

# Saltwater Recreational Fisheries in the U.S. Caribbean

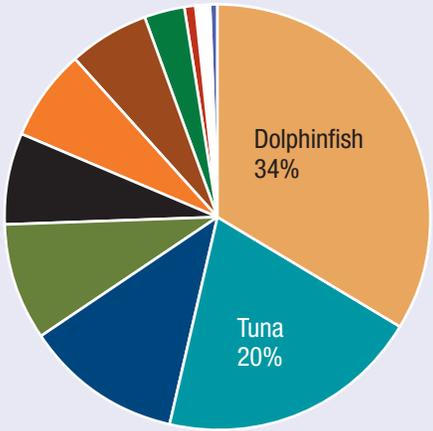


In 2015, 156,864 anglers took approximately 667,600 fishing trips in Puerto Rico. 92% of those anglers were coastal county residents and the remaining 8% were visitors.

Thriving recreational and subsistence fisheries are integral to life in island communities across the Caribbean. Recreational fishing makes important economic contributions through tourism and major international fishing tournaments. Subsistence fishing provides a healthy source of seafood and preserve intergenerational and traditional practices that reflect the unique and diverse cultures of the Caribbean region. With many species of fish available any time of year, many opportunities await saltwater anglers in the Caribbean. *continued on back*

## Primary Target Species in Puerto Rico

While the majority of recreational trips in 2015 reported not targeting any particular species, the popular species shown here were the primary targets of anglers in nearly a quarter (23%) of all recreational fishing trips. Of the targeted trips, the species breakdown is as follows:



- Blue marlin 12%
- Atlantic tarpon 9%
- Jack crevalle 7%
- Yellowtail snapper 7%
- Blue runner 6%
- Barracudas 3%
- Other snapper 1%
- Lane snapper 1%
- Groupers and hinds <1%

Source: Marine Recreational Information Program

## Popular Recreational Species in Puerto Rico

2015 Species	Total Catch NUMBER OF FISH	Harvested Released	CAUGHT IN TERRITORIAL WATERS	CAUGHT IN FEDERAL WATERS
Barracudas	124,000		88%	12%
Blue runner	91,000		>99%	<1%
Other snappers	78,000		90%	10%
Dolphinfish	74,000		55%	45%
Yellowtail snapper	60,000		100%	0%
Jack crevalle	32,000		>99%	<1%
Tuna	25,000		33%	67%
Lane snapper	24,000		100%	0%
Groupers and hinds	19,000		100%	0%
Atlantic tarpon	5,000		100%	0%
Blue marlin	367*		67%	33%

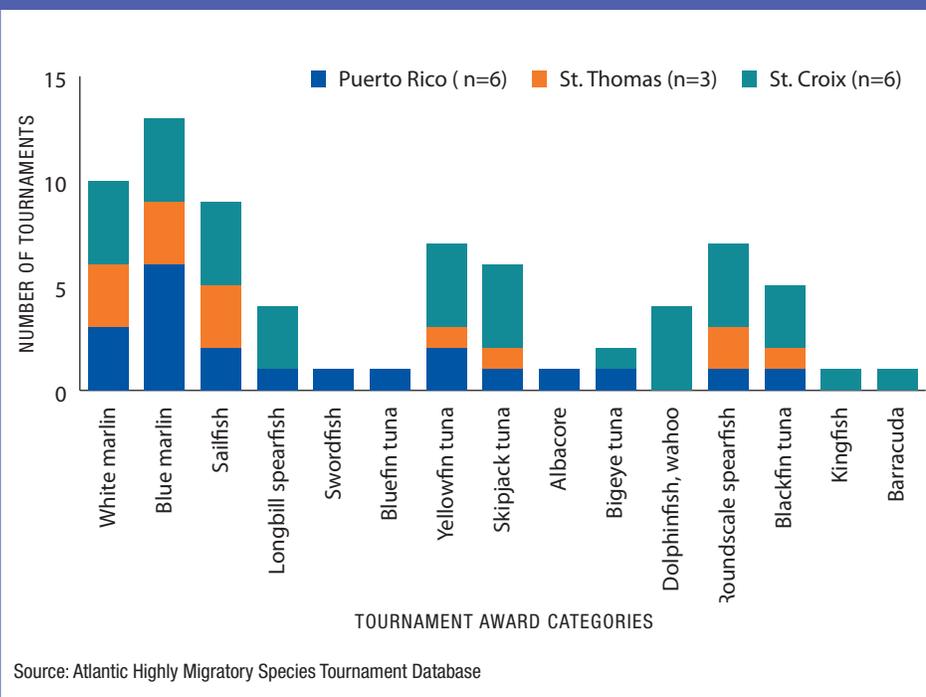
Source: Marine Recreational Information Program  
Puerto Rico territorial waters extend from 0-9 miles offshore. Recreational catch data (excluding tournament harvest) are not available in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

