



TAG FLAG

2010 Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament Announces the 2010 Championship Team.

Angler Rick Bothmer wins his first championship
 2nd place going to Kelly Schultze,
 3rd place going to John Jacobi
 4th place Greg Wallace.

The Tournament Anglers Association recently held the 20th Annual Sailfish Tournament in Ixtapa, Mexico. From the warm greetings of the Dorado Pacifico Hotel to the warm Mexico sun, 36 Anglers and 17 guests enjoyed a week of fishing, fun and good entertainment. It was an interesting week, as many guests arrived before the start date to get settled and do a little pre-tournament fishing. This proved to be quite an experience for members fishing on Friday who found themselves caught in a rather large, strong storm about mid-day.

Aboard the Don William was Tournament Chairman, Ed Lynch and long time friend, Gary Morgan. After working 5 sailfish in fairly calm seas during the morning hours to a little drizzle, the seas and sky opened up around 11:30 am and quickly pushed the wind to 25+ knots and

6-8 foot seas. Not a problem for a bigger boat, but the 28 foot Panga and all aboard were taking a beating. It took well over 3 hours to safely travel the 13 miles back to the Zihuatanejo Pier, where the life vests were quickly removed and the two headed back to Dorado Pacifico for hot showers and warming fluids. As Gary Morgan later commented, "I danced with the devil today". Similar stories were reported from other anglers, but all made it back unscathed.

This year, the Dorado Pacifico wanted to do something special for the 20th annual celebration and decided to make this year's event all outdoors. What a treat! The opening banquet was held in the Sunset Bar at poolside, which provided the perfect back drop for a beautiful sunset over the Pacific Ocean. The Tournament sponsors: Gloomis, Shimano, Hook & Tackle Clothing, L&S Bait, Grays

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It's Go Time for Eastcape

.....
 and Mr. Leimbach is getting it all dialed in.
You're in store for a great tournament.



The Sun Finally Sets on Ixtapa

After 20 years of great times and some pretty darn good fishing, the decimation of the fishery has forced a decision from the board to change our venue. What fish are left are jumping on the school bus to Cabo. President Jim Gill explains on page 2.



TAA Departs Ixtapa Venue

by Jim Gill
TAA President

Twenty years ago an angling exploration to Zihuatanejo was the genesis for Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament. The experimental tournament chaired by Rocky Franich and Arlen Steiner was a "big success...wow...perfect...wonderful...and everyone raved about the local atmosphere and fishing" reported the Tag Flag June 15, 1990 edition.

The Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament popularity was a chain reaction inspired by unprecedented release counts paralleled by tremendous atmosphere and good timing. Attracting new anglers, membership, families and friendships the "new" tournament soon replaced the vintage TOC and required instituting participation limits.

The attraction that inspired Ixtapa Tournament successes was its ultimate nemesis...the release count. During the tournament's prime ten year period, 1994 through 2003 the annual four day count averaged 198 releases and the per angler average was 6.12 releases. Whereas recent statistics 2004 through 2010 the annual four day count averaged 83 releases. The disappointing result totals from the past two years 2009 and 2010 garnering 40 and 17 releases respectfully.

Seventeen billfish releases by 36 anglers amplifies the current status of a depleted fishery and the daunting closure for a "big success...wow...perfect...wonderful experience".

The TAA board of directors with the support of current tournament chairman Steve Sears have made the difficult decision to change the winter tournament venue to Cabo San Lucas. Alternative dates and locations were considered for the 2011 tournament identifying significant improvement in

the Cabo San Lucas fishery coupled with the attraction of quality amenities, good atmosphere and convenience. The details of the event are included in this edition of the Tag Flag.

Contrary to the conservation efforts of TAA starting in 1990 with the introduction of catch and release, an emphasis on light tackle short timed releases and most recently circle hooks the fishery has suffered extensive depletion from abuse by illegal commercial fishermen and the continued kill by sport fishermen. Recognizing the severity of the abusive activities and potential destruction of the fishery TAA with the assist of Leonardo and local captains in 2007 presented a case study of the damage to the Zihuatanejo sport fishing industry and the need for government action.

