



# tagtimesnews

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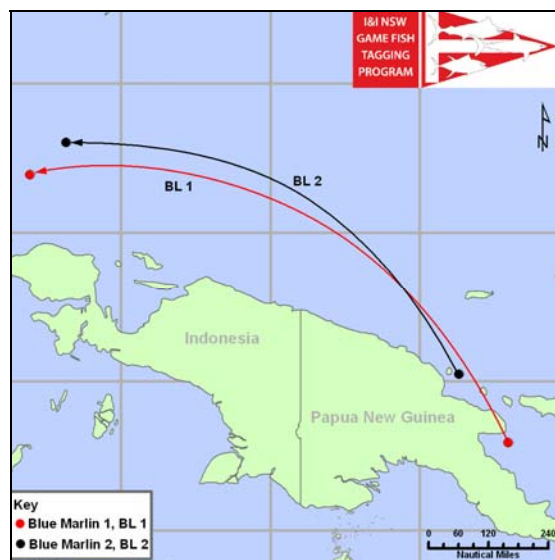
## TAG TIMES IS BORN

This is the first issue of Tag Times newsletter, produced by the I&I NSW Game Fish Tagging Program. This publication will be released regularly throughout the year and will provide interesting information and updates on releases, recaptures and any other developments relating to the program. It is available in electronic format for download from the I&I NSW website (see back page.)

## TWO RECORD BREAKING BLUE MARLIN

Details on the recapture of a record breaking Blue Marlin were reported last year. The Blue Marlin was tagged in the Huon Gulf, PNG and was recaptured 7 years and 71 days later by a commercial boat fishing near a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) near Pulau Fani, Indonesia (BL1). The fish had travelled a minimum of 1076 NM and broke the previous record of longest time at liberty for Blue Marlin by more than double, with the previous record standing at 3 years and two months.

The above record did not stand for long as another record breaking Blue Marlin was recaptured several months later after originally being released in October 2001 by Madang GFC boat MV Talio. This fish was recaptured almost 7 years and 7 months later at a location 90nm from Pulau Bras, Papua New Guinea. This beats the previous short-standing record by over 4 months (BL2).



The Blue Marlin had grown from an estimated weight of 85kg to an estimated weight of between 140kg and 160kg. The relatively small weight gain over its 7 years at liberty is probably attributable to the fish being a male (although this wasn't specified). This weight is at the top of the range for male Blue Marlin which are slower growing and shorter lived than their female counterparts.

The Blue Marlin had travelled a minimum distance of 880 NM between original release and recapture locations. The distance record is currently held by a Blue Marlin tagged north of Sydney and recaptured 18 months later by a Japanese longliner south of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean, a straight line distance of 5507 NM.

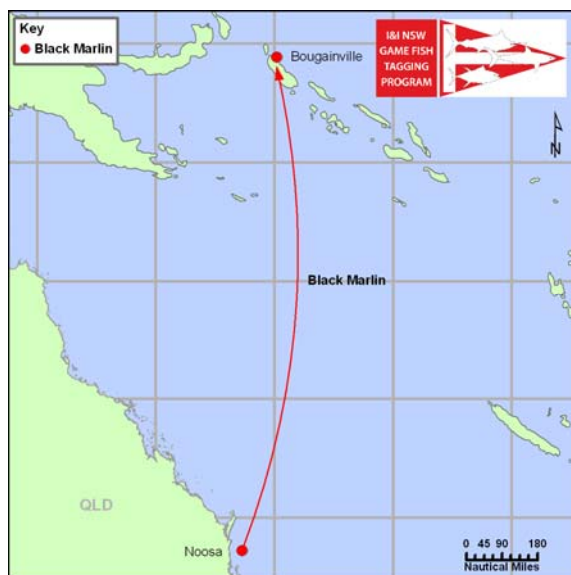
## INTERESTING RECAPTURES

### Black Marlin

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2009 a black marlin was released from the waters off Noosa by the Sunshine Coast GFC vessel Keneka. This fish was released in excellent condition at an estimated weight of 30kg.

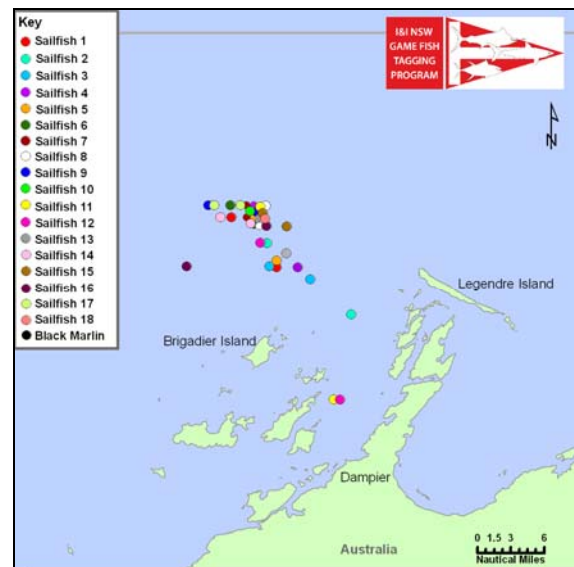
The fish was subsequently recaptured on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2009 by a local fishing company on Bougainville Island (Papua New Guinea) approximately 1250 nautical miles from its release point off the QLD coast (See below map).

