



Observing Today...Conserving for Tomorrow

The IGFTO Observer

A newsletter for International Game Fish Tournament Observers

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LIVIN' THE DREAM Scott Kozak

by Art McDonald

Don't we all dream about taking 6 months out of our humdrum worlds – sit on the beach in some exotic locale, go fishing whenever we want, and just “chill out?” Welcome to the world of IGFTO member Scott Kozak.

Born in Ohio (don't confuse his Ohio roots – he's an avid University of Michigan Wolverine), Scott began fresh-water fishing as a youngster in the Great Lakes – mostly for Walleye, Perch, Salmon, and Trout. In 2012 he discovered salt water fishing on the Atlantic coast specializing in both Tuna & Sailfish. Expanding his interest, he became involved in several tuna tagging trips to Panama with the Atlantic Tuna Project in 2012 and 2013 – and, as he says, “the fire was lit.”

A Seasoned Observer

He joined the IGFTO in June 2013 and participated, as an Observer, in several billfishing tournaments in the Caribbean and Central America. He credits his IGFTO membership with introducing him to some of the foremost anglers and crews on the Circuit and began, in 2014, concentrating his fishing mostly



Observer extraordinaire Scott Kozak on board the 42' Maverick "Pacific Fly".

The previous edition of this IGFTO Newsletter featured an article entitled “Busman's Holiday” where four IGFTO members (including myself and president Steve Hargett) made an overnight seamount/FAD trip releasing a total of twelve marlin in 18 hours of fishing (11 Blues & 1 Black) – not shabby at all!

in Costa Rica – tagging and releasing hundreds of billfish. Scott and his wife own Manchester Roofing in Toledo, Ohio, a large-scale commercial/industrial business. Their business involves large roofing projects such as manufacturing plants, schools, and hospitals. Fortunately, for the Kozaks, their son, Philip runs the day-to-day operations while they are in Costa Rica from November to May – Livin’ the Dream.

A Charter Boat Owner

In 2016 Scott and his family purchased a home in Quepos, CR, and soon after bought an inshore charter boat, the Chloe Frijole (say that a couple of times). In 2017, Scott purchased the Pacific Fly, a 42’ Maverick sport fishing yacht. Pacific Fly is available for charter year-round and specializes in tournament fishing and offshore seamount/FAD (Fish Aggregating Device) trips.

A Rancher

Recently, Scott also purchased Rancho Pacifica, a small ranch outside Quepos where fishing friends and clients can stay. It’s conveniently located only seven minutes from Quepos airport, and fifteen minutes from Marina Pez Vela, where he docks his boat.

And an Angler

Scott is an accomplished angler, placing in several billfish tournaments. He is also the recipient of the West Palm Beach Fishing Club International Angler Award. In 2016, he was nominated for the International Game Fish Association’s (IGFA) Chester H Wolfe Outstanding Sportsmanship Award. Scott is the IGFA representative in Ohio, a Board Member of the Tournament Anglers Association, and member of the Billfish Foundation.

Los Sueños Signature Series Triple Crown

Legs 1, 2, & 3 – 2019

Story by Art McDonald

- Leg 1: Jan 16-19
- Leg 2: Feb 27-March 2
- Leg 3: March 27-30



Los Sueños, Costa Rica is just one of those places I can’t wait to visit each year. We all know the beauty and ambience of this incredible place, but it’s the fishing that makes your blood begin to boil when the Los Sueños Signature Series Triple Crown beckons. The tournament concept is simple –

Day 2 saw some jockeying for position with “Family & Friends” forging into the lead with 2,600 points, followed closely by “Reel Pushy” (2,500 points), and “Fish Tank” with 2,400 points. Day 3 was owned by “Fish Tank” who blew away the fleet by adding another 2,400 points to their impressive total of 4,600 for the overall win. Automatically, “Fish Tank” becomes the leader going into the second leg. Totals: 648 billfish released – 582 sailfish and 66 marlin.

Leg 2: It was obvious from the start that the bite was on when,

there are three legs, each leg consists of 3 fishing days, and each leg has a first, second and third place winner. At the end of the third leg, all the points are totaled to determine the first, second and third place Grand Champions for the entire tournament.

Each sailfish released earns 100 points – each marlin (any species) racks up 500 points. This year, there were 46 participating boats. Each boat carries a fishing team and a captain and crew and these men and women comprise some of the best fishing people on the planet. Each boat also carries an observer and this year a total of 101 IGFTO members represented our organization (several attending all 3 legs).

Blue IGFTO shirts were EVERYWHERE!

Leg 1: Leg 1 started out slow, compared to what was to come.

