

## Tournament combines with Citizen Science effort - Doug Sanderson

Among the studies being conducted in conjunction with GFAA club tournaments was Hervey Bay GFC's Garmin Fishing Classic for 2022 10th on 13th November 2022. Continuing the bumper small black season, the fish turned up in droves with 309 strikes resulting in 167 fish tagged for the 86 anglers on 26 boats – a great result. Tagged fish were 9 blue marlin , 144 black marlin, 2 sailfish ,1 cobia, , 4 mahi mahi ,1 longtail tuna, , 4 kawa kawa tuna and 2 Spanish mackerel.

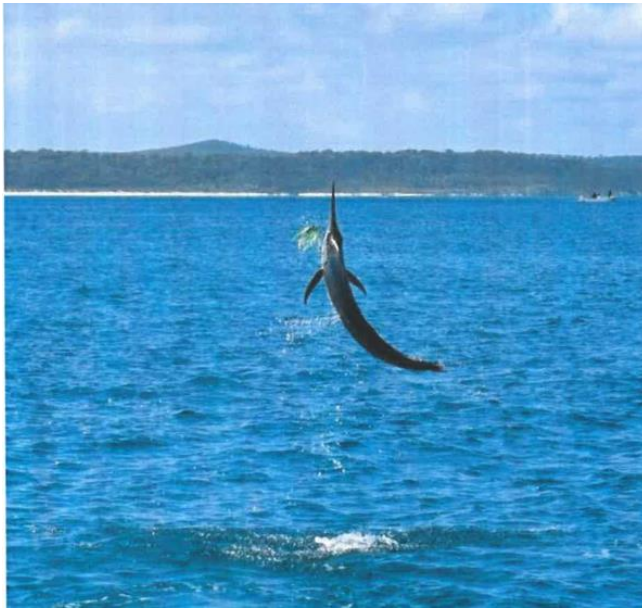
The blue marlin caught were relatively small fish up to an estimated 300lb, as were the blacks caught on heavy tackle in the range of 100-200lb. The lack of striped marlin was also notable . Many of the black marlin were truly micro versions, with the smallest fish being as little as 10lb. larger baby blacks were caught, though average fish seemed to be only 20-60lb.

GFAA `s Scientific Officer Dr Julian Pepperell requested the capture of four juvenile marlin in the tournament as the fish currently being caught were around 10 to 12 kg. Earlier in the year he had sampled four fish that were smaller and he felt a comparison would help to determine when the current cohort were being spawned, as part of a bigger research study including Northern Territory fish.

The heads were frozen and sent to a Melbourne laboratory where the otoliths, just a millimetre long are to be scanned under a microscope to determine the age of the fish, sometimes a few as 40 days old.



Needless to say ,the many marlin tagged are now part of the tagging research program supported by the NSW DPI.



### Winning Teams and Anglers

Champion team 7.5 m and over Chaos  
Champion team 7`5 m and under Seagull  
Champion boat inside the bay Ikanui  
Champion heavy tackle angler Josh Brazier  
Champion light tackle angler Adam Argus  
Champion female angler Mel Stewart

Winning Teams and Anglers  
Champion junior angler Gus Manning  
Champion Hervey Bay Club angler Sarah Best  
First Billfish for the tournament tagged on Ramppage  
Last Billfish for the tournament tagged on Athrill