

## Now that's a big dolphin

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Ryan Riggs of Charleston holds the 77½-pound state record dolphin caught July 24 aboard the boat Daymaker during the Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish Tournament.

When the big bull dolphin first swam into the spread of baits, Capt. Jay Weaver tried to get mate Ryan Riggs of Charleston to pull the bait away. Weaver thought he and the rest of the Daymaker crew were in the middle of a school of small dolphin.

But the fish turned out to be much bigger than anticipated. It took the naked ballyhoo rigged on a circle hook — intended for a billfish during the July Bohicket Marina Invitational Billfish tournament — and began peeling off the 30-pound test line.

A big jump showed the crew of the 52-foot sportfisher that they had a real trophy hooked up.

Riggs soon had the fish to the boat, and Cameron Carpinelli stuck the gaff in the meaty portion of the head and hefted it across the transom. Back at Bohicket Marina, the fish was weighed and registered 77½ pounds — a new South Carolina record.

"We were guessing all day, between 59 and 68 pounds," Weaver said of the catch which broke a 12-year-old record of 74 pounds, 6 ounces. The fish measured 58½ inches long and had a girth of 33 inches.

Amy Dukes of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources certified the weight, and once all the paperwork is completed it will become the official record.



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Interestingly, the crew noted that the tip of the tail of another fish was visible in the dolphin's mouth. When the dolphin was cleaned (left), another dolphin that weighed about five pounds was found in the record fish's stomach. It was estimated the big fish had gorged itself on the smaller fish a day or two earlier.

The International Game Fish Association's all-tackle world record dolphin weighed 87 pounds and was caught in 1976 off Costa Rica; Riggs' fish was only a couple of pounds smaller than IGFA's 30-pound line class record of 79 pounds, 5 ounces, caught in 1996 off the coast of Senegal.

## **Shark anglers face tighter restrictions**

### **New rules apply to recreational and commercial fishermen**

State and federal fisheries managers have tightened the rules governing commercial and recreational shark fishing in South Carolina or federal waters.

Anglers are now prohibited from keeping sandbar or silky sharks, in addition to the 19 shark species already on the federal/state prohibited list.

Recreational anglers who land sharks must have all fins, head and tail naturally attached.

Commercial anglers landing sharks must have fins attached through off-loading. This measure is meant to help identify sharks that are kept and to prevent "finning" of sharks, a practice that involves cutting off a shark's fins and dumping the rest of the animal at sea. Fueled by the Asian market for shark fin soup, this practice has decimated shark populations worldwide.

All other current restrictions related to size and bag limits, possession and handling of sharks in South Carolina's recreational shark fishery remain in place.

Commercial shark fishermen and federally permitted shark dealers also face tightened restrictions, including a reduction in the number of large coastal sharks that may be landed. This change also applies to those who catch sharks incidentally, as in the case of shrimp trawlers.

No sandbar sharks may be landed in the commercial fishery at all, unless by a vessel selected by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to participate in a federally managed shark research fishery.

When fishing in federal waters (more than 3 nautical miles offshore), anglers who fish recreationally for sharks are required to have a federal highly migratory species angling permit and a S.C. saltwater recreational fishing license, if the sharks are landed in state waters.

When fishing only within state waters (up to 3 nautical miles offshore), recreational anglers are required to have a S.C. saltwater recreational fishing license.

*Complete federal regulations for commercial and recreational shark fishermen can be found online at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/). Find out more about DNR shark research at [www.dnr.sc.gov/marine/mrri/shark.html](http://www.dnr.sc.gov/marine/mrri/shark.html). For additional information, contact the Federal Highly Migratory Species Division at 307-713-2347.*

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