Allegedly regulations were formulated limiting abusive commercial fishing tactics with marginal enforcement. Unfortunately reports substantiate that illegal activity appears to be on the increase. TAA will continue its efforts to communicate the positive results experienced in the Sea of Cortez and Baja California to encourage local officials in Zihuatanejo to take appropriate action to restore their gem.



"We're not here for a long time....we're here or a GOOD time" Bill Gillissie

Taxidermy, Old Harbor Outfitters, and Costa Del Mar were all represented with beautiful banners proudly displayed around the inside of the restaurant. As the sun was setting, Chairman, Ed Lynch, his wife Shana and Co-Chairman, Steve Sears and his wife Dorinda, greeted the guests and TAA members with a reception cocktail followed by an authentic and delicious Mexican buffet. As we opened the 2010 Tournament, we paused to remember the many past TAA members that were no longer with us, including Bill Gillissie who died in late 2009. The 2010 Tournament was dedicated to Bill, while Bill's wife, Karen, would join the tournament later in the week. Once the official business and event particulars were out of the way, a walk was taken down memory lane as stories were heard from Rocky Francich, John Jackson, Dick Wallace and others, about the early days of the TAA and Ixtapa Sailfish Tournaments. The stories really brought home one of the true reasons for the annual trip to Ixtapa, it's about more than fishing. Thank God, because fishing would prove to be the only challenge for 2010.



Blue Marlin (caught by Kelly Schulzke) and 2 Dorado. First fish of the tournament went to John Jacobi and last fish was caught by Ken Ponichtera with 35 minutes left in the day. High point for day one went to Kelly Schulzke with 250 points.

This strong storm was significant to the Tournament in that the water temperature became very inconsistent, there were huge bands of 75 degree water and the small pockets of water over 80 degrees were hard to find. Good blue water was 3 miles out and turning green at 14-15 miles. Fish became very scarce.

Day one (Monday) started off with the anglers having brunch in the front of the Hotel starting at 5:30 am. The excitement to get fishing was in the air and everyone wanted to get to the pier and board the boats. Right out of the gate there were a few hook ups and by the 10 am report 4 sails had be caught and released. Unfortunately the noon report did not show much improvement, and by 2 p.m. only a couple of additional sails had become available to the 36 anglers in 18 boats. By the time the last boat reported in, there were a total of 6 sails, 1 small

Day two proved to be a very frustrating day on the water with a total of two sails caught. The first fish, 3 hours into day two was caught by Rick Bothmer and the last fish caught by Allen Molle at 1:30 PM. A few Dorado appeared and put a couple of members on the board with 10 points.

Day three was an off fishing day and many anglers took their frustrations to the golf course, which for some, provided a source of humility and for others, great laughter. It appears that there is a different set of mechanics involved in swinging a golf club compared to the fine art of hooking a sailfish with circle hooks. Regardless, it was a fun day for all that finished off with a sunset cocktail party in the VIP suite, where once again the fun and laughter of the day's outings provided a nice break from the frustrations of the

elusive *Istiophorus platypterus* (sailfish). I hate it when fish are smarter than us.

Day four was much cooler than normal with rougher seas and high cloud cover most of the day. Life on the panga was filled with stories and observations about where all the fish had gone and what had happened to the plentiful fishing grounds that have come to be appreciated. Two minutes into the fishing day, Gary Morgan hooked the first fish and battled the beast to the side of the boat in a vicious fight, claiming 150 points and putting himself on the board as a contender for the top prize. Angler Greg Wallace took top points on day four with one sailfish and one Dorado, scoring 160 points.

