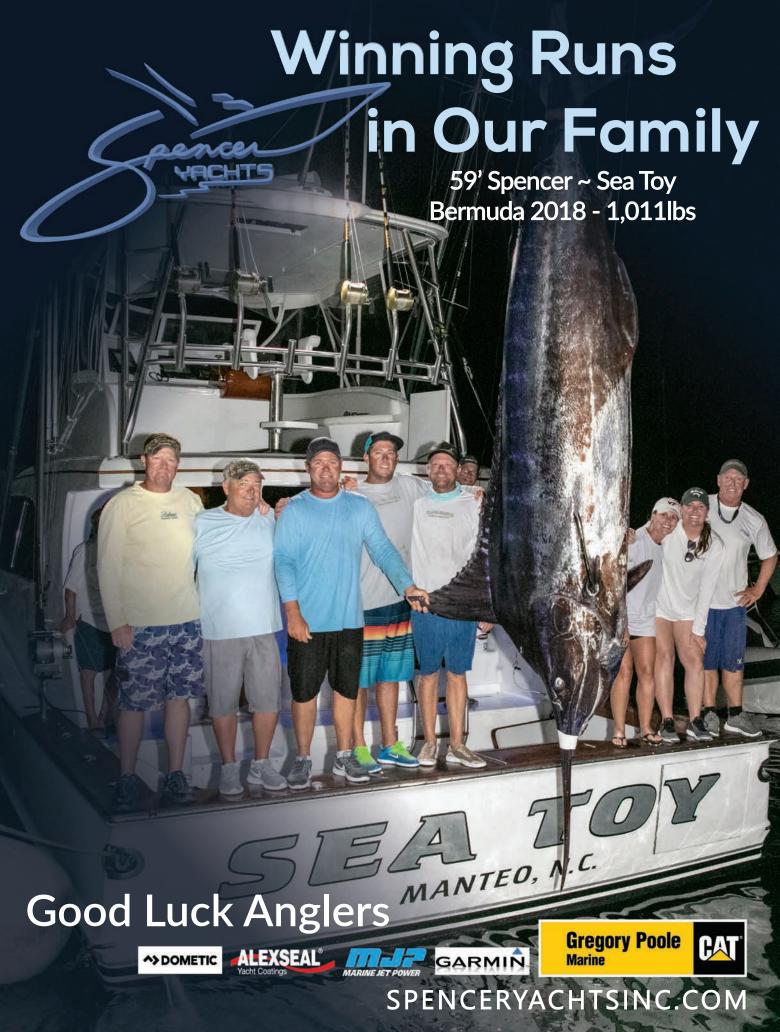


















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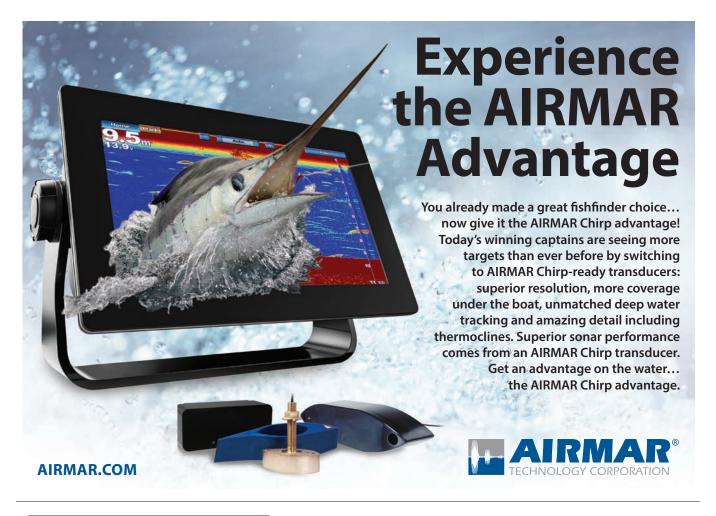
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From left to right: Brandon De Paulis, Max Meissner, Phil De Paulis, Capt. Jerry Owens, Andrew De Paulis, Alexa De Paulis and Ande Wightman



