

# BLACK MARLIN BULLETIN

NUMBER 1

AUGUST 2013



## Attention all Billfish Anglers Black marlin fin clips needed

This is the first of a series of irregular bulletins to keep you informed about an exciting new research project.

University of Queensland Honours student Sam Williams, working closely with Dr Julian Pepperell, is hoping to compare the genetic 'fingerprints' of black marlin from eastern and western Australia to determine if there are breeding populations on both sides of the continent and/or reveal if there is movement of fish between the Pacific and Indian oceans.



Photo: Sam Williams (left) & Dr Julian Pepperell (Right)

For this project to be successful we need lots of fin clips to extract DNA from juvenile or sub-adult fish (up to, say, 50kg) caught from both coasts. Sampling on the east coast is going well and will hopefully reach a target of around 50 samples. On the west coast, however, small black marlin are not as common, so we are especially keen to spread the word in the West and have as many anglers as possible ready to take fin clips from black marlin if they happen to hook one.

### The Story so far

Members of the Sunshine Coast Game Fishing Club were the first to take part in the sampling. Over the months of December 2012 to May 2013 they were able to take 30 fin clips from juvenile black marlin. The Angler who took the most samples was Club Captain Robert 'Smithy' Smith with 9 samples. Other participants were Brent Higgins 7, Craig McCulloch 6; Paddy Diamond 4; Jay Graham 2 and Jamie Behrens 2.

Also a special mention to Ben Bright who was able to take 24 fin clips in Weipa throughout 2012 (21 sails and 3 blacks – the sailfish clips will be used in a later study).

The 2013-2014 season has just begun, with Nick Hill from Townsville leading the charge with 5 fin clips on the east coast while Kim Andersen and Ben Bright have opened their accounts with one each. On the west coast, Chris Nisbet of Broome Billfish Charters has opened his account with one sample, while Dennis Bryan and Len Vertigan have informed us that another 9 finclips have been taken by anglers from the Dampier (Nickol Bay SFC) and Exmouth GFC. Details of the anglers will be given in the next Bulletin.

## A Friendly Competition

In order to make the collection of fin clips a bit of fun, we've decided to hold two lucky draws at the end of the season, one for the west coast and one for the east. Details of each fin-clipped black marlin will be placed in a hat, and the lucky angler from each coast will receive a signed copy of Julian Pepperell's award winning book "Fishes of the Open Ocean".

### What to do

Most fishermen find the easiest method is to snip 3-5cm of the tip of the pectoral (side) fin with rigging shears or by using a basic hole-punch on the fin, while holding the bill (we only need small pieces of fin). A small clip off the dorsal fin is also fine (see photo). Because little blacks are often extremely active near the boat we suggest that you use whichever technique is most comfortable for you.

After taking the finclip from the black marlin, we ask you to do the following:

Place the sample in a small cliplock bag (photo).

Write on a label (eg. back of a business card), in **pencil**

Species (just to confirm as black marlin)

Date of release

Location

Estimated weight

Place the label **inside** the plastic bag

Place in in a freezer, or on ice until a freezer is available

We will arrange to collect samples. If you have any questions or would like to contact us, Sam Williams' number is 0404 991 599 or email at

[samuel.williams5@uq.net.au](mailto:samuel.williams5@uq.net.au) and Julian Pepperell's is 0418 613 396 or email at [julianp@internode.on.net](mailto:julianp@internode.on.net)



Please feel free to send this Bulletin to anyone else you think might be able to help.

Good fishing and good luck!

**Julian Pepperell**

**Sam Williams**