



2026 OFFICIAL BILLFISH RELEASE FORM

Please complete the form for each billfish released. The information from this form will be used to inform fishery management agencies about the billfish fishery in NC. This information will help NC anglers continue to enjoy the off-shore fisheries in NC. Release data is needed regardless of the size of the fish or the gear used by the angler.

J-Hooks may be used with entirely artificial lures only. Circle hooks MUST be used on any natural bait or natural-artificial bait combination.

Boat Name _____ Captain (Name/Signature) _____

Date _____ Mate (Name/Signature) _____

Complete your release form and turn into the correct tournament official, and incomplete form may disqualify releases.

Release forms can now be submitted via the Big Rock App using the account associated with boat registration; however, release forms can still be turned in to Big Rock Headquarters or Hatteras Harbor Marina by 10:00 pm on the day of release.

Angler	L/JG/JB/A ¹	Release Time	Fight Time	Species ²	Est. Size	Hook Type ³	Hook Location ⁴	Rig Type ⁵	Bait Type ⁶	Leader ⁷	Main Line ⁸
1.											
2.											
3.											
4.											
5.											
6.											
7.											

Filling in your release form:

- L/JG/JB/A—L for Lady, JG for Junior Girl, JB for Junior Boy, A for angler hooked. If it is a junior angler you must also include their age (16 years of age and under).
- Species—Blue marlin (BM), white marlin (WM), sailfish (SF), spearfish (SP), roundscale spearfish (RS)
- Hook type—Circle (C) or J-hook (J). Also note the hook size (i.e. circle 7/0)
- Hook location—Jaw (J), Bill (B), Mouth Cavity (M), Gills (G), Deep/Gut (D), Fowl (F), Unknown (U)
- Rig Type—Natural Dead (ND), Natural Live (NL), Combo-Natural/Artificial (C), Lure (L)
- Bait Type—Ballyhoo (B), Spanish Mackerel (SM), Squid (S), Mullet (M), or Other (O).
If rig is a lure, note the number of hooks in Bait Type.
- Leader—Size of mono (Leader will be considered mono unless wire is noted)
- Main Line—Size of backing



9. DISQUALIFICATION

Boat will be disqualified from the tournament if:

- 1. The boat, captain and/or crew violates any rules of the tournament unless otherwise specified in these rules.
- 2. If a billfish has been boated and not presented to the Weigh Master. A fish is considered boated when any portion of the fish intentionally breaks the outside vertical plane of the boat.
- 3. If a fish escapes before gaffing and is recaptured by any method other than as outlined in the angling rules. No free gaffing allowed.
- 4. Under no circumstances can you gaff the fish in order to measure the fish and then release the fish.

10. 400 POUND PENALTY

Boat will be penalized four hundred pounds from the weight of the largest blue marlin weighed in by the boat during the week by said boat if:

- 1. Blue Marlin does not meet tournament minimum length and/or weight requirements
- 2. Fish does not adhere to State and Federal Fisheries regulations
- 3. If the gaff breaks the vertical plane of the boat, the fish can no longer be counted as a release and no points will be awarded. If the fish is lost, the team will not be penalized 400 points. If the fish is boated, it must meet minimum requirements or a 400 pound penalty will be enforced.

13. RELEASE POINTS

Cash prizes will be awarded to the boats that score the most number of points first. No release points will be awarded if the gaff breaks the outside vertical plane of the boat. In order to qualify as a release, the billfish must remain in the water. (Federal Law).

125 Release Points will be awarded:

- 1. For all billfish including blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, hatchet marlin and spearfish
- 2. When mate touches the leader or the leader touches the rod tip.
- 3. Team turns in a release form provided by the Tournament Committee attested to by signature of the captain and mate or angler on board the boat at the time of the release. This form may be submitted to the OFFICIAL WEIGH MASTER AT TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS, Hatteras Harbor Marina or submitted electronically with the Big Rock App. Release forms must be turned in no later than 10:00 p.m. on the day the fish is released to qualify.

400 Release Points will be awarded for:

- 1. Blue Marlin if the team provides indisputable video or photo evidence to the Rules Committee.

To qualify for the 400 points, teams must turn in a Release Form in person along with supporting video footage no later than 10:00 p.m. on the day the fish is released.

The release video must contain the following elements:

- a) *The mate touching the leader or the leader touching the rod tip.*
- b) *Clear and indisputable evidence that the fish is a blue marlin*
- c) *Date and time stamp of the release. It is the responsibility of the boat to ensure that their camera's clock/date is set accurately to reflect the time and date of the releases. The date and time stamp must be 100% accurate.*

There are two options to provide the video evidence:

- 1) *Teams may turn in a release form in person along with the SD Card, Micro SD Card or Compact Flash Card from their camera. Forms and Media Cards can be turned in at Tournament HQ or the Official Weigh Station in Morehead City or to the tournament representative at Hatteras Harbor Marina.*
- 2) *Teams may complete the release form and submit the supporting video evidence from their phone via the Big Rock App. Teams are responsible for ensuring the date and time of the release are clearly verified within the video using an approved method outlined in the Captain's Handbook.*

REPORTING STATIONS:

Morehead City:
Tournament Headquarters 710 Evans St
opens 6:00 am on fishing days

Hatteras:
Hatteras Harbor Marina 58058
NC Hwy 12 Hatteras, NC 27943