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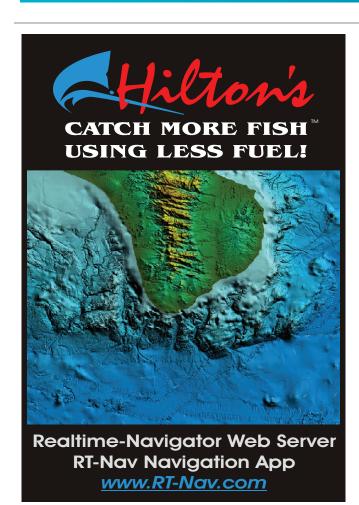
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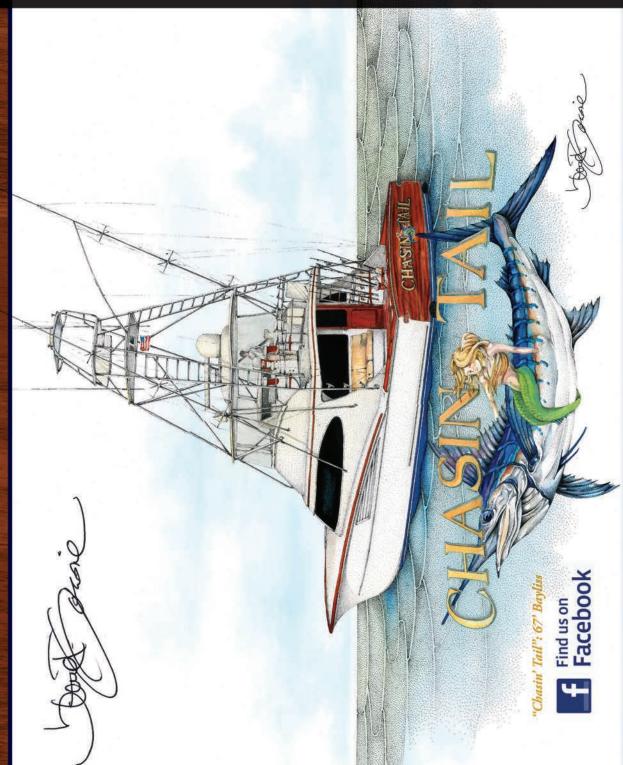




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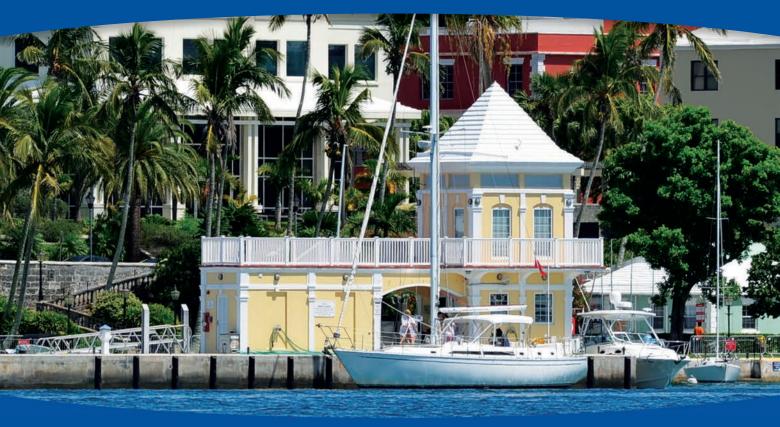
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This 40-foot gamefisherman, owned and operated by Capt. Alan Card and his son lan, is fast, clean and well-kept. Challenger has captured, in Bermuda waters, six blue marlin weighing from 1,130 to 1,195 pounds (winner of the World Cup in 1993). Challenger won the inaugural Bermuda Big Game Classic in 2001. Call 441-234-0872 or 441-337-2109 (cell), email ajcard@northrock.bm, or visit bigfishbermuda.com.



### **GRINGO CHARTERS**

Just one hour away from the fishing grounds, this 31-foot custom JC is fully equipped for offshore fishing. Chum for yellowfin and blackfin tuna, or troll for wahoo, dolphin and blue marlin—whatever baits your hook. The season runs from April through November, with the marlin bite peaking in June, July and August. Contact Capt. Joey Dawson at 441-295-3500 or 441-704-3474 (boat).