\*All blue marlin were reported as released alive.



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While some species like red hind (mero cabrilla), mutton snapper (sama), and black grouper (mero negro) have specific seasons, many others like mackerels (sierra), dolphin (dorado), wahoo, mangrove (pargo prieto), and yellowtail snapper (colirrubia) can be caught year-round. NOAA Fisheries partners and collaborates with the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and the natural resource agencies of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to manage fisheries in the federal waters of the U.S. Caribbean.

## Blue Marlin

### SPECIES SPOTLIGHT



Fishing for blue marlin is one of the most desired

and rewarding angling opportunities in the world.

This large billfish, which can grow to more than 14 feet and 1,700 pounds, is found in tropical and warm oceans around the world. It is cemented in history as the worthy adversary in Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. In the Caribbean, blue marlin is one of the most coveted offshore species and the main target in many big game tournaments. Pound for pound, blue marlin is one of the strongest and most challenging fish to catch, requiring some unique and innovative techniques. Anglers use lures, trolled baits, and live baits, some of which can be up to two feet long and weigh more than 20 pounds. Most blue marlin are released and many are tagged by recreational anglers to help research organizations understand this truly pelagic species. From this research we've learned that female blue marlin are much larger than males and live to be more than 30 years old. Through tagging projects and other research collaborations, recreational anglers are working hard to protect, preserve, and understand this magnificent fish.

### DIVING DEEPER

Fisheries management is contingent upon the best available data. While there are some ongoing saltwater recreational fishery data collection efforts in the Caribbean, managers often encounter challenges regarding data coverage and continuity. In an effort to improve fishing data collection in this region, NOAA's Marine Recreational Information Program and regional partners are finalizing the Caribbean Regional Implementation Plan. The plan identifies a series of goals, including fully describing regional needs for recreational fishing data, establishing a baseline assessment of current data collection programs, and developing a prioritized approach for implementing improved methods that address national and regional needs. Together with the Council, territories, and U.S.-affiliated islands, NOAA Fisheries is committed to meeting the data needs that can promote sustainable and enduring participation in saltwater recreational fisheries for generations to come.

## LEARN MORE

In the Caribbean, NOAA Fisheries works closely with the Caribbean Fishery Management Council and government entities from the territories and U.S.-affiliated islands across the region. For more information visit the [NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region website](#).

**Sean Meehan:** Southeast, Gulf of Mexico and the U.S. Caribbean Recreational Fisheries Coordinator, [sean.meehan@noaa.gov](mailto:sean.meehan@noaa.gov), (727) 824-5330

**Kim Amendola:** Southeast Recreational Fishing and Communications Specialist, [kim.amendola@noaa.gov](mailto:kim.amendola@noaa.gov), (727) 551-5707

**Ken Brennan:** Southeast Fisheries Science Center Recreational Fisheries Coordinator, [kenneth.brennan@noaa.gov](mailto:kenneth.brennan@noaa.gov), (252) 728-8618