8:00 a.m., with lines in the water, the radio immediately woke up with the first Sailfish at 8:05 a.m., released quite appropriately by “Numero Ono”.

The lead changed often throughout the day, but by 4:00 p.m., lines out, we had 255 fish released (226 sailfish and 29 marlin). “The King & I” had the lead with five sailfish and three marlin for 2,000 total points.

at 10 a.m., the fleet had already released 160 sailfish – everybody was hot, but “Team Galati” was on fire with a total of 36 sailfish for the day which included 4 doubles, and finished with 3,600 points, slightly ahead of “Big O” (3,300 points), and “Mjolnir” (3,300 points). Day two - all eyes were on “Team Galati”, but they didn’t call in their first release until 9:06 a.m..

Meanwhile, “Fish Tank” and “Tarheel” were steadily picking off one Sailfish at a time but the “Galati” boys started their comeback with several sails and a marlin at 12:27 p.m. Not far behind was “Sea Angel” which came up with a sailfish at the last minute (3:59 p.m.), edging out “Team Galati” for the day.

But “Team Galati” was still in the lead. Could anybody knock them off their pedestal? They kept knocking, but nothing was going to stop “Team Galati” from finishing in first place with 8,600 points, followed by “Fish Tank” in second place with 8,200 points, and “Tarheel” finishing third with 7,600 points.

“Fish Tank” continues to lead in the overall with 12,800 points for legs one and two, well ahead of the closest runner up, “Team Galati” (9,900 points). Totals: 2,063 billfish released – 2,042 sailfish and 21 marlin – pretty impressive!



Just some of the many IGFTO observers that participated in Leg II of the Los Sueños Billfish Signature Series, ready for action.
Photo by Pepper Ailor

Leg 3: There was a lot on the line. But this time there were new names in the lead. “Uno Mas” took charge right out of the box and never looked back, even though “Big Oh” had them in their sights – as did “Hey Chama.” When the smoke cleared, “Uno Mas” had 5,000 points, “Big Oh” had 4,900, followed by Hey Chama” also with 4,900 points – missing second place on time by 28 minutes.

The Overall Championship: Naturally, everyone was trying to outscore “Fish Tank” for the overall championship. But “Fish Tank” added 31 sailfish 3 marlin for 4,600 leg 3 points, ending up in 6th place in leg 3. But those leg 3 points put them over the top allowing them to win the overall by an impressive 17,400 points. Congratulations to the “Fish Tank” team with Capt. Ben

Overall (Grand Championship):

- First Place: *Fish Tank* – 17,400 points
- Second Place: *Uno Mas* – 13,900 points
- Third Place: *Team Galati* - 13,800 points

Total Billfish:	Sailfish:	3,820
	Marlin:	125
	Total:	3,945
Number of Boats:		46
Average # Billfish/Boat:		85.8
Average Release:		Every 66 seconds

Few places in the world are comparable to fishing the Pacific waters off Los Sueños, and you’ll be hard pressed to find a more organized Tournament anywhere on the circuit. Thanks to Tournament Director Ashley Bretecher and her partner in crime, Tina Mueller.

DO YOURSELF A FAVOR – PUT THE LOS SUEÑOS SIGNATURE SERIES TRIPLE CROWN ON YOUR BUCKET LIST – Guarantee

Horning, Laura and Chris
Jessen, Kitt Toomey, Mike
Ivancevic, and Darren Helwig
and their crew for an impressive
showing!!

you won't be disappointed.

Pura Vida, mi amigo y amigas!



Boats at the ready - 5am on the dock in Los Sueños. Photo credit: Photo by Pepper Ailor

20 New Observers Join IGFTO

Largest Graduating Class to Date

February 2, 2019, Delray Beach, Florida. Captains and Fisherpeople looking to participate in big game tournaments traveled from as far away as New Jersey, Tennessee and Costa Rica to join the International Game Fish Tournament Observers in their mission to help preserve billfish and witness fair competition between tournament participants. Guest speaker Ellen M. Peel, president of The Billfish Foundation said "Congratulations, I know you

We're here for you.
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will help protect our precious billfish resource and provide tournament directors with an alternative to kill tournaments.”



Observer Training Courses Schedule

Saturday, April 27, 2019
Pensacola, FL

Friday, June 21, 2019
Virginia Beach, VA

Thursday, July 11, 2019
Los Sueños, Costa Rica

Saturday, November 9, 2019
Delray Beach, FL

Saturday, January 25, 2020
Delray Beach, FL

Welcome New IGFTO members

Congratulations to our new members who joined in the fourth quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019. A new record of 45 new IGFTO Observers was set. Florida boasted the most new members with 23. Nine call Costa Rica home. Three are from New Jersey. North and South Carolina, and Tennessee are

+1 (404) 386-3388

New Member Benefits have been added. Log in and check them out.

