



# NEWS RELEASE

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## INTERNATIONAL GAME FISH ASSOCIATION

300 Gulf Stream Way, Dania Beach, Florida 33004 USA • Phone (954) 927-2628  
Fax (954) 927-4299 • Email: [HQ@igfa.org](mailto:HQ@igfa.org) • Website: [www.igfa.org](http://www.igfa.org)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jason Schratwieser, IGFA Conservation Director  
954-924-4320, [jschratwieser@igfa.org](mailto:jschratwieser@igfa.org)

### The IGFA and Stanford University Launch the IGFA Great Marlin Race

Marlin are some of the most magnificent fish in the ocean and the race is on to learn more about them – before it's too late.

The International Game Fish Association has partnered with scientists from Stanford University to create the IGFA Great Marlin Race – a conservation research program which combines the excitement of tournament angling with cutting-edge marine biologging science. Working in close collaboration with anglers, boat captains and crews fishing at billfish tournaments around the world, the IGFA Great Marlin Race program is planning to deploy 50 electronic satellite tags on a variety of billfish species in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans over the course of a year.

“The goal of the program,” explains IGFA Conservation Director **Jason Schratwieser**, “is to learn more about the basic biology of these magnificent fishes, and how they utilize the open ocean habitat. We also envision giving open access to the tagging data so that it can be utilized by scientists around the world.”

Pop-up archival satellite tags (PATs), attached to a captured billfish before it is released, record information about depth, temperature and light levels – which can be used to study their migrations and behaviors over the course of several months after they've been tagged. These data, in turn, will help scientists to identify key habitat areas where large numbers of fish spend significant portions of time – as well as the migratory corridors they use when they travel from place to place.

“Pelagic fishes are under constant pressure from human exploitation,” explains Stanford University Professor of Marine Sciences **Dr. Barbara Block**. “As scientists our role is to provide resource managers and policy makers with the best possible information about the life histories of these animals – so they can do a more effective job at managing their populations in the wild.”

Block, who pioneered the use of electronic tags on open ocean fishes in the early 1990's, was one of the founders of the initial Great Marlin Race program – which was launched in 2009 in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Hawaiian International Billfish Tournament in Kona, Hawaii run by IGFA Trustee **Peter Fithian**.

**Bob Kurz**, an IGFA Representative and co-founder of the Great Marlin Race recalls, “I remember when Barb first started working with us back in the mid-90’s – deploying the first generation of satellite tags on marlin. When we were talking about what special activities we could develop for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we knew that Barb’s research had to play a role.”

The concept behind the Great Marlin Race is simple. In the days leading up to a billfish tournament, angling teams are invited to sponsor PAT tags to be placed on fish caught and released during the event. One hundred and twenty days after each tag is deployed, it automatically releases itself from the fish – and its exact location is determined by earth-orbiting ARGOS satellites. In a given tournament, the tag that surfaces furthest from where it was initially deployed wins the race for that tournament.

For the new IGFA Great Marlin Race, the idea has been expanded to multiple events all over the world. Beginning with the International Billfish Tournament of Club Náutico de San Juan in Puerto Rico September 4 – 11 of this year, this separate race will be a multi-tournament event lasting until September 30, 2012. Schratwieser explains, “The idea is to have a twelve month race, which includes all the billfish electronically tagged in all the Great Marlin Race events for that year. And the marlin whose tag travels the furthest of all will be recognized at our annual International Auction and Banquet in January.”

“We are really excited about this new partnership between our organization and Stanford University,” explains **Paxson Offield**, Chairman of the IGFA and long-term supporter of the Great Marlin Race, “By pairing top-notch science with tournament angling, we hope not only to learn more about the biology of the animals, but also to engage our constituents – billfish anglers around the world – in helping to conserve them for future generations.”

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*To learn more about threats to billfish populations, research implications or sponsoring a tag in the IGFA Great Marlin Race, please contact IGFA Conservation Director Jason Schratwieser at [jschratwieser@igfa.org](mailto:jschratwieser@igfa.org).*

Founded in 1939, the IGFA is a non-profit organized under Section 501(c)(3) under the Internal Revenue Code and is best known for conservation efforts of fisheries, educational programs, rule-making and for maintaining worldwide game fish records in freshwater, saltwater, fly fishing and junior angler categories. IGFA members are located in over 125 countries. The IGFA welcomes visitors to its 60,000-square-foot interactive Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum in Dania Beach, Florida.

For further information, contact the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum, 300 Gulf Stream Way, Dania Beach, Florida 33004; phone 954-927-2628, fax: 954-924-4299, website: [www.igfa.org](http://www.igfa.org).