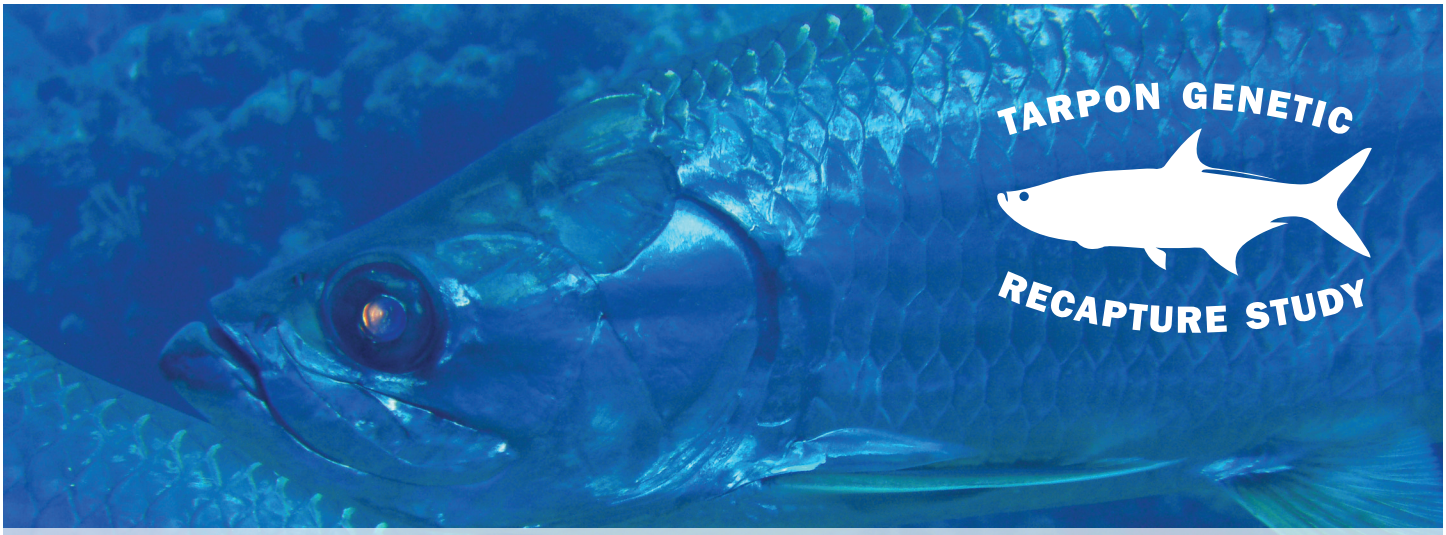


2012 Review

Davis

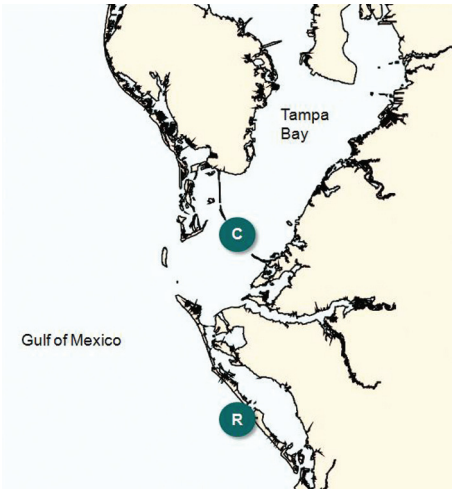
More remarkable recaptures!

Thanks to the volunteer anglers who generously gave their time, strength and stamina to take a DNA sample from tarpon they catch and release; these fish have all been genetically "tagged." Tarpon anglers submitted 16,553 of the 17,649 samples inventoried in the Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study database as of October 31. THANK YOU! Researchers have identified 143 tarpon as recaptures, or fish that have been caught and sampled more than once. The updated figures indicate about one of every 100 tarpon genetically sampled is a recapture. Some tarpon have pretty impressive and exciting tales to tell. Remember, these numbers are not absolute and change every day as more samples are processed.