### **HAKUNA MATATA**

Hakuna Matata is Bermuda's newest charter fishing boat. The vessel is a 51-foot Custom Carolina sport-fishing boat with a single 700hp Iveco Motor. Specializing in deep-sea fishing, father/son team Michael and Scott "Skitchy" Barnes together have more then 40 years' experience fishing in Bermuda. Every season in Bermuda sees different fishing, but they're equipped to catch most species. To book, visit them online at hmcharters.com, call 441-505-1611 or email hakunamatatacharters@gmail.com.



#### JUMP DEM BONES

Bermuda's premier fly and light-tackle fishing guide for bonefish, hogfish and other inshore species. Capt. Ian Linnell has 35-plus years of fishing expertise from light tackle to marlin and will give you a truly Bermudian experience around the island's clear waters on Jump Dem Bones, a custom-built 18-foot Dolphin skiff. Tackle and soft drinks are provided; just bring a love for fishing. Open year-round with full- or half-day trips at competitive prices. Pick up at various spots around the island. Nonfishing partners welcome. Call 441-747-6911, email jumpdembonesbda@gmail.com or visit bermudabonefish.com.



















### BERMUDA /// CHARTER DIRECTORY

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### **MAKO CHARTERS**

Fish with Capt. Allen DeSilva on board the 65-foot Hatteras Es Mucho! Equipped with four staterooms and four baths, the Es Mucho! has a cruising speed of 28 knots designed to get you out to the great fishing spots quicker. Mako Charters is celebrating 40 years of charter operations and Capt. Allen specializes in big blue marlin. He has released many granders and currently holds the island record with a 1,352-pound Atlantic blue marlin. Bermuda also offers some tuna and wahoo fishing, DeSilva and son Jeffrey would love to show you! Call 441-295-0835 (office) or 441-505-8626 (boat), email fishbermuda@gmail.com, or visit fishbermuda.com.



### **MEGA BUCKS**

If you're planning a trip to Bermuda, get hooked up on board Mega Bucks, a 43-foot Torres. Mega Bucks is fast, spacious and air-conditioned. It offers full, three-quarter and half-day trips for deep-sea fishing, including marlin, tuna, wahoo, dolphin and shark. It also runs reef-fishing and night-fishing trips. For more information, contact Capt. Sinclair Lambe at 441-234-3081, email megabuckscharters@gmail.com or visit megabucksfishing.com.



### **OVERPROOF CHARTERS**

Capt. Peter Rans is one of the most accomplished charter captains in Bermuda and operates the one of the top charter services in Bermuda. Overproof is a 58-foot Custom Carolina Sportsman designed by Omie Tillet. This year is the fishing machine's debut year in Bermuda. The fast, comfortable boat is equipped with top-shelf tackle. Overproof won the largest fish in the 2018 Bermuda Big Game Classic with a 930-pound blue Marlin. Call 441-238-5663 (home) or 441-335-9850 (cell), email overproof@northrock.bm, or visit overprooffishing.com.



### **PARADISE ONE**

Paradise One is a fabulous 54-foot sport-fishing catamaran that is luxurious, spacious, comfortable and very fast, and is fully equipped with the best fishing tackle and gear. Brothers Allan and Delvin Bean have fished Bermuda waters, as well as Florida and the Bahamas, for more than 25 years. They take great pride in all they do. You'll never be dissatisfied! Contact Delvin Bean at 441-734-9409 or Allan Bean at 441-705-6134, email paradiseonecharters@yahoo.com, or visit paradiseone-fishingcharters.com.



### PLAYMATE CHARTERS

Fish with Bermuda's tuna specialists on Playmate, a 43-foot custom-built sport-fisherman with large open flybridge, air-conditioned cabin and spacious fishing cockpit. Join the crew for the best chunking action available. Playmate supports tag-and-release for all billfish and sharks, and is Bermuda's No. 1 releaser of tuna—its tags have been recovered worldwide, providing valuable information to stock-management scientists. Playmate has also guided clients to 25 world records! Call Capt. Kevin Winter at 441-799-8862, email playmate@logic.bm or visit playmatefishing.com.



