

**33nd Annual North Carolina Ducks Unlimited
Band the Billfish Tournament Rules**
www.ncdubillfish.com

1. This is a rod and reel, hook and line tournament. Double line and leader combined may not exceed 40 ft.; neither of which may exceed 30 ft. The following practices are illegal in this tournament: a) use of handline or rope attached to the line or leader; b) shooting, harpooning, or lancing; and c) the transfer of any participant from one boat to another to aid in the landing of the fish. Non-offset circle hooks are mandatory when deploying natural bait or natural bait/artificial lures. "J" hooks are allowed on artificial lures only.
2. All boats must be entered and all fees paid prior to fishing to qualify for prizes, trophies and awards. In the event of mechanical breakdown after the start of the tournament a substitute boat may be allowed. Any change of vessels from the original registration must be submitted and approved by the Tournament Committee and will be allowed only if the original boat becomes disabled. Failure to receive approval will result in disqualification. **Any request to withdraw a boat and receive a refund of category funds only must be received in writing by 9:00 am on Thursday.**
3. All boats must be represented at the Captains' meeting held on July 21, 2021 at 7:00 pm (location TBD due to Covid-19). All participants are expected to have read and comply with the rules, including any changes that may take place at the Captains Meeting, and agree to comply with them. Signature of the entry form constitutes acknowledgement of rules compliance.
4. **Fishing days – participants choose 2 of the 3 following days:**
 - **Day 1** - Thursday, July 22, 2021 - 9:00 – 3:00 PM
 - **Day 2** - Friday, July 23, 2021 – 9:00 – 3:00 PM
 - **Day 3** - Saturday, July 24, 2021 – 8:00 – 2:00 PM

Lay Day forms must be submitted prior to 9 AM of the declared Lay Day. Completed Lay Day forms can be photographed and emailed to mshouse@localfirstbank.com or texted to 910-358-5080.

Scales will close at 6:30 p.m. on Day 1 and Day 2, and at 5:30 p.m. on Day 3.

No vessel or team is to deploy any lines, teasers, dredges, chum or bait prior to the official starting times or after the daily stop time. Official Fishing time is Continuous GPS time.

All billfish must be reported to TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS when hooked, lost, boated or released. Radio frequency shall be **VHF CHANNEL 72**. Fish hooked prior to or

after fishing hours are not eligible. Saturday may be played until caught or released. Official weigh station will be the Big Rock Weigh Station unless other weigh stations are designated by the Rules Committee. The weigh-in deadline will be extended for boats which are fighting a billfish at the end of each day. However, once the fight is over the captain must make every effort to get to weigh-in as quickly as possible.

5. All fishing will be done between Loran coordinates North 40275 and South 39200. Any fish hooked up outside these boundaries will be disqualified.
6. Score sheets must be turned in before the scales close each day at the tournament headquarters located at the Big Rock Weigh Station. Score sheets showing catch and daily points (in categories) must be signed by the team captain and the boat captain. Score sheets will be in the captain's bag and will be available at the tournament headquarters daily at the Big Rock Weigh Station. Score sheets can be emailed to mshouse@localfirstbank.com or texted to 910-358-5080 prior to close of the scales each day.
7. Protests must be submitted in writing and turned in to the tournament officials before 6:30 p.m. on Day 1 and Day 2 and 5:30 p.m. on Day 3 or within 1/2 hour after the fish is officially weighed, whichever is later. Any decision by the Tournament Rules Committee will be final.
8. There is no Weather Committee. The choice to fish is by team or captain's discretion.
9. The tournament will recognize a 110" minimum length and/or 400 pounds on Billfish to be weighed. This length is measured from tip of lower jaw to the fork of the tail. Any fish brought to the dock less than 110" and 400 pounds will be disqualified. In the event a blue marlin does not meet these qualifications, the fish will be disqualified, and the boat will be penalized four hundred pounds from the weight of the largest blue marlin weighed in by the boat during the week. In addition, a penalty of four hundred points will be taken away from the total of release points accumulated by said boat. No official weigh slip will be given for any disqualified fish. In the event a blue marlin is boated or gaffed, the fish shall be presented at the official weigh station; if not presented the 400 point penalties will incur. A fish is boated when it breaks the plane of the boat. The weigh master has the right to refuse any fish in his sole discretion. Additionally, all fish must adhere to State and Federal Fisheries regulations to qualify for prizes in this tournament.
10. To be considered a release, the crew cannot have attempted to boat or gaff the fish. In order for a billfish to be counted as a release, a member of the fishing team or crewmember must touch the leader **or the leader touches the rod tip**. A fish is boated when any portion of the fish breaks the plane of the boat. A released Blue Marlin will be awarded 400 points. All other released billfish will be awarded 150 points. All

billfish are to be released except those in excess of 110" fork length or 400 pounds, and then it is up to the crew whether or not they want to take the fish. Billfish which meet a minimum (110" and/or 400 lbs.) to 499 lbs. will be awarded 1 point per pound. Billfish which weigh 500 lbs. to 699 lbs. will be awarded 2 points per pound. Billfish weighing 700 lbs. and over will be awarded 3 points per pound.

