

## 2012 LUHRS BILLFISH SHOOTOUT

A record number of 96 boats competed in the annual Port Stephens Luhrs Billfish Shootout. Luhrs Boats Australasian distributor BlueWater Power Yachts provided \$10,000 for the Champion Tag & Release Team, and Isuzu Australia \$10,000 for the heaviest marlin weighed.

The forecast was for perfect conditions and the weather bureau was spot on. Blue skies, blue water, light sea-breezes, and most importantly, plenty of the main attraction free-jumping up and down the shelf in the fishing area. The stars were aligned for both days.

Inevitably, on Day 1, most of the fleet hot tailed it to the renowned Car Park area. You didn't need any marks or a GPS to find this local hot-spot and tags were being reported straight after fishing commenced. At tools down, two local boats were neck and neck with "Gunrunner" Skipper Scott Lee and "The Force" Skipper Shayne Wilson each tagging 6 marlin, but "Gunrunner" took the honours when taking line class into account. A lot of the fleet elected to fish 15Kg and had been practising their techniques for a quick fight, tag & release. In NSW tournaments, a fish isn't counted until it is released.

The chase for the heaviest marlin was a hotly contested with 4 marlin weighed ranging up to 236.1 kilo, the heaviest being caught by the boys aboard "Ba'Ja". Minimum weight for this tournament is 150Kg and anglers call in short lengths and estimated weights prior to putting the gaff in. It's a good system.

The fleet departed Port Stephens early on Sunday and sped to the shelf. Within the first 2 hours many were hooked up during the early bite. As the tags & position reports were called through, most converged on The Car Park, making it entertaining if one kept ones sense of humour. There was plenty of ducking and weaving as boats tried to stay on fish and keep out of the way of others fighting fish. Fishing live baits deep, many fish were coming to the surface and jumping alongside another boat before the anglers had struck. It was definitely spectacular & exciting fishing. There were often 5 or 6 boats hooked up at once and all madly reversing through the crowd. Most Skippers did the right thing.

Privateer (a Luhrs 41 Open) came down from Mooloolaba in QLD for the weekend. Saturday was a bad day for the visitors, with no fish tagged. It was incredibly frustrating to have boats hooked up all around with not even a bite. However, experienced local angler & lure-maker Mario Zac kindly gave the visitors some tips on how to pull fish out from amongst the crowd over a cool ale (or 3) on Saturday afternoon. Following his advice they went out and tagged 4 fish on Sunday to give one of the visiting anglers his first marlin and another 2 their grand slams of blue, black and striped species. Owners Mick & Bob said it was the most exciting fishing they'd ever experienced and the whole crew vowed to come back next year.

"Gunrunner" took advantage of their Day 1 lead by adding another 7 tags; whilst the battle for the minor placing saw a charge from behind from boats including "Diversion" adding 5 tags, "Calypso" added 4 tags for a total of 9, and "Pelagic" tagged 8. Overall, 189 marlin were tagged in the 2 days.

At game-over, "Gunrunner's" ever consistent and skilful Skipper Scott Lee clinched a well-deserved victory for his crew aboard winning champion boat T&R with 13 fish to take home the \$10,000 from Luhrs / BlueWater Power Yachts. Angler Jason Lee caught 12 of the 13. Because the Luhrs Billfish Shootout is a qualifying event, the "Gunrunner" team also won the right to enter the prestigious IGFA Offshore World Championships in May 2013. "Gunrunner" is a family amateur boat so winning the Luhrs Billfish Shootout against a lot of "gun" pro-skippers is a tremendous achievement. Father Barry is definitely & justifiably a proud man.

Tag & Release prizes were paid back to 10th place with "The Force" (10 tags), "Calypso" (9 tags), "Diversion" (8), "Pelagic" (8), "Anarchy" (6), "Shakara" (5), "Born Free" (5), and "Tonlu 2" (5) sharing a combination of cash and prizes from Club Marine insurance, Zacatak Lures, Costa & Flying Fisherman Sunglasses, Mavericks on the Bay, and ABL lures

The Capture section benchmark was set high on Day 1 by "Ba'Ja" with their 236.1 kilograms blue marlin, and Skipper Jamie Cook from Lake Macquarie GFC took out the \$10,000 Isuzu Heaviest Marlin prize.

2012 Luhrs Champion Junior Male Angler is Ethan Henderson (tagging 2 marlin), Skipper Jamie Henderson's youngest son onboard "Everwilling" and Champion Junior female went to Amy McAndrew (tagging 4 fish) fishing with Capt. Dave McAndrew (AKA Dad) onboard "Shelby". The Peter Goadby Encouragement Award went to "Viking 2" as they just missed out on a prize due to the count back system.

Entries are limited because of space at Nelson Bay, and with so many boats attending this year the cut off target of 100 is certainly going to fill very quickly for 2013 so don't forget to enter early.

The Luhrs Billfish Shootout has a number of unique features including:

- It is a Billfish only tournament. No other species count for points.
- Tag & Release prizes are paid back to 10th place. 1st prize is \$10,000 from BlueWater Power Yachts, Australasian Distributor for Luhrs Sportfishing Boats.
- Capture has a 150Kg minimum weight. One prize only. \$10,000 from Isuzu Trucks.
- Boats can travel from their home port and fish the allowed waters on the Saturday making it an ideal opportunity for boats travelling to Port Stephens for the NSW Interclub Championships that start the following weekend.
- Newcastle Port Stephens Gamefishing Club has an active social agenda over the weekend with the Briefing and Calcutta on Friday night, Saturdays Competitor BBQ, and Sundays Main Prize Giving function. Some major new initiatives are planned for 2013.

For further information on the Luhrs Billfish Shootout please contact:

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**Photos by:**

Kirk Maclean – Hunter Photo Design, Tony Poole, and the crew of "Gail Force".

**View the 2012 Photo Gallery at:**

**[www.tbft.com.au/imgthumb/gallery.asp?gallery=1&page=1](http://www.tbft.com.au/imgthumb/gallery.asp?gallery=1&page=1)**

# LUHRS BILLFISH SHOOTOUT 2012

## BlueWater Power Yachts

Tag & Release		Points
Luhrs Champion Team 1	Gunrunner	149500
2	The Force	112000
3	Calypso	99000
4	Diversion	92000
5	Pelagic	80000
6	Anarchy	63000
7	Shakara	61500
8	Born Free	57500
9	Tonlu 2	57500
10	Smart Bill	57500

**Champion Junior - Female**      Amy McAndrew

**Champion Junior - Male**      Ethan Henderson

**Isuzu Heaviest Marlin**      BA'JA      236 Kg

**Peter Goadby Award**      Viking II

Boats	96
Anglers	443

Species Tagged	
Black Marlin	19
Blue Marlin	17
Striped Marlin	153
Total Tagged	189
Captured	10

This event proudly bought to you by:

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