### A REEL ADDICTION CHARTERS

Discover Bermuda's deep-sea action on Reel Addiction. Whether fishing for wahoo, chumming for tuna or trolling for marlin, Reel Addiction has what it takes. There is no better way to experience the very best of Bermuda's sport fishing than on Reel Addiction! Call 441-799-9927 or 441-799-9928, email info@reeladdictionbermuda.com, or visit reeladdictionbermuda.com to make a reservation.



#### **REEL HOT CHARTERS**

If you're fired up to catch big fish in Bermuda, book a day on board Reel Hot. This 43-foot Torres was built specifically for fishing in Bermuda, with a spacious flybridge, air-conditioned cabin and huge cockpit with three fighting chairs for when the action gets "reel hot." Top-shelf tackle, the latest equipment and the newest techniques complete the package. Capt. Nick New has been fishing local waters for more than 25 years. Call 441-537-6040, email reelhot@gmail.com or visit bermudacharter.com for rates.



### BERMUDA /// CHARTER DIRECTORY





### **SHAKE DOWN CHARTERS**

"We find 'em! You wind 'em" is the motto on this fully equipped 35-foot Bruno charter boat, operated by Capt. David "Bounce" Barnes. For more information, call 441-335-1779 (cell) or 441-297-3635 (home) or email shakedowncharter@hotmail.com.



### **WOUND UP**

Spend a day offshore with Capt. James Robinson aboard Wound Up — a custom 37-foot Duffy. Winner of the 2009 Blue Marlin World Cup, 2009 & 2011 Bermuda Billfish Blast, 3rd Place in the 2014 Big Game Classic, and biggest marlin jackpots in the 2009 & 2010 Triple Crown and 2013 Sea Horse. Wound Up weighed a 1,049pound blue marlin in 2008 and holds the Bermuda record for catching 51 wahoo in one day! Tournament-proven and family-approved. To book, call 441-737-9985, email freshfish@northrock.bm or visit woundupbermuda.com.

### **ATLANTIC SPRAY**

### Capt. Sloan Wakefield 38-foot Luhrs 441-735-9444

atlanticspray.net atlanticspray@me.com

### **ELLEN B**

### Capt. Michael Baxter 32-foot Shoreline

441-234-2963 (home) 441-334-9722 (cell) baxtersreef@northrock.bm

### **FISH CAKES**

### Capt. Craig Soares

38-foot Lobster Sportfisher Deep-sea and reef fishing 441-734-5211 fishcakes@northrock.bm

### **FOUR REEL**

### Capt. Dean Soares

36-foot BHM Deep-sea and reef fishing 441-505-7786 fourreel@northrock.bm

### **JOLLY ROGER**

### **Family and Party Fishing Boat**

56-foot Chesapeake 441-234-2193 441-333-2204 iollyrogerbermuda.com consort@transact.bm

### **LAST CHANCE**

Capt. Robert J. Lambe 35-foot Bruno & Stillman Deep sea & reef fishing 441-734-9244

### **TROUBADOR**

### James & Blake West

42-foot double-ender Deep-sea and reef fishing 441-293-0813

### **R & D TIME**

### Capt. Derek Exell

40-foot Luhrs 441-236-9464 441-333-9912 theboatyard@logic.bm

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### Capt. Vernon Bridgewater

