



The IGFTO Observer

A newsletter for International Game Fish Tournament Observers

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Eight Tournaments added to IGFTO 2014 Schedule

Observing Today ... Conserving Tomorrow

Observer Training Course offers Discounted IGFTO Memberships

IGFTO will offer a \$100 membership discount to new members who complete the International Game Fish Association Observer Training Course on Feb. 28 at the VFW Post, 1805 NE Savannah Rd., Jensen Beach, FL.

Observers joining IGFTO within 30 days of completing the Feb. 28 course will make a \$100 contribution to IGFTO rather than the standard \$200 first-year membership.

Each new IGFTO member receives an IGFTO dress shirt, IGFTO "Denali" work shirt, IGFTO workbook and will be covered by the IGFTO blanket liability insurance policy.

"The IGFA and IGFTO are excited about training anglers around the world to participate as observers in the growing number of tournaments that need these qualified officials," said IGFA OTC instructor Jack Vitek.

"Observers not only create a level playing field in these prestigious tournaments, they also promote the safe release of billfish, to ensure they are around for future generations to enjoy."

The Feb. 28 class will be from 9 am to 1 pm and costs \$150, which includes a one-year membership to the IGFA. Applications are available on the IGFA and IGFTO websites.

IGFTO Welcomes Members

Four new members joined IGFTO in the third quarter of this year.

Welcome aboard:

Ronald Haven of Jensen Beach, FL
Gerard Weber of Pompano Beach, FL
Charlie West of Jupiter, FL
David Skinner of Fort Pierce, FL.

Educational Outreach

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



IGFTO observers at the Flor de Caña International Billfish Tournament in Nicaragua in August

IGFTO added eight additional tournaments to its 2014 schedule, providing observers to 18 billfish tournaments in ten countries in the Caribbean, US Virgin Islands, Central America and the United States.

New to the schedule were the Big Five Fishing Open, the White Marlin Classic, the Cap Cana Classic Blue Marlin and Casa de Campo International Blue Marlin tournaments in the Dominican Republic; the Flor de Caña International Billfish Tournament in Nicaragua, the International Billfish Tournaments in Puerto Rico and El Salvador and the Stuart Light Tackle Tournament in Florida.

"We hope to supply greater numbers of IGFTO member observers to each of these tournaments next year," IGFTO Director John Treat said. "We are looking for experienced boaters and fishermen, trained in IGFA fishing rules, etiquette and species identification, to join us as we participate in more and more tournaments."

Rick Alvarez, director of International Billfish Tournaments Inc., is one of many tournament directors to advocate the use of observers in all release tournaments.

"Even more in multi-species tournaments and those where gaming is involved for the purposes of raising funds for charities as is our case," he said. "Release tournaments that use video confirmation or photo confirmation run the risk of a number of rule infractions that can occur when the video camera is not rolling or when the snapshot is taken."

So far in 2014, observers have witnessed more than 7,361 billfish releases, bringing the total to more than 16,700 releases since IGFTO was formed five years ago.

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

Contact Us:

John Treat, Director
john.treat@igfto.org
401-523-8700

Steve Hargett, Director
steve.hargett@igfto.org

Terry O'Neill, Director
terry.oneill@igfto.org

Greg Moore, Director
greg.moore@igfto.org

Bob Stimolo, Director
bob.stimolo@igfto.org

Pat Moore, Webmaster
webmaster@igfto.org

**IGFTO
P.O. Box 123
Bristol, RI 02809-0123**

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.