This fish was caught while trolling a lure on a 300lb handline around Teop Island and was weighed in at 58kg, an impressive 28kg of growth during its 287 days at liberty.



There were also significant numbers of fish tagged at Exmouth and several hundred Sailfish and a number of Black Marlin tagged off Broome.

20 Sailfish and one Black Marlin have subsequently been recaptured from WA. All 20 fish were recaptured in the same general area as where they were released (See below maps). The fish ranged in distance from 0 NM up to 17 NM from site of original release and were recaptured from one day to 153 days after they were first tagged. This pattern did not change between Dampier and Exmouth.



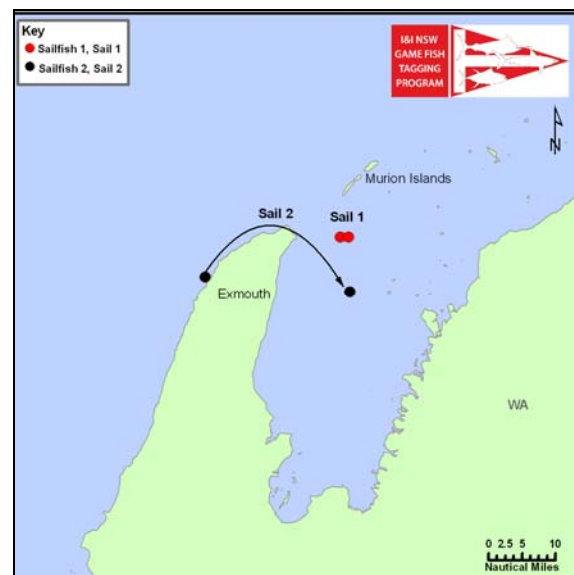
High numbers of recaptures like this are not unusual when fish are holding in a specific area that is regularly fished. Recapture rates drop rapidly when the fish are dispersed and are caught in remote fishing locations with little fishing pressure.

## SAILFISH RECAPTURES EXPLODE OFF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIA COAST

An extraordinary number of Sailfish were found to be congregated around the large bait schools gathered offshore from Dampier throughout the winter months of 2009.

Since the start of 2009, 741 sailfish have been tagged to date at Dampier, this accounts for the vast majority of the 923 Sailfish recorded on the tagging database by December 2009.

The majority of Sailfish were tagged in August although the first fish were tagged in February. It was reported that the fish were there in large numbers because of the large quantities of baitfish present that held there for many months.



## Bronze Whaler

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2006 a bronze whaler shark was tagged and released off St. Kilda in South Australia by Adelaide GFC member Brad Smith.

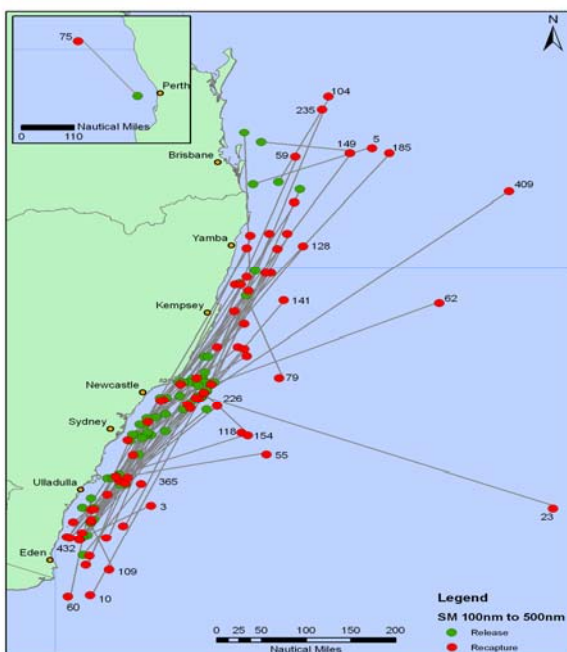
This fish was recaptured on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2009 only 200m from where it was first tagged at St. Kilda, by the same angler who originally tagged the fish 1078 days earlier! The fish had grown from an estimated 140kg to 185kg and has now been recognised as state and Australian record for the 8kg line class.

## TAGGING SUMMARY REPORTS

A detailed summary of the I&I NSW Game Fish Tagging Program from 1973 – 2005 is available from the website and details releases and recaptures from throughout the programs history.

A summary report for the seasons 2006-2007 and the 2007-2008 will also be soon published on the website. Included in this report are some interesting maps of Striped Marlin and Southern Bluefin Tuna recaptures recorded since the start of the program.

A sneak peek of one of the maps with plots of Striped Marlin recaptures that have moved between 100 and 500 NM can be seen below.



*Tag Times* is a newsletter for the NSW Game Fish Tagging Program.

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