

# HAWAIIAN INT'L BILLFISH TOURNAMENT (HIBT) AND THE IGFA GREAT MARLIN RACE

## *Three years of satellite tagging Hawaii's marlin*

Fishing history is rich in the Hawaiian Islands, where marlin reign supreme and icons like Henry Chee, Hidenori Onishi, George Parker and others built their legacies. No small part of the Hawaiian fishing mystique is the Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament (HIBT), which celebrated its 53rd competition August 12 – 18, 2012. But in addition to great fishing, this tournament has another significant place in history: as the home to great research.

The IGFA Great Marlin Race continued off the coast of Kona this year, extending a three year tradition of deploying satellite tags in marlin in the Pacific Ocean. The Great Marlin Race project began in 2009 as a partnership with Barbara Block's lab at Stanford University. The program has flourished with the blessing of tournament founder and IGFA Trustee Emeritus Peter S. Fithian and the tireless work of individuals like Stanford University researcher Dr. Randy Kochevar, IGFA Representative Bob Kurz, and IGFA Development Director Eric Schratwieser, they have helped take this project to three different oceans and all four hemispheres in the past 12 months, collecting more data than has ever been seen on these majestic species.

If history repeats itself, Kona will once again prove itself to be a rich site for data in about 180 days, when the timed tags release from their fish. Last year, tags were programmed to release in 120 days but this period has been extended an additional 60 days to get a better idea of where these oceanic nomads travel. In the last Great Marlin Race at the 2011 HIBT, the winning tag, sponsored by a West Marine BlueFuture Conservation Grant, was on a 170 lb Pacific blue marlin that travelled approximately 2,188 nautical miles (nm) from its tagging site, ending up north of the Marquesas Islands in French Polynesia. The second place tag, sponsored by Laguna Niguel Billfish Club 1 and 2, traveled 1,752 nm on a 330 lb blue marlin.

"It is truly amazing to have so much international cooperation in this research project," shared IGFA Conservation Director Jason Schratwieser. "Teams from Australia, Japan, South Africa, New Zealand, and the USA came together to sponsor IGMR tags at the HIBT this year. With the data we're gathering in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans as well, this is a scientific endeavor that is unifying anglers across the globe."

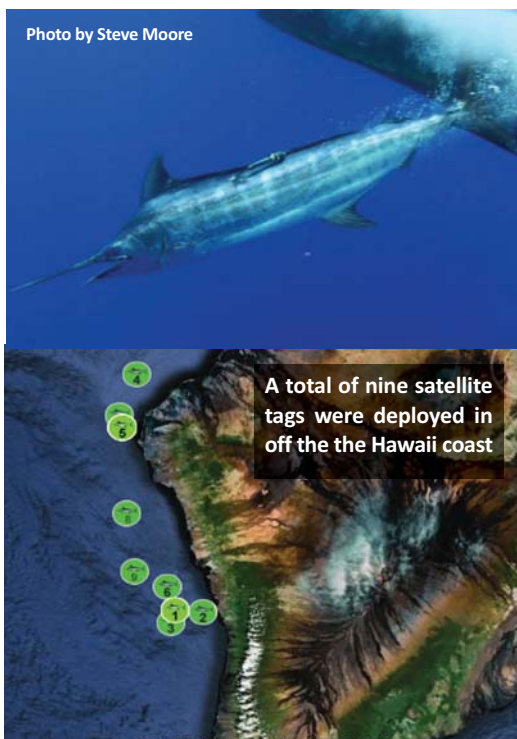


Photo by Steve Moore

A total of nine satellite tags were deployed in off the the Hawaii coast

### Thank you to the sponsors of the IGMR at the 53<sup>rd</sup> HIBT

#### Exmouth Game Fishing Club #1 - California

Tag Sponsor: James Roscic of Exmouth Game Fishing Club

#### Game Fishing Club of South Australia

Tag Sponsors: Ralph Czabayski of Game Fishing Club of South Australia

#### Hawaii Yacht Club

Tag Sponsor: West Marine, Blue-water Futures Marine Conservation Grant

#### Kona Game Fishing Club Taiyo - Japan

Tag Sponsor: Masaharu Matsushita of Kona Game Fishing Club Taiyo - Japan

#### Laguna Niguel Billfish Club #1

Tag Sponsor: Ralph Bodine of Unbelievable Sportfishing

#### Balboa Angling Club

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#### Mission Bay Marlin Club - California

Tag Sponsors: Tim McBride of Mission Bay Marlin Club

#### Pajaro Valley Game Fish Club - California and Bay of Islands Swordfish Club - New Zealand

Tag Sponsors: Rocky Franich, Bill Evans, Tony Campos, Rex Pyne, John Griffiths & Murray Hansen

#### Townsville Game Fishing Club - Australia

Tag Sponsor: Greg Gilbert of Townsville Game Fishing Club

#### South African Protea Team

Tag Sponsor: South African Protea Team

Date/Time	Tag & Release Information
August 13 - 9:00 AM	Ari Levine aboard <i>Golden Aussie</i> reeled in a 300 lb Pacific blue marlin, the largest of the fish that would be tagged during this IGMR event, and Stephanie Chen deployed the satellite tag.
August 13 - 12:30 PM	After a 44 minute fight, angler Greg Gilbert brought a 175 lb Pacific blue marlin alongside <i>Hooked Up</i> , where the fish was tagged by Rick Reger.
August 13 - 12:39 PM	Ralph Czabayski caught and tagged a 180 lb Pacific blue marlin from the deck of <i>Nasty Habbit</i> , handling the fish for only a minute before releasing it in excellent condition.
August 14 - 8:30 AM	Dave Martin deployed the first satellite tag of the day in a 200 lb Pacific blue marlin caught by Wian Terblanche aboard <i>High Flier</i> .
August 14 - 9:17 AM	Masharu Matsushita began the second fishing day by reeling in a 200 lb blue with the Kona Game Fishing Club - Taiyo - Japan team aboard the <i>Humdinger</i> .
August 14 - 2:51 PM	Four minutes after Allen McGee brought a Pacific blue marlin alongside <i>Miss Mojo</i> , IGFA Representative and IGFA Conservation Award winner Bob Kurz deployed a satellite tag in the 150 lb fish.
August 16 - 11:39 AM	A 130 lb Pacific blue marlin was reeled in by angler Matthew Nikkula aboard <i>Maggie Joe</i> and tagged by satellite tag sponsor James Roscic.
August 17 - 8:38 AM	<i>Long Ranger</i> saw the last IGMR tag deployed during the HIBT as angler Heidi McBride caught a 120 lb Pacific blue marlin, which was promptly tagged by Mitch Stauffer.
August 21 - 8:30 AM	The ninth tag of the Hawaii IGMR event was deployed by George Platner in less than a minute in a 250 lb Pacific blue marlin caught by Guy Terwilliger aboard <i>High Flier</i> .
September 9 - 9:51 AM	The skillful angling of Janet B. Martic helped McGrew Rice deploy the final tag of this event in a 200 lb Pacific blue marlin while aboard Ihu Nui.