Day five started with the Tournament wide open. Low fish count and low scoring throughout the week left an opportunity for any of the 36 anglers to sweep the Tournament. At ten minutes into the day, Neal McNamara scored his first sailfish and jumped on the scoreboard. The next fish, caught by Rick Bothmer, would put Rick in the winner circle with 450 points (3 sailfish). At the end of the day the final count would be posted with a



total of 16 Sailfish, 1-Blue Marlin and 9 Dorado. The low scoring fish count did not deter the group from celebrating 20 years of fishing the Ixtapa waters with captains and friends at the Mirador Bar, where prizes were presented to the captains. A special presentation of a memorial emblem of remembrance was presented to all the captains, celebrating our long time fellow angler Bill Gillissie's life.

Our top captain for the 2010 TAA Ixtapa Tournament was Jaime Vargas on his boat, Albatros.

The 2010 Ixtapa Tournament closed to a wonderful beach party and dinner fronting the Dorado Pacifico. The Dorado Pacifico Fire Dancers entertained the group with historic Mexican dances. Daniel, the wonderful chef at the hotel, prepared a spectacular buffet dinner beachside and we all stopped to give a warm "thank you" to our friends Luis, Ricardo, Daniel, Jesus and the entire staff of the Dorado Pacifico. After the presentation of awards to the top anglers, fireworks popped and banged and lit up the skies revealing some very dark rain clouds heading our direction. As we closed the tournament, in honor of Bill Gillissie, rain drops started to dance across the stage soon turning to showers. The entire group retreated to the piano bar, where member Gary Lucas sang "Rain Drops Keep Falling on My Head", followed by his heart-felt rendition of "One Ton Tomato".



Did someone go to



John Jackson, past TAA president gives us a bit of a history lesson on how we came to Ixtapa.

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Tournament Chairs

Many thanks to all who have stepped up to produce the finest fishing tournaments on this planet. If you haven't had the chance to chair, give it a try. Here's the list of all who are eager to help you.

Eastcape Billfish Tournament

1984 Tom Snyder/Neal McNamara
1985 Tom Snyder/Neal McNamara
1986 Tom Snyder/Neal McNamara
1987 Tom Snyder/Walt Godber
1988 John Jackson/John Zehnder
1989 No Tournament
1990 No Tournament
1991 No Tournament
1992 Bill Sangster/Jim DeWitt
1993 Walt Sparks
1994 Walt Sparks
1995 Mike Green/Jerry Yahiro/Alan Brittz
1996 Mike Green/Jerry Yahiro/Alan Brittz
1997 Terry Smith/Donna Smith
1998 Neal McNamara/John Jackson
1999 Neal McNamara/Darrell Ticehurst
2000 Neal McNamara/Steve & Debbie House
2001 Steve & Debbie House
2002 Steve & Debbie House
2003 Darrell Ticehurst
2004 Mike McElroy/Bill Evans
2005 Bill Evans/Neal McNamara/Dale Miles
2006 Dale Miles/Neal McNamera
2007 Dale Miles/Jim Severson
2008 Jim Severson/Bill Evans
2009 Bill Evans
2010 Keith Leimbach

Cabo Sailfish Tournament

2011 Steve Sears/Steve Lynch

Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament

1990 Rocky Franich
1991 No Tournament
1992 John Jackson/Bill Mazza
1993 John Jackson/Bill Mazza
1994 Neal McNamara/George Malloch
1995 Pat Snyder/Judy Franich
1996 Jim Gill/Pat Snyder/Judy Franich
1997 Alene Molle/Smokey Molle/Jim Gill
1998 Don Veninga/Alene Molle/Smokey Molle
1999 Don Veninga/Gary Lucas
2000 Gary Lucas/Bob Fox
2001 Bob Fox/Pete Davis
2002 Pete Davis/Steve Davis
2003 Steve Davis/Jack Betts
2004 Dale Miles/Neal McNamara
2005 Dale Miles/Dave Holland
2006 Dave Holland/Mike Hopley
2007 MikeHopley/Brian Hill
2008 Brian Hill/Rod Van Saun
2009 Rod Van Saun/Ed Lynch
2010 Ed Lynch/Steve Sears

