

Tagging update – significant recaptures

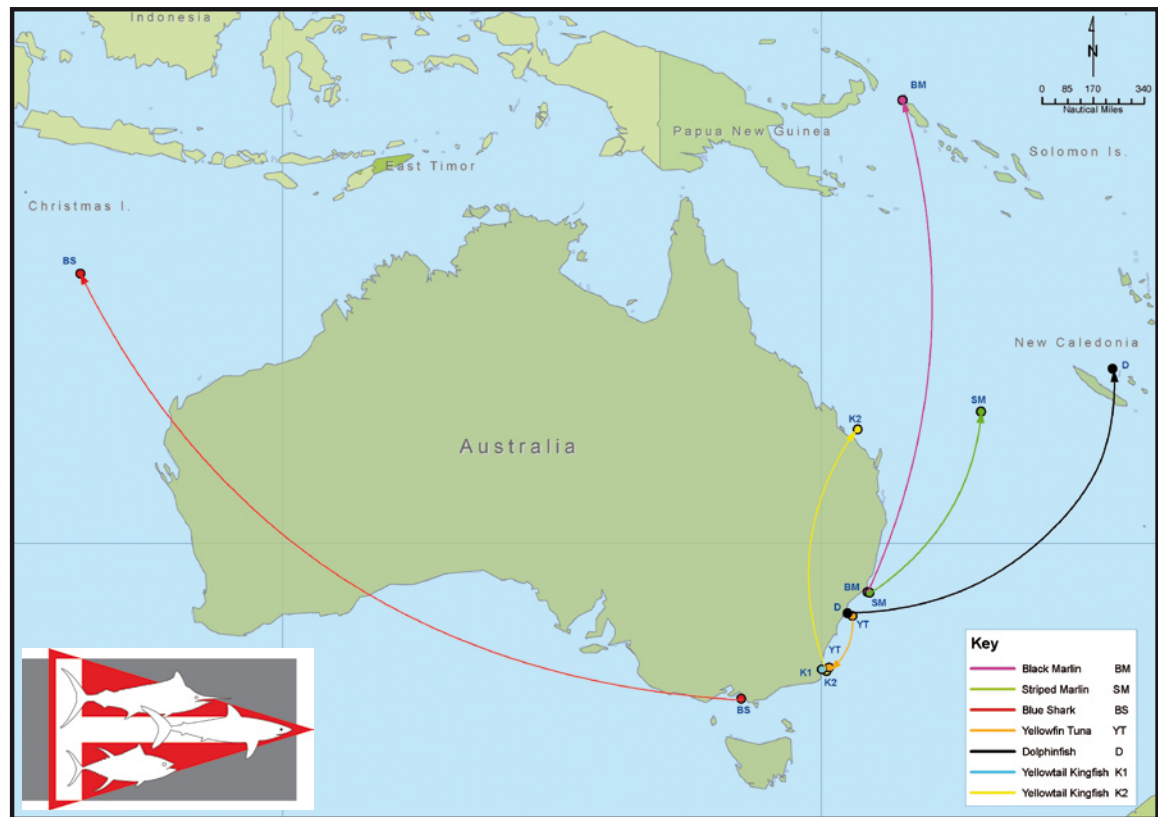
THE NSW DPI Game Fish Tagging Program is the largest saltwater tagging program of its kind in the world. Several notable recaptures have been reported within the past 12 months.

The table below provides some interesting details on some of these, including the distance the fish moved and their time at liberty. Remember, all of the distances moved represent straight-line distances from the point of release to the point of recapture. The fish are likely to have moved much further than the distances reported here.

The black marlin recaptured from Papua New Guinea in the Bougainville Island area is the fifth to have been reported from there since records

began in 1973. Four of these marlin were caught by local fishermen, often fishing from dugout canoes using very simple fishing gear.

The striped marlin released during the peak season at Port Stephens and recaptured in the Coral Sea midway between Rockhampton and New Caledonia was the fifth-longest movement recorded for the species. The furthest distance moved by a tagged striped marlin to date is 1067 nautical miles. The fish was tagged off Bermagui and recaptured north of Chesterfield Island in the Coral Sea, a point midway between Townsville and Vanuatu.



The blue shark released from Kilcunda in Victoria was recaptured by a longliner in the Indian Ocean, approximately two-thirds of the way to Christmas Island from Exmouth, WA. This is the second-furthest blue shark movement reported to the program. The furthest recorded also swam from Victoria to the Indian Ocean to a location approximately 450 nautical miles west of Carnarvon, clocking up a straight-line total of 2507 nautical miles.

The yellowfin tuna released in Sydney and recaptured off Merimbula by an Eden S&GFC member was only the 12th yellowfin to have been re-released

with a new tag after its first recapture. It had grown from an estimated 10kg to a solid 50kg after being at liberty for 560 days, and is the largest yellowfin that has been recorded and re-released.

The dolphinfish released late in the season from Sydney and recaptured 499 days later, to the east of New Caledonia, is the longest time at liberty recorded for a dolphinfish and the second-furthest distance moved.

The two yellowtail kingfish tagged by Brian Schofield demonstrate that although many fish are recaptured in the same location as release (even after being at liberty for almost

three years!), some kingfish travel significant distances. Both kingfish were tagged in the same vicinity: one of the fish was recaptured 634 days later at Fitzroy Reef, near Gladstone, Queensland.

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

SPECIES	TAG NUMBER	RELEASE DATE	RELEASE LOCATION	RELEASE WEIGHT/LENGTH	RECAPTURE DATE	RECAPTURE LOCATION	RECAPTURE WEIGHT/LENGTH	DAYS AT LIBERTY	DISTANCE MOVED	MAP REF
Black marlin	B016302	03/03/07	Port Stephens, NSW	50kg	01/05/07	Buka Island, PNG	n/a	59	1478nm	BM
Striped marlin	B017129	24/02/07	Port Stephens, NSW	70kg	18/08/07	Coral Sea	59kg (dressed)	175	665nm	SM
Blue shark	S139203	28/02/06	Kilcunda, VIC	25kg/180cm	08/07/07	Indian Ocean	231 cm	495	2335nm	BS
Yellowfin tuna	S208710	20/11/05	Browns Mountain, Sydney, NSW	10kg	03/06/07	Merimbula Shelf, NSW	50kg/120cm	560	170nm	YT
Dolphinfish	A238154	14/04/06	Sydney, NSW	1kg	26/08/07	New Caledonia	6.5kg	499	1167nm	D
Yellowtail kingfish	A439031	09/05/04	Mowarry Point, NSW	2.7kg/65cm	28/04/07	Mowarry Point, NSW	5.8kg/91cm	1084	0nm	K1
Yellowtail kingfish	D003947	13/11/05	Eden, NSW	4 kg/70cm	09/08/07	Fitzroy Reef, QLD	11kg	634	716nm	K2