



# The IGFTO Observer

*A newsletter for International Game Fish Tournament Observers*

Volume 4

Edition 1



*Observing Today ... Conserving Tomorrow*



Photos Provided by Richard Gibson

## IGFTO Offers Observer Exam for Experienced Mates & Captains

International Game Fish Tournament Observers is now offering IGFTO memberships to experienced and qualified mates and captains who pass a written test (soon to be available online) to determine your knowledge needed to serve as an IGFTO observer.

Applicants with sufficient experience and knowledge who pass the test will not be required to take the IGFA (International Game Fish Association) Observer Training Course, though less experienced observer applicants will be required to take the IGFA course.

Applicants wishing to take the written or online test may apply by contacting any IGFTO Director.

### Contact Us:

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IGFTO will offer a \$100 membership discount to members joining IGFTO within 30 days after completing the next IGFA Observer Training Course on Feb. 28 at VFW Post 10066, 1805 NE Savannah Rd., Jensen Beach, FL.

The class will be from 9 am to 1 pm and cost \$150, which includes a one-year IGFA membership. Applications are available on the IGFA and IGFTO websites.

### Welcome New IGFTO Members:

Liz Sizemore; Pompano Beach, FL  
Marty Shoemake; Hattiesburg, MS  
Thomas Jeziorski, Chicago, IL  
William Langam, Philadelphia, PA

## Observers Witnessed Record Numbers of Billfish Releases in 2014

IGFTO observers participated in 18 billfish tournaments in 2014, calling releases of 7,724 billfish in the Caribbean, Central America, US Virgin Islands and Florida.

Since IGFTO was founded in late 2009, observers participated in 63 tournaments in 12 countries, witnessing the catches & releases of 17,015 billfish.

*Left:* IGFTO Observer Terry O'Neill calls a sailfish release aboard Pirauga.

*Right:* IGFTO Observer John Treat watches as an angler fights a billfish on the A-Fin-Ity in Guatemala.



## IGFTO - Looking Ahead in 2015

IGFTO's 2015 tournament season starts in January with observers heading to Palm Beach, FL, for the 52nd annual Buccaneer Cup and Los Suenos, Costa Rica, for Leg I of the Triple Crown Billfish Series.

IGFTO will send observers to 16 tournaments this year in the Dominican Republic, Aruba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, USVI & the US.

## IGFTO Board restructures Management Team

*By IGFTO Co-Founder & Director John Treat*

IGFTO recently completed its 5th anniversary, having experienced significant growth in membership, number of countries we are observing and number of tournaments we participate today.

In order to manage this success, IGFTO has restructured its leadership team to make sure we manage all aspects of a growing organization and focus on the key challenges we now face.

Our greatest challenge is managing and coordinating all the International Billfish Tournaments we now participate. All of the hard work we have done to make ourselves an organization of seasoned, professional observers has paid off. We have strong credibility in the offshore fishing community and I expect to see more tournament officials requesting we be a part of their tournament plans.

Along with these happy thoughts bring many challenges for us to address and we need to have experienced leadership to take on those challenges.

At the IGFTO Annual Board Meeting Nov 1, 2014, John Treat asked Directors Steve Hargett and Greg Moore to oversee all IGFTO participating tournaments, including coordination with tournament directors and developing IGFTO coordinators for each tournament. Steve is responsible for tournaments in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Aruba and the July Open in St. Thomas. Greg is responsible for tournaments in Florida, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the AMBT in St. Thomas.

International Game Fish Tournament Observers Inc. is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt charitable organization dedicated to the preservation and conservation of game fish worldwide. We provide trained and insured observers to authenticate the "catch and release" of billfish and game fish during international big game fish tournaments.