



The IGFTO Observer

A newsletter for International Game Fish Tournament Observers

Volume 3

Edition 2



Observing Today ... Conserving Tomorrow

IGFTO Works with IGFA at Observer Training Courses



IGFA Official Jack Vitek instructs an Observer Training Course in Jensen Beach, FL in March.

The International Game Fish Association's Observer Training Course instructor, Jack Vitek, invited experienced IGFTO observers to share their experiences during recent classes in Florida and California. The OTC course teaches observers IGFA angling rules, observer etiquette and billfish identification.

Vitek taught attendees at recent classes about a new IGFA rule change that states "a safety line may be to be attached to the rod, reel or harness provided that it does not in any way assist the angler in fighting the fish."

The new rule was adopted in an attempt to make the sport safer, but requires the safety line to remain loose when attached to the harness. The line may not become tight so that the angler may rest when fighting the fish. Previously, the safety line could not be attached to a harness.

IGFTO gained seven new members in the first quarter of 2014. They are Joseph Grzyyb of Stuart, FL; Brian Mayer of Bowie, MD; Joseph Yurillo of Jensen Beach, FL; Evan Hipsley Jr. of Pensacola, FL; Maureen Mascaro of Homestead, FL; Robert "Rick" Hersey of Port St. Lucie, FL and Stewart Smetts of Stuart, FL and Maineville, OH. Welcome Aboard!

Observers Witness Record Number of Billfish Releases

In the first quarter of 2014, IGFTO provided 64 observers to five international billfish tournaments, where record numbers of billfish were caught and released in accordance with IGFA rules.

With the astonishing releases of 5,153 sailfish and marlin during the three Los Suenos Triple Crown Series tournaments in Costa Rica and 137 releases in Florida and the Dominican Republic tournaments, observers have already witnessed 60% more releases this year than in all of 2013.

Since IGFTO was formed in September 2009, observers have called releases of 14,300 game fish in 11 countries.

IGFTO applauds all tournament directors who require releasing game fish to preserve them for future generations of boat owners, captains, anglers and mates to experience the thrill of big game fishing.

Educational Outreach

IGFTO Observers recently presented educational programs to fishing clubs in West Palm Beach and Stuart, FL.

They distributed hundreds of flyers, newsletters and bucket stickers at tournaments around the world in an effort to spread the IGFTO mission of conserving game fish through catch and release venues.

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

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Future Tournaments For IGFTO Observers

IGFTO Observers will be heading to international big game fish tournaments in Cap Cana, Dominican Republic; St. Thomas, USVI; Costa Rica, Aruba and Guatemala in 2014.

The IGFTO Board of Directors also is working with tournament directors in Puerto Rico and Nicaragua on plans to supply IGFTO observers to tournaments in those countries in the near future.

As a member of IGFTO, you will receive email notifications of future tournament observer packages as soon as they become available.

IGFTO member observers have liability insurance coverage while participating in international game fish tournaments.

We proudly wear our blue IGFTO observer shirts as notification to boat owners, captains and crews that we are trained and serious about our roles of making sure all teams compete on a level playing field.

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.