Tournament of Champions

1983 Neal McNamara/Bill Hoey
1984 Neal McNamara/Roy Vallarino
1985 No Tournament
1986 Bill Mazza/Darrell Ticehurst
1987 Darrell Ticehurst/Jay deBeaubien
1988 George Malloch/Jim DeWitt
1989 Bill Hoey/Jay deBeaubien
1990 Dan Radman/Darrell Ticehurst
1991 Gary Morgan/Willie Brennan
1992 Gary Morgan/Willie Brennan
1993 Bill Mazza/Dan Radman
1994 Arlen Steiner/Jim Ramsey
1995 Dick Wallace/Greg Wallace



Ziahuatanejo Trial a Big Success

excerpt from June 15th, 1990 Tag Flag

As was mentioned in the last Tag Flag, about twenty members put together an experimental tournament in Ziahuatanejo this April.

And the report is:

"WOW! "

"Perfect!"

"Wonderful"

And a whole lot more very, very positive comments. Everyone raved about the hotel, the local atmosphere and the fishing.

Organized and chaired by Rocky Franich and Arlen Steiner, with an assist from TAA president John Jackson, the tournament was greeted by rave reviews from every quarter.

And this despite the fact that the fishing was scheduled during the slow fishing season. George Malloch didn't find the fishing slow though, he won it! We'll get to more on the results later, first let's here about the place.

Ziahuatanejo is the old city next to the modern tourist area of Ixtapa. They are on the same bay but separated by a few miles.

The Hotel Villa del Sol is located in Zihuatanejo and is in the "deluxe" category, but is intimate, with only 'about 30 rooms. Everyone raved over the hotel and liked the location. The atmosphere was gardenlike and very pleasant. Food was part of the room rate for this tournament and was rated good. It is possible to get a room rate without including food that would give members more flexibility in choosing their evening meal, and this would probably be best.

Fishing was done from "panga" type narrow outboard boats which had small cabins. Two anglers fished from each boat, each fishing

with two rods out. Both bait and lures were used. The fishing grounds were several miles out, but everyone felt the boats were fast enough to get there. Basically, the boats headed west until they found blue water, then they started trolling.

All anglers voiced their pleasure at fishing two to a boat.

The majority of the fish caught here are sailfish, so the rules called for 20 pound test. It was allowable to back down on a fish, but the outboards really aren't suited for backing, so mostly the angler's skill was required to tip a fish. All of the captains and mates were good and enjoyed the tournament format very much.

George Malloch won this first tournament with three sails released for the three days. TAA champion Neal McNamara did his usual expert job, releasing two and coming in second. No one else got more than one. Overall 18 sailfish were released for the three days, not good, but not bad either. All of the captains said that the time of year was wrong, which we knew, but the time scheduled was when it fit. The captains said the best time was in the fall, about when we hold the Tournament of Champions.

Maybe we should consider rescheduling the TOC and having a Ziahuatanejo tournament in November? More about this later.

The cost for this event was (and will be) slightly higher than for the TOC. The hotel is more expensive and fishing two to a boat costs more than fishing three to a boat. However, with the enthusiasm shown by everyone who went, it seems that you really get your money's worth.

**TAA CHAMPIONS****Eastcape Billfish Tournament****Overall Champion**

1984 Curtis Fitzgerald
 1985 Arlen Steiner
 1986 Walt Godber
 1987 Arlen Steiner
 1988 Andy Jacobi
 1989 No Tournament
 1990 No Tournament
 1991 No Tournament
 1992 Curtis Fitzgerald
 1993 Curtis Fitzgerald
 1994 Jim Gill
 1995 John Jackson
 1996 John Jackson
 1997 Dick Wallace
 1998 John Jackson
 1999 Dean Hafeman
 2000 John Zehnder
 2001 Neal McNamara
 2002 Neal McNamara
 2003 Jim Ramsey
 2004 Steve Lynch
 2005 Keith Leimbach
 2006 Ken Ponichtera
 2007 Richard Schwager
 2008 Paul Steigerwald
 2009 Neal McNamara