IGFTO Address Change

We have a new mailing address:

IGFTO
PO Box 7333
Gainesville, GA, 30504

Our Condolences

Our Condolences to Former IGFTO President John Treat on the passing of his wife Patti. A native of New Haven, CT, Patti was a former teacher and real estate representative. Patti and John were married 56 years, had two children and two grandsons.

Patti was a Master Gardener, a member of the National Organization of Italian American Women and the League of Women Voters, and a sponsor for UNICEF. She accompanied John attending numerous events of importance to the IGFTO and always added an extra touch of dignity and class.

We need also express our regret over the loss of Ken and Alice Simmons who died in a plane crash while enroute to the Bahamas in early February. Ken was a long-time IGFTO member who participated in numerous tournaments. Together they owned and managed the Simmons Veterinary Hospital which included a pet resort and hurricane shelter for pets. They

home to two each, Georgia, Louisiana, and Virginia are home for one each. Who traveled the furthest to join? Welcome Nicholas Charuhas from Brussels, Belgium

Welcome and congratulations to:

- Tyler Brielmayer..... Santa Rosa Beach, FL
- Alan Hand..... Winter Park, FL
- Thomas Arndt..... North Miami Beach, FL
- Serena Wilson..... West Palm Beach, FL
- Ed Hall..... Sunrise, FL
- Mark Chappell..... Treasure Island, FL
- Kenny Meyer..... Savannah, GA
- Karen Nix..... Moncks Corner, SC
- Terre Lewis..... Tequesta, FL
- Michael Moldenhauer..... Melbourne, FL
- Brien Johnson..... Jaco, Costa Rica
- Alcides Alfaro..... Quepos, Costa Rica
- Mike Walton..... Islamorada, TN
- Kurt Sloan..... Hobe Sound, FL
- Wolfgang Paul..... Boca Raton, FL
- David Esquivel..... Alajuela, Costa Rica
- Peter Jensen..... Delray Beach, FL
- Neil Harris..... Herradura, Costa Rica
- Deiby Jimenez..... Herradura, Costa Rica
- John Alexander Osorno..... San Jose, Costa Rica
- Rudy Dodero..... Jaco Beach, Costa Rica
- Wolfgang Schmolling..... Marco Island, FL
- Daniel OBryan..... Playas Del Coco, Costa Rica
- Jimmy Downey..... Marco Island, FL
- Adrian Walton..... Islamorada, FL
- Don Trevisani..... Miami, FL
- Mikkel Vestergaard..... Palmetto Bay, FL
- Mark Dixon..... Tequesta, FL
- Jamie Stampar..... Jupiter, FL
- Jeffrey Fabbri..... Hobe Sound, FL
- Sean Barber..... Treasure Island, FL
- Mike Cisneros..... Nashville, TN
- George Bihari..... Hollywood, FL
- Mel Franqui..... Boynton Beach, FL

were married for 33 years and had two sons. The Simmons were well known for their volunteer work both in Palm Beach County and the Bahamas.

Annual Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting.

Every month, your BOD meets via conference call, and once a year in-person, to discuss myriad action items and decision points relevant to IGFTO. Coinciding with Leg II of Los Sueños Signature Triple Crown, on February 27, 2019, the BOD huddled for three hours in Costa Rica and reviewed and approved minutes from both calendar year 2018 and January 2019 meetings encompassing many aspects.

Although not an all-inclusive list, items discussed included: membership growth, Observer Training Courses (content, location, and facilitator), Observer participation and tournament locations (including static, potential new venues, and corresponding statistics), technology enhancements, IGFTO apparel, BOD composition, sponsors (single and/or organizational), financials, and social media outreach.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

If you still haven't renewed your IGFTO membership for 2019 you will be removed from the membership list and lose your access to the member only pages

Miguel Huezos Guzman..... Puntarenas, Costa Rica
Doug Cook..... Lake Charles, LA
Audrey Callahan..... Cornelius, NC
Alan Carr..... Margate, NJ
Tara Lyall..... New Smyrna Beach, FL
Bob Kapp Sr..... Fair Play, SC
Rob Kapp Jr..... Cornelius, NC
Joshua Carr..... Jackson, NJ
Michael Dougherty..... Sewell, NJ
Nicholas Charuhas..... Brussels, Belgium
David Wessner..... Virginia Beach, VA

of igfto.org. Invoices were sent beginning in December of 2018. If you need another copy of your invoice please email webmaster@igfto.org. We hope you will continue with your membership which supports organizations such as The Billfish Foundation and the International Game Fish Foundation and help conserve our precious resource of game fish.

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.

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