

## **2015 Gulf of Mexico Marlin Tagging Competition**

The Gulf of Mexico fishery is unlike any other in the world. The combination of converging currents, nutrients pouring in from the Mississippi, and structure (both natural and man made) add up to some amazing fishing especially in the past few years. Recently, research conducted by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has confirmed what anglers have known for a long time and has recognized the Gulf as critical habitat for both white and blue marlin. High concentrations of larval billfish indicate that the Gulf is an important spawning ground for white and blue marlin.

Recognition of the Gulf as an important fishery is a start, but more information is needed to gain insight into billfish behaviors in the area so to better manage and protect this fishery. Last year, TBF introduced the Gulf of Mexico Marlin Tagging Competition to get more tagging data from the region. This competition opens up the Gulf as a separate region with awards for captains, anglers, mates and crews. Only tagging of white and blue marlin is eligible. Categories for species, youth angler, lady angler, boat, captain and crews means anglers in the Gulf can now compete amongst themselves to find out who the best of the best really is. Unfortunately, there were **NO ELIGIBLE AWARD WINNERS FOR INDIVIDUAL ANGLERS IN 2014**. Award winners are recognized at the Miami International Boat Show at the TBF awards ceremony and receive trophies from King Sailfish Mount and pair of Costas! Not only can crews win great prizes, but help contribute to billfish conservation in their own backyard. Find out more and get on board at [www.billfish.org/gulfcompetition](http://www.billfish.org/gulfcompetition) for complete rules, categories, and dates. Boats fishing out of Louisiana have already been tagging and releasing billfish this spring and with chances to win great prizes we hope TBF has given you one more reason to get fired up for this season!