Tournament of Champions**Overall Champion**

1983 John Jackson
 1984 Vivian Caruso
 1985 No Tournament
 1986 Neal McNamara
 1987 George Hollander
 1988 Irene Raum
 1989 Andy Jacobi
 1990 Rocky Franich
 1991 Bill Sangster
 1992 Jerol Moore
 1993 Mike McElroy
 1994 Mike Green
 1995 Dan Radman

Cortez-Pacific Gamefish Tournament

1976 Bill Hoey
 1977 Marty Franich
 1978 Neal McNamara
 1979 Judy Franich
 1980 John Jackson
 1981 Ron Storm
 1982 Bob Manos
 1985 Bob Manos

Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament

1990 George Malloch
 1991 No Tournament
 1992 Neal McNamara
 1993 Walt Sparks
 1994 Smokey Molle
 1995 Alene Molle
 1996 Alene Molle
 1997 Jim Nottage
 1998 Smokey Molle
 1999 Dave Plut
 2000 Gary Lucas
 2001 Smokey Molle
 2002 Alan Molle
 2003 Andy Jacobi
 2004 Andy Jacobi
 2005 Jim Gill
 2006 Rocky Franich
 2007 Alan Molle
 2008 Brian Hill
 2009 John Jackson
 2010 Rick Bothmer

International Roosterfish Tournament

1969 Fred Stockman
 1970 Fred Stockman
 1973 Bob Manos
 1974 Bob Manos
 1975 Fred Stockman
 1977 Fred Stockman
 1980 Neal McNamara
 1982 Fred Stockman
 1983 Curtis Fitzgerald
 1986 John Jackson
 1987 Walt Godber
 1991 Walt Godber
 1992 John Jackson
 1995 Bob Roberts
 1996 Steve Martin
 2008 Rocky Franich

Tournament of Champions Expert Division

1983 Paul Raum
 1984 Vivian Caruso
 1985 No Tournament
 1986 Jay deBeaubien
 1987 George Hollander
 1988 Irene Raum
 1989 Willie Brennan
 1990 John Zehnder
 1991 Bill Sangster
 1992 Jerol Moore
 1993 Bill Crozier

1994 Mike Green
 1995 Dan Radman

Classic Billfish Tournament

1975 Guy Billups
 1979 Dave Nottage
 1979 Judy Franich
 1981 Bill Hoey
 1983 Walt Godber
 1984 Bill Hoey

International Sailfish Tournament (Costa Rica)

1995 Alene Molle
 1998 Joan Vernon
 2000 Joan Vernon

One-Day Tournament--Cabo

1985 Sanbo Sakaguchi

Eastcape Billfish Tournament Challenge Division

1998 Keith Leimbach
 1999 Dean Hafeman
 2000 John Zehnder
 2001 Jerry Yahiro
 2002 Dale Miles
 2003 Jim Ramsey
 2004 Steve Lynch
 2005
 2006 Ken Ponichtera
 2007 Richard Schwager
 2008 Paul Steigerwald
 2009 Jerry Zavalney

Rolex/IGFA Offshore Championship

2001 Neal McNamara

HIBT/Pro-Am

1995 Mike McElroy
 2003 Rocky Franich



Steve and Dorinda Sears will be your host for the inaugural Cabo San Lucas Tournament

When Andrea Holland got the call at 6 am to be a relief angler, "you have to be kiddin me" was her response.

Little did we know, she landed her first sail behind those Gucci sunglasses. >>>>>>>>



Calendar

**May 9-14 2010
Offshore World
Championships,
Cabo San Lucas**

**June-4-6, 2010
Eastcape Billfish
Tournament**

**January 2011
Ixtapa Sailfish
Tournament**