You must enter Level I to enter Level III!

11. Any billfish gaffed or boated to determine if it meets minimums is a taken fish and is not eligible for release points. All fish except taken fish must remain in the water to be counted as a released fish. Nothing can be put inside any fish to enhance its weight; i.e. water, ice, weights or other fish.

12. All participating boats must adhere to state and federal regulations to qualify for prizes. Atlantic Tuna/ HMS Permit Required - Automated Permitting System - 888-USA-TUNA (872-8862). Permits may also be obtained at www.hmspermits.noaa.gov

All participants must adhere to the North Carolina Coastal Recreational License. Call 1-800-682-2632 or DMF 1-252-756-7021 for information.

13. All fish must be weighed in on the day they are caught and must be in fresh edible condition fit for human consumption. One wahoo, tuna (yellowfin, bigeye) and dolphin (sport fish) may be weighed by each boat per day. The total poundage of these fish will serve as tie breakers for awards and prizes in the Grady-White/Radio Island Marina (Level I) & Transportation Impact (Level II) Categories. Only one of each species of fish per boat can be weighed per day. Gamefish to be weighed may be transported to the weigh station by chase boat or on board the boat on which the fish was caught with the daily catch report and a member of the fishing team. Gamefish only break ties and cannot win anything by themselves except designated sport fish categories. The largest dolphin can count in both the White's Tractor & Truck Gamefish and the First Bank Largest Dolphin Categories. **If no qualifying gamefish are caught in the Gamefish category, the tournament will retain the money.**

14. If there is only 1 winner in Level I or Level II categories then they take 100%, if only 2 winner's prize money will be split 60% - 40%. If no winners in Level I and Level II, then those respective monies will be returned. If one or two of the gamefish species are not weighed in, then that winning money will be pro-rated between the other winners in the White's Tractor and Truck Gamefish Category. **If no qualifying fish is weighed in the largest blue marlin category (over 500 pounds) the total amount of the prize money from this category will be paid out under the rules of Level I to boats entered in Level I.**

15. **OUTBOARD LEVEL \$500** - Entry in this level is restricted to outboard boats only. No inboards, inboard-outboards, jet powered or airboats permitted. No sailboats permitted. Any hybrid or combination engine boat will not be eligible for prizes in this level. To be eligible for prize money, a blue marlin must weigh at least 400 pounds or measure at least 110". If no blue marlin are caught, the winners will be determined by release points. If no billfish are caught or released, winners will be determined by the largest gamefish, (yellowfin tuna, dolphin, wahoo). **Prize money for the Outboard Level is as follows: 50%/first place, 30%/second place and 20%/ third place or 60/40 for two places.** Winners may be polygraphed. All other NCDU Billfish Tournament rules are enforced for this level. Entrants must enter Category #1 Tournament Entry and may enter additional levels as stated in NCDU Billfish Tournament rules.
16. Photo Verification – The NCDU Band the Billfish scoring staff will verify the species at the Weigh Station Scoring tent. Bring photo verification of a blue marlin release with your scorecard. The following qualify for verification although video is the easiest form to confirm: date/time stamped photography and video and/or dated cell phone photos or video. All photos and video become the property of NCDU Band the Billfish upon completion of scoring. Boats not able to present readily viewable video or photo evidence of a blue marlin that is time/date stamped will be awarded 150 release points (same as white marlin or sailfish).
17. All money winners shall be subject to a Polygraph test (captains or mates only) at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. Refusals to take the test will result in immediate disqualification. Any candidate who is impaired by drugs or alcohol will immediately cause their boat to be disqualified.
18. Sport fish (tuna/dolphin/wahoo) of the boat will serve as tie breakers for Youth and Lady Angler.
19. Tournament winner is the boat with the most points. Prizes will be split if there is a tie after sport fish tiebreakers.
20. Weighed fish remain the property of the boat on which they were caught.
21. Rulings of the committee on all issues will be **FINAL**
22. All releasing and taking of Billfish must be radioed to the committee boat immediately.

