

2011 LUHRS BILLFISH SHOOTOUT

A record number of 80 boats competed in the annual Port Stephens Luhrs Billfish Shootout, with over 40 missing out because of limited space. Luhrs Boats Australasian distributor BlueWater Power Yachts provided \$10,000 for the Champion Tag & Release Team, and this year the \$10,000 Isuzu Heaviest Marlin prize jackpotted to \$20,000 because no fish reached the minimum 150Kg in 2010. It was a sure bet that the heavy tackle would be out and a lot of boats would be heading wide hunting bear.



In the lead up the fishing was inconsistent, with some boats struggling to find a couple of fish per day. Many areas up and down the shelf had patches of bait with the ever popular "Carpark" probably the most consistent area. However, by the first radio sked on Saturday morning, things had obviously changed. Capt. Tim Dean at the helm of "Calypso" was off to a flying start by releasing 2 fish within the first hour; meanwhile others enjoyed early success including talented Junior Angler Connor Craven onboard Capt. Bill Billson's "Viking II", and "Born Free" skippered by Geoff Leonard.

But by days end it was "Calypso" that had the lead with 8 tags including a "grand slam" followed closely behind by "Viking II" on six. Only a couple of fish were captured with one Blue Marlin making the minimum weight by 9.5 kilos. However, this fish was subsequently disqualified due to the leader being over-length. It was an expensive mistake as this fish would have won the \$20,000 Isuzu Heaviest Marlin prize. No doubt there will be much closer attention paid to the rules and lengths by this team in future tournaments.

Conditions on Day 2 were near perfect as the fleet left early and made their way to their Secret Spot X's. Within the first 2 hours many boats were hooked up during the early bite. As the tags were called through, many boats converged to one area, making it difficult to fight a fish. Team "Calypso" took advantage of their lead by adding another 2 tags; whilst the battle for the minor placings saw a charge from behind from boats including Greg Plunkett's "Lone Wolf" who had a fantastic day releasing six and Craig Frith's "Frito 1" made a comeback releasing 4. "Born Free", who were in 3rd place on the first day, managed a double header on 15kg & released both successfully to keep up with the field.



With the Isuzu \$20,000 still up for grabs after lunch on Sunday it soon became apparent that many boats were chasing the money. In the end, it was lucky angler Mark Foy, fishing onboard "Seaka", skippered by Geoff Thompson, who won the \$20,000 Isuzu Heaviest Marlin prize with a 157kg Blue Marlin. In this tournament there is only one capture prize

for one fish, and it must be over 150Kg.

By days end the ever consistent and skilful Capt. Tim Dean had clinched a well deserved victory for his crew aboard "Calypso" winning champion boat T&R with 10 fish to take home the \$10,000 from Luhrs / BlueWater Power Yachts. Angler Barry Fogg caught 8 and Gary Ward 3. Because the Luhrs Billfish Shootout is a qualifying event, the "Calypso" team also won the right to enter the prestigious IGFA Offshore World Championships in May 2011.



Tag & Release prizes were paid back to 10th place with "Frito" I (8 tags), "Viking II" (7 tags), "Born Free" (7), "Lone Wolf" (7), "Gunrunner" (5), "Chianti" (5), "No Moor" (4), and "Gametime" (3) sharing a combination of cash and prizes from Club Marine insurance, Zacatak Lures, Costa & Flying Fisherman Sunglasses, Mavericks on the Bay, and Eastern Creek Raceway.

2011 Champion Junior Male Angler is Connor Craven (tagging 7 marlin) fishing onboard "Viking II" and Champion Junior Female is the consistent Kiera McMahon (tagging 4 fish) fishing with Capt. Jason Lee onboard "Gunrunner". The Peter Goadby Encouragement Award went to "Game Plan" a well presented trailer boat that was towed down from Mooloolaba for the weekend.



Entries are limited because of space at Nelson Bay, and with so many boats missing out this year, the 2012 Luhrs Billfish Shootout will be sure to attract another record crowd. **The dates are 18th & 19th February 2012.** 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 Blue-Water 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 to go to the Bay.

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 2012 so stay tuned.

For further information on the Luhrs Billfish Shootout please contact:

NPSGFC - Nigel Rushworth – 02 4981 0021 - Email: nigel@npsgfc.com

Luhrs Boats - Tony Poole – BlueWater Power Yachts - 02 9029 6554 - Email: tony@bpy.com.au

Story - Brent Hancock - Tackle World Port Stephens - Email: info@tackleworldps.com.au

Photos – Kirk Maclean – Hunter Photo Design – www.hunterphotodesign.com/index-1.html or email: kirkphotog@nelsonbay.com

Photos from top to bottom:

Team Calypso 002 – A top day at the office for team “Calypso” with tag flags aplenty

Seaka 001 – A very happy Mark Foy with his Isuzu \$20,000 winning Blue Marlin onboard “Seaka”.

Team Calypso 001 – 2011 Luhrs Billfish Shootout Champion Team Tag & Release “Calypso” with (from Left) Capt Tim Dean, Luhrs Tony Poole, Barry Fogg, Gary Ward (seated) Jye Clayden, and Judd Westling.

Viking II 001 – 2011 Luhrs Billfish Shootout Champion Junior Connor Craven with (left to right) David Finn, Capt. Bill Billson, and proud father Glenn Craven onboard Viking II.

Luhrs 30 Open – Australian Specification packages boats with factory warranties start at under \$290,000 delivered including economical twin shaft drive diesels and an alloy tower with dual controls. The new Luhrs 30 Open is already proving popular with sport fishermen all around the world. Why would you bother with outboards?

Seaka cheque 002 – The crew of Seaka receiving their Isuzu Trucks \$20,000 cheque from INPSGFC President David Litchfield.