CONSERVATION NOTES, *continued from page 3*

IGFA & FISHBASE
PARTNERS IN INFORMATION EXCHANGE

IGFA's founding principles were to encourage the study of game fish and to utilize recreational fishing as a source of scientific data. As anglers, you can help IGFA achieve these objectives by submitting photographs of your catches to FishBase.

FishBase is a global information system available in 12 languages that has data on 28,900 species of fish. The FishBase website (*www.fishbase.org*) receives over 11 million hits per month, and is an incredibly powerful and free resource to anglers. FishBase enables you to locate information on your favorite fish such as its distribution, maximum size, and biological characteristics. It also provides taxonomic information such as the fish's scientific name, different common names, pictures and much, much more.

Here's how you can help. FishBase currently has around 20,000 pictures of about 8,000 fish species. There are many species in the database that still lack photographs, especially freshwater and aquarium fishes. If you have good quality photos of these or other species, FishBase would like you to submit them. The copyright will remain with you, and FishBase will attach your name to every photo and make your contact address and URL available in FishBase (if you agree).

There are several ways to submit pictures, but the easiest is to upload your digital images directly from your computer by using the "FishWatcher" link. To submit a picture, simply go to the FishBase homepage and type in either the common name or scientific name of your fish and click "search" to get the species summary. At the top of the page, click on "Fish Watchers: add your observation" to enter FishWatcher. Upon entering the FishWatcher webpage, you will be given directions on how to obtain an identification number and password that will allow you to submit your pictures.

If you have good quality photos of these or other species, FishBase would like you to submit them

www.fishbase.org

When you submit a picture, FishBase will request information such as the location, date, length and species of your fish. It is important to provide as much of the requested information as possible, as the information you provide will be used to create distribution maps to assist in monitoring trends of biodiversity. By submitting pictures of your catches to FishBase, you'll be helping IGFA promote the study and conservation of the game fish we cherish.

For more information on FishBase and Fish Watcher visit: www.fishbase.org or contact Jason Schratwieser or Glenda Kelley at IGFA at 954-927-2628.

HOW MUCH IS MY MARLIN WORTH?

How much is my marlin worth? That was the question that Australia's New South Wales (NSW) Fisheries wanted to answer. To accomplish the task, they commissioned Ernst and Young to conduct a socioeconomic analysis that compared the impact that commercial and recreational striped marlin fishing has on the local economy.

Unlike black and blue marlin that cannot be possessed or sold by commercial anglers, striped marlin caught as bycatch in the commercial tuna fishery may be retained and sold if they are caught beyond three miles of the NSW coastline. Because of this legal loophole, evidence suggests that commercial anglers are specifically targeting them by setting longlines at shallower depths where striped marlin often feed. Indeed, catch data also supports this: the number of striped marlin caught as "bycatch" in 2001 was 23 times higher than the number caught in 1993. As far as numbers go, commercial anglers caught over 206 metric tons of striped marlin in 2003. Recreational anglers, on the other hand, caught 1,000 metric tons of striped marlin of which over 96% were released.

Striped marlin "bycatch" in 2001 was 23 times higher than the number caught in 1993

But what is the value of a commercially caught striped marlin compared to one that is caught recreationally? Well, in 2002-2003, the gross value of the commercial catch was approximately $1.24 million or about $6 per kilogram. In contrast, the gross value of the recreational catch was $53 million, which translates to roughly $46.45 per kilogram. The difference in gross price per kilogram is astonishing, but what's better is that 96% of the recreational catch is released. Put another way, 960,000 kilograms of striped marlin valued at roughly $44.5 million dollars were returned to the sea by recreational anglers in 2002-2003, thus making it a reusable resource. If you think about marlin, or any other fish for that matter, in monetary terms it should place an even greater emphasis on proper catch-and-release ethic to ensure the maximum return from such a large investment.

Other benefits that recreational striped marlin fishing bring to the NSW community are more economic output, household income and jobs.

The entire study can be viewed by visiting:
http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/47773/20050217/www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/rec/pdf/stripedmarlin.pdf

RECREATIONAL VERSUS COMMERCIAL VALUE OF MARLIN

	Recreational	Commercial
Economic Output	$112 Million	$4.6 Million
Household Income	$26.2 Million	$1.3 Million
Jobs	907	34