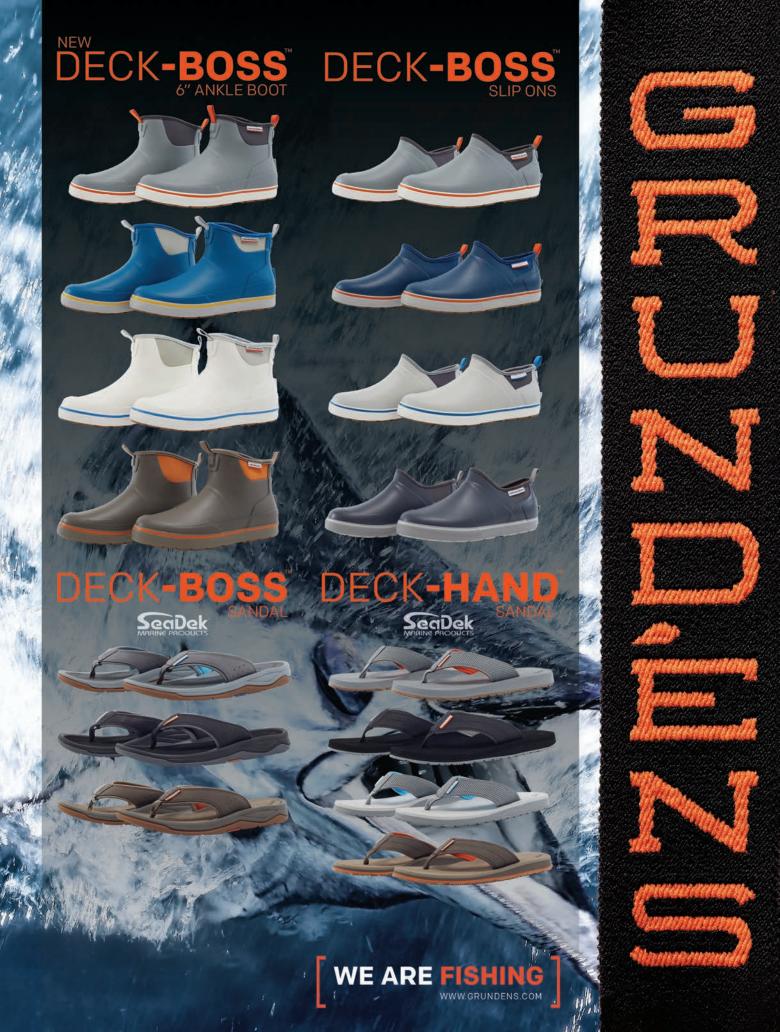
46-foot Bertram Deep-sea and reef fishing 441-334-7127 bridgev@northrock.bm

### **MOBY DICK CHARTERS**

### Capt. Peter Rodday

Fishing Charters & Private Tours 40-foot Classic 441-737-1332 mobydickchartersbermuda.com mobydickcharters@hotmail.com

"Whether fishing for wahoo, tuna, marlin or mahi mahi, Moby Dick Charters will help you put them in the boat and on the deck."



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Bermuda's first and most famous Italian restaurant featuring classic and contemporary regional Italian specialities. Spectacular wine list and an ambiance that sparkles with zest. Great outdoor dining on the terrace. Our Wine Bar has the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence. Mingle at this cozy spot next to our restaurant.

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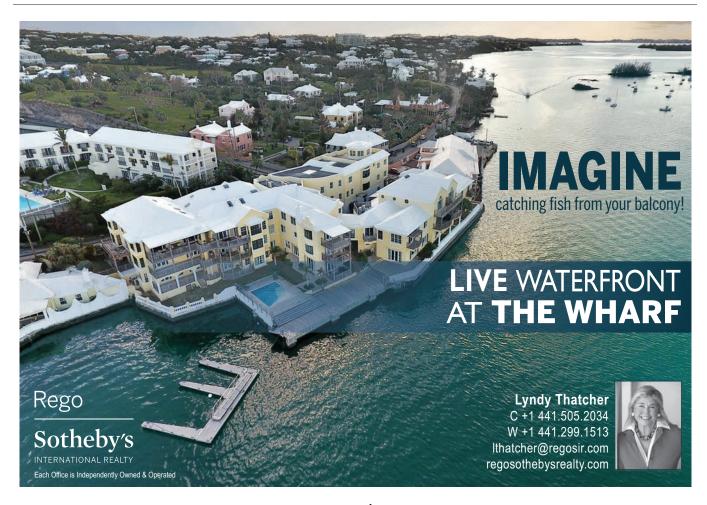


### L'ORIENTAL

Above Little Venice is Hamilton's best Oriental Restaurant. Featuring sushi, teppanyaki and fusion dishes artistically presented in an atmosphere of serenity and beauty. Seating available inside under the exquisite Pagoda or outside under the stars.

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25 Belmont Hills Drive, Warwick | T: 441-232-2323 | E: info@blu.bm | www.blu.bm | Facebook: @BluBermuda Dress Code: Smart Casual









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