



70

OMM 600

**BOAT TESTS**

- O'Brien 56 custom
  - OMM 600 Jaycat
  - Reader's BW 26
- AND LOTS MORE ...**

O'Brien 56

56

72

64

- Reunion Island
  - Service a Stellar
  - Jet lure history
  - Halco Laser Pro
- AND LOTS MORE ...**

80

# BlueWater

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## Hot billfish action in southern Queensland



This sailfish (S 2) was estimated at 40kg when released from *Simple Plan* off Mooloolaba on September 25th last year. It was recaptured on the same grounds after 194 days – as shown in the next photo.

DESPITE the lack of juvenile black marlin last year at the usually prolific winter grounds of Cape Bowling Green near Townsville, black marlin finally arrived in their droves this summer. The fish tended to stay predominantly

off Queensland, with few small juvenile black marlin continuing south into NSW waters. Scientific papers indicate that this phenomenon is not altogether unexpected, as there have been several other seasons where high catches in the northern latitudes have

not resulted in particularly high catches in southern regions and vice versa. High or low catches in northern Queensland therefore do not necessarily mean bumper or lean years in the more southern latitudes, but that doesn't dampen angler optimism if good catches occur early in the season to the north!

The fish encountered this season in southern Queensland showed a relatively wide range of sizes, with a number of better quality fish reported among the 1+ to 2+ year-old fish of approximately 15 to 40kg. There were a total of 11 black marlin recaptured after being tagged from the end of October off Fraser Island to the end of March off Mooloolaba. Many fish were tagged in mid-January off the Gold Coast. The recaptures varied from three to 136 days at liberty; most fish were recaptured within 85 nautical miles of their release point.

Two black marlin (BM 1 & BM 2) released with consecutive tag numbers on the same day

off South Stradbroke Island by Surfers Paradise GFC vessel *Murphy's Law* headed northwest. They were recaptured off Mooloolaba within two nautical miles of one another after 22 and 30 days at liberty. A black marlin (BM 3) tagged off Fraser Island was recaptured off the Gold Coast by Sunshine Coast GFC member Jeff Oates after covering a minimum straight line distance of 134 nautical miles in 136 days. The only black marlin (BM 4) out of the group to be recaptured in NSW was originally released off the Gold Coast by *Pacemaker* and was recaptured close to the Swansea I&I NSW fish aggregating device (FAD). This fish had covered a minimum of 327 nautical miles over a period of 70 days and was estimated to be about 45kg in weight.

A number of sailfish were also encountered this year off southern Queensland. One sailfish (S 1) clocked up the third-longest time at liberty for the species after being released off Mooloolaba in April 2006 and recaptured in April 2010,



Species	Tag number	Rel. date	Rel. location	Est. rel. length/weight	Recap. date	Recap. location	Est. recap. length/weight	Days at liberty	Approx. distance moved (nm)	Map ref.
Black Marlin	B048473	15/01/2010	Stradbroke Is.	120cm/20kg	14/02/2010	Mooloolaba	140cm/25kg	30	71	BM 1
Black Marlin	B048474	15/01/2010	Stradbroke Is.	115cm/15kg	06/02/2010	Mooloolaba	140cm/35kg	22	69	BM 2
Black Marlin	B049902	24/10/2009	Fraser Island	12kg	09/03/2010	Mooloolaba	168cm/40kg	136	134	BM 3
Black Marlin	B047706	16/01/2010	Gold Coast	120cm/25kg	27/03/2010	Swansea FAD NSW	220cm/45kg	70	327	BM 4
Black Marlin	B052311	19/01/2010	Gold Coast	220cm/80kg	22/01/2010	Gold Coast	180cm/ 60kg	3	19	BM 5
Black Marlin	B037497	11/01/2010	Gold Coast	209cm	04/02/2010	Gold Coast	50kg	24	7	BM 6
Black Marlin	B028055	15/01/2010	Gold Coast	180cm/30kg	15/02/2010	Mooloolaba	160cm/30kg	31	84	BM 7
Black Marlin	B061031	24/01/2010	Cape Moreton	170cm/35kg	09/03/2010	Mooloolaba	200cm/55kg	44	20	BM 8
Black Marlin	B026136	15/01/2010	Gold Coast	120cm/40kg	05/02/2010	Gold Coast	183cm/40kg	21	15	BM 9
Black Marlin	B061222	27/03/2010	Mooloolaba	160cm/25kg	31/03/2010	Mooloolaba	28kg	4	1	BM 10
Black Marlin	B037740	15/01/2010	Mooloolaba	160cm/45kg	10/04/2010	Noosa	35kg	85	11	BM 11
Sailfish	B012932	28/04/2006	Mooloolaba	20kg	12/04/2010	Noosa (South)	22kg	1445	10	S 1
Sailfish	B027752	25/09/2009	Mooloolaba	40kg	07/04/2010	Mooloolaba	40kg	194	3	S 2

only 10 nautical miles away from its original release point. Another sailfish (S 2) was also released and recaptured off Mooloolaba after 194 days of liberty. Photographs of this fish were taken on release and recapture, as shown here.

Special mention should go to charter boat operator Rob Smith on *Triton IV*, who released or recaptured four of the fish in this article, and Jeff Oates on *Simple Plan* who released or recaptured three.

We are still awaiting release information on two other recaptured black marlin caught in the southern Queensland area. This is a timely reminder to prompt readers to dig out any tag cards they may have forgotten to send through as the program is not able to operate properly without your help returning completed tag cards. Also, please contact the program if you release a previously tagged fish but aren't able to read the tag number. These records are still collated and are an important help in tabulating

the total number of recaptures recorded in the fishery. The Industry and Investment NSW Program issues tags to individuals and fishing

clubs and is funded by the NSW Recreational Fishing Trust. If you would like to participate in the program please phone: (02) 9527 8411

or email: [gamefish.tagging@industry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gamefish.tagging@industry.nsw.gov.au)

Phil Bolton  
Fisheries Manager,  
Tagging I & I NSW



The previously tagged sailfish S 2 was recaptured by Nathan Douglass aboard *Luna*, off Mooloolaba. It had been at liberty for 194 days.