23. Fish can be transferred to another boat to meet the weigh in deadline. They must be accompanied by the angler, responsible team member and with the daily catch report.
24. All Prize monies will be mailed to the respective winners within 10 days of the completion of the tournament.
25. **Binding Arbitration** - In the event the Tournament Organizers/Rules Committee cannot render or refuses to render a final and binding decision with respect to any dispute, claim, difference, or controversy under review, the matter shall be resolved by binding arbitration under the commercial arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association. The decision rendered in arbitration shall be in writing and shall be final and binding upon all parties. The parties shall have no further recourse, except as provided for by the commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Once the decision is rendered, it will produce the effect of “res judicata” and the parties shall fully comply with the decision without delay. The participants specifically waive any right to a trial by judge or jury.

*Rules may be changed by tournament committee. Any changes will be announced at the Captains Party meeting July 21, 2021.

FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS - All vessels and participants shall comply with North Carolina and Federal Fisheries laws and regulations regarding fishing licenses, vessel permits, fishing gear, season size limits and bag limits. Participants shall also adhere to all NC Ducks Unlimited Tournament rules as contained herein.

26. **DISPUTE RESOLUTION** – A protest by one participant against the catch of another must be submitted in accordance with Rule 16. All other disputes, controversies, or claims of any kind arising out of or relating to the Tournament (hereinafter, “dispute” or “disputes”), including, but not limited to, all disputes concerning decisions by Tournament Officials, Boards, or Committees, must be submitted in writing to the Rules Committee no later than 5:00 p.m. on the last fishing day of the Tournament. Failure to submit any such disputes in writing by that date and time shall constitute a waiver and release of any and all such disputes.

In the event of any dispute arising out of or relating to the Tournament in any way, the interested parties shall use their best efforts to settle such dispute by mutual agreement. To this effect, responsible, authorized representatives of the interest parties shall meet, consult, and negotiate with each other in good faith (with or without a third-party mediator, as they may choose) and attempt to reach a mutually satisfactory solution. In the event they do not reach such a solution within a period of five (5) days after the first notice by any party to any other of the existence of the dispute, then without waiving any other provisions in these Rules concerning the absolute discretion and finality of decisions made by the Tournament Officials, Boards, or Committees, the sole and exclusive means for resolution of any dispute shall be the

procedures set forth below:

- a) The dispute shall be submitted to arbitration under the North Carolina Revised Uniform Arbitration Act, Chapter 1, Article 45C of the North Carolina General Statutes.
- b) All negotiations, mediations, and arbitration hearings shall take place in Morehead City, North Carolina, or such other places the interested parties may agree upon in writing.
- c) The arbitration shall be conducted by a single arbitrator who is a retired North Carolina state or federal judge or an attorney whose practice experience includes commercial litigation. The arbitrator must be a resident of the State of North Carolina. In the event the interested parties cannot agree upon an arbitrator, the decision shall be made by a Resident Superior Court Judge of Carteret County, North Carolina.
- d) Prior to any arbitration hearing, limited discovery shall be permitted for the purpose of obtaining production of documents and taking depositions. All discovery shall be governed by the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure. All issues regarding discovery requests shall be decided by the arbitrator. All discovery shall be completed within 90 days after the selection of the arbitrator; provided, however, that the arbitrator shall have the authority to extend or reduce the time for discovery in a manner consistent with a general desire for expedited resolution of the dispute.
- e) All fees and expenses for the arbitration shall be borne by the parties equally. However, each party shall bear the expense of said party's own counsel, experts, witnesses, and preparation and presentation of proofs. Only in the case of extreme abuse of the procedure may the arbitrator reallocate such costs and expenses among the parties.
- f) Any arbitral award may be enforced by an action in the Superior Court of Carteret County.

The terms and conditions of this Agreement shall be construed, interpreted, and enforced under the laws and judicial decisions of the State of North Carolina, notwithstanding any principle of conflicts of law. In the event any part of this Agreement shall be declared illegal, invalid, or void, such declaration shall not affect the validity of any of the other terms or provisions of this document.

- 27. VIOLATION OF RULES** - Any boat violating any of these Tournament Rules or any boat containing a participant violating any of these Tournament Rules is subject to disqualification from the Tournament (unless another sanction for a particular violation is expressly set forth herein). By participating in the Tournament, all participants acknowledge that all Tournament Rules are material and that disqualification is a permitted and appropriate sanction for any violation of any Tournament Rules. Decisions regarding the interpretation of Rules, violation of Rules, penalties, and the suspension of any Rules or penalties will be made by Rules Committee and/or Board of Directors in their sole and absolute discretion. All decisions by Rules Committee and/or Board of Directors are final and are not subject to further challenge by participants.