



Observing Today ... Conserving Tomorrow

Go Pro Video Camera Takes a Dive as Observer Tags & Releases Blue Marlin

Capt. Scott Kozak usually fishes for king salmon and lake trout on Lake Michigan near his Toledo, Ohio home.

So, this new IGFTO observer and his wife, Alix, came a day early to the USVI July Open in St. Thomas, hoping to tag and release his first blue marlin.



Scott Kozak

He brought a tag stick and attached his go pro video camera over his visor to record the event.

Aboard the Black Pearl charter boat, with Capt. Jimmy Estraca and mate Dave Wikowski, Scott hooked up a 200+ lb. blue marlin that came up on the right rigger after a ballyhoo skirted with a blue and white islander. The boat backed down and Scott got back a lot of line, when suddenly the handle broke off the reel making it impossible to turn the spool. Scott grabbed the line attached to the fish while Dave made a blood knot to attach the line to another reel. Scott cut the line to the old reel and continued the 45-minute fight - the go pro camera recording all the action.

When the blue marlin finally came alongside the boat, Scott leaned over the boat and successfully tagged the fish. But his visor and the camera dropped into the ocean.

Scott hopes a big dolphin or wahoo gobbled up the camera and will one day be found by another angler.

It would be an interesting video to watch someday, he said. Hopefully the camera not only caught the marlin fight, but recorded plenty of sea life on its way to the bottom of the ocean.

If anyone in St. Thomas finds a camera inside a fish, please let Scott know. He can be reached at scott.kozak@igfto.org.

Scott, 53, a roofing company owner and charter boat captain, is a proponent of tagging and releasing fish. He and five other anglers recently tagged and released 75 yellow fin tuna off Boca Chica, Panama.

IGFTO Membership Applications are Available Online at www.igfto.org

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IGFTO Continues to Grow in 2013

IGFTO's membership growth has jumped by 46 % since the beginning of 2012 with 14 new members since January 2013.

This growth, along with our designation as a federally tax-exempt 501(c)3 charitable organization, brings new challenges and goals for the future of IGFTO.

At least 16 of our members will attend the Billfish Foundation Annual Awards Banquet on Nov. 1 in Fort Lauderdale, FL. This is the weekend of the Fort Lauderdale Boat Show. We have room for more IGFTO members to attend. Just send your tax-deductible donation of \$225 to IGFTO and we'll reserve your seats at our tables. Our presence at this event demonstrates our desire to support organizations also dedicated to conserve and preserve billfish worldwide.

The IGFTO Board of Directors will hold an annual meeting during the Nov. 1 week to plan for our organization's future. We will discuss ways to further IGFTO's mission to conserve and preserve game fish by advocating release tournament venues. Directors also will discuss developing educational programs.

4 IGFTO Ladies Observed at the 50th Annual USVI July Open in St. Thomas



Thank you to all who made memorial contributions to IGFTO in the name of Lee Fickinger who died in May. Tax-deductible donations in excess of \$2,300 were collected in his memory.

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Four new IGFTO women members observed during the 50th annual USVI July Open Billfish Tournament in St. Thomas last month. Lisa Hargett, Sine Mate, Kim Hermanowski and Pat Moore (left to right) were among 11 IGFTO observers who witnessed the catch and release of 39 blue marlin and 2 white marlin.

During her first tournament as an observer, Lisa rode along as a trainee with veteran observers during the first two days and observed on her own the final day. Kim trained in Cap Cana, DR, this year - as well as observing on her own there. Pat has observed since January and Sine has observed for more than a year.

"We're proud to join the other men and women IGFTO observers who work so hard to level the playing field in international billfish tournaments," Pat said.

The five other IGFTO lady observers with many more years of experience are Theresa Sheil, Carol Ott, Lyn Tayloe, Barbara Wolfe and Tracey Preston.