

Kingfish trans-Tasman traveller

SPECIES	TAG NUMBER	RELEASE DATE	RELEASE LOCATION	ESTIMATED RELEASE LENGTH/WEIGHT	RECAPTURE DATE	RECAPTURE LOCATION	RECAPTURE LENGTH/WEIGHT	DAYS AT LIBERTY	DISTANCE MOVED	MAP REF
Black marlin	B034549	02/03/2008	Newcastle Canyons	45kg	04/06/2008	Solomon Islands	60kg (est.)	94	Approx. 1621nm	BM
Yellowtail kingfish	D007886	12/08/2006	Eden Wide	48cm	01/01/2009	Mangawhai Heads, NZ	90cm	873	Approx. 1167nm	YK
Striped marlin	B030276	07/12/2008	Newcastle Canyons	55kg/ 200cm	31/01/2009	Ulladulla Shelf, NSW	80-85kg est.	55	Approx. 163nm	SM

AN exceptional recapture of a yellowtail kingfish has been reported to the NSW DPI Game Fish Tagging Program (GFTP).

The fish was originally caught and released by John Rankin fishing on *Mighty Dragon* wide from Eden, NSW, in the winter of 2006. It was recaptured 1170 nautical miles (straight-line distance) and 873 days later off Mangawhai Heads Beach on New Zealand's northeast coast. During this time it had grown from a length of 48cm at release to an estimated 90cm when recaptured.

This is only the third kingfish recorded from the Australian program to have travelled across the Tasman Sea to New Zealand waters.

The record for the furthest distance travelled currently stands at 1249 nautical miles. This belongs to a kingfish tagged off the coast of Bermagui in March 1990 and recaptured at Tauranga, Bay of Plenty, NZ, in March 1991.

The other was a fish tagged at Coffs Harbour in June 1984 and recaptured in April 1986 at Home Point, NZ.

Kingfish have also been recorded travelling in the opposite direction. At least two fish tagged under the New Zealand Cooperative Gamefish Tagging Program have been recaptured off the east coast of Australia.

With the numbers of kingfish tagged in Australia so far amounting to more than

30,000 fish, and more than 12,000 having been tagged in New Zealand, this trans-Tasman movement is unlikely to be a regular occurrence. But it's likely to happen often enough to allow some potential mixing of the populations.

This is supported by scientific studies that have shown that no significant genetic differences exist between Australian and New Zealand kingfish populations.

A tagged black marlin was recently reported by a longliner fishing the Solomon Islands.

The fish was tagged by *Billistic*, a Newcastle & Port Stephens Game Fishing Club boat, in March 2008 at Newcastle Canyons. It was recaptured about 70 nautical miles north-east of Santa Isbel Island in June 2008.

The fish was first caught on a circle hook-rigged livebait and tagged at an estimated weight of 45kg.

When it was recaptured almost three months later at an estimated weight of 60kg, the fish had travelled

a minimum distance of 1615 nautical miles.

A striped marlin originally tagged at Newcastle Canyons in December 2008 by Newcastle & Port Stephens GFC boat *Rackem Up* was recaptured in Ulladulla in late January. Ulladulla GFC boat *Mayhem* caught the fish as it headed south with the East Australian Current. The fish had travelled a minimum distance of 163 nautical miles before being retagged during the Jess Sams Tournament.

The program continues to issue tags free of charge to participants and is funded by the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust. It operates throughout Australia and across many Pacific islands.

If you'd like to participate in the program, please contact the NSW GFTP: write to NSW DPI, PO Box 21, Cronulla, NSW 2230, Australia; email gamefish.tagging@dpi.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 9527 8411. ■

**– Phil Bolton
NSW DPI, Manager,
Recreational Fisheries**



Lyn Salvidge with her 223kg Pacific bluefin tuna off Westport on New Zealand's South Island.

IGFA accepts Pacific bluefin tuna for line class records

THE International Game Fish Association has agreed to recognise line class world record applications for Pacific bluefin tuna – the huge species that was discovered aggregating off southern New Zealand in recent years.

This is great news for anglers in the southwest Pacific, and follows representations made over several years to the IGFA by the New Zealand Big Game Fishing Council.

It isn't often that a truly significant large species gets added to the world record list, and this will be an incentive for more anglers to have a crack at these enormous and powerful tuna.

The NZBGFC was grateful for the strong support of Australian IGFA Trustee Neil Patrick and others who spoke in support of the proposal at the January IGFA Trustees' meeting. ■

– Peter Saul