Third time's the charm

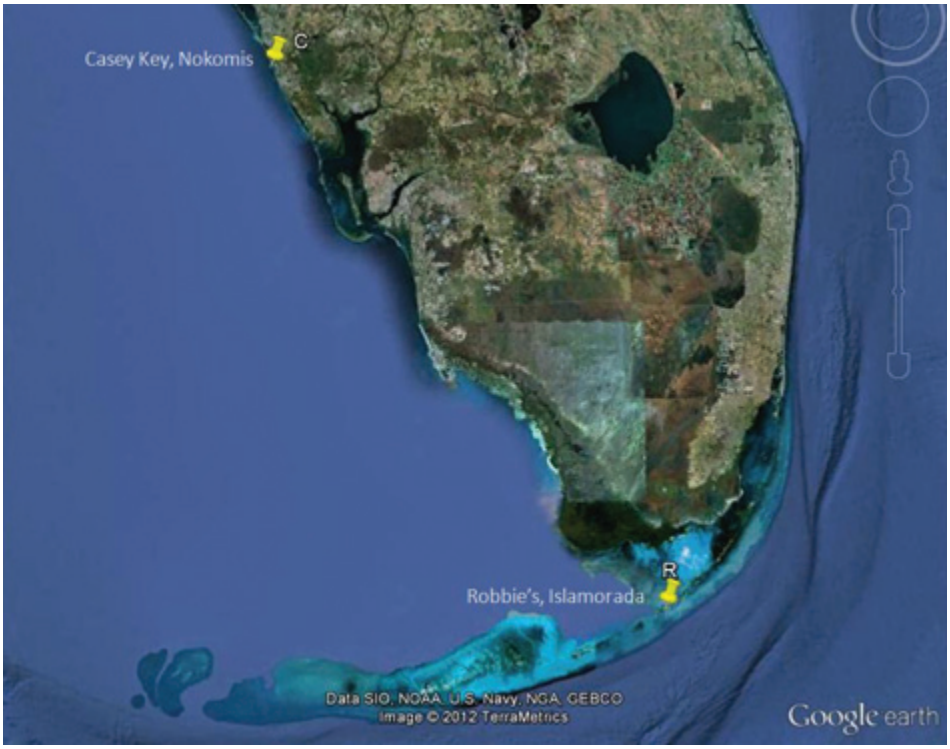
One tarpon in southeast Florida was quite able to withstand catch-and-release fishing practices, as three people caught the same fish. The first angler caught, genetically sampled and successfully released the tarpon on June 25, 2010 in the north fork of the Sebastian River in Indian River County. It was recorded at 25 inches following a four-minute fight. After 73 days of freedom, another angler fishing in the Sebastian River caught and sampled the tarpon. This time it was caught at 10 a.m. on September 6 and recorded at 31 inches after a three-minute fight. Just six days after its second capture, the tarpon was caught and sampled a third time in the north branch of the Sebastian River. This is one of the few fish in the database that has been caught and sampled three times within a few months, but it provides evidence of this species' ability to survive multiple recaptures when handled properly. Keep in mind, recorded lengths are estimates provided by the angler and not accurate measurements; however, researchers can use the size information to distinguish adults from juveniles. In this scenario, the provided lengths reveal the tarpon was a juvenile, indicating Florida has important juvenile tarpon habitats. Continued sampling in these habitats and coastal areas, and additional recaptures, may provide evidence that juveniles in Florida's tarpon nurseries eventually become the adult fish in the state's recreational fishery.

From bays to beaches – Follow the moon



After testing a tarpon DNA sample provided from a fish caught inside Tampa Bay near the Sunshine Skyway Bridge on the quarter moon in May, researchers determined it was from a recaptured fish! Six days later, only two days before the full moon of June, another angler caught and genetically sampled the same fish off Longboat Key in Sarasota County, approximately 20 miles south. The tarpon made its way from inside the bay to the Gulf beaches during the peak of spawning season. Biologists expect the lunar phases to drive adult tarpon movements during spawning seasons. Fish aggregate in passes and along beaches prior to moving offshore to spawn near the full and new moons. This fish provides an example of what biologists refer to as system-wide movement.

Sarasota to the Keys in less than a month



The first DNA sample from this tarpon was provided by an angler fishing off the beaches of Sarasota County near Nokomis on the morning of June 18, 2009. The adult tarpon measured approximately 65 inches and was swimming along the central Florida Gulf Coast during peak spawning season. Only 25 days later it was sampled again at 2:02 p.m. on July 13 in Islamorada. FWC staff sampled the fish a third time at 3:03 p.m. on August 11 at Robbie's Marina (Islamorada), 29 days later. The distance between DNA sampling locations was more than 190 miles from where it was initially sampled and released. The southward movement during the known spawning season (April to July) was an unexpected event, which biologists refer to as regional movement.

Contact us

FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute
Attn: Tarpon Genetics
100 8th Avenue SE
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Hotline: (800) 367-4461 (toll-free in Florida)
E-mail: TarponGenetics@MyFWC.com

TARPON GENETIC RECAPTURE STUDY

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How this all got started – Fishing pressure

Few tarpon are harvested recreationally in Florida and the state has no commercial tarpon fishery; however, fishing pressure is intense when the silver kings are present in state waters. The recreational fishery is quite popular and continues to grow, particularly during spawning season, April through July. Tarpon fishing generates millions of dollars for the state's economy and is part of the greater billion dollar saltwater recreational fishing industry. Much of this revenue comes from taxes placed on the sale of boats, engines, fuel, fishing gear, tackle and licenses. As a result of the increased fishing pressure, all current state-funded tarpon research programs focus on questions related to whether or not tarpon can handle the fishing pressure.

To begin understanding the effects of fishing on tarpon, the FWC initiated a study to estimate short-term, post-release survival rates. The question was straightforward: Will a released tarpon survive from the stress of angling, yes or no?

From 2002 to 2007, biologists attached sonic tags to 82 tarpon in Boca Grande Pass and Tampa Bay to track the fish with acoustic telemetry. Results from this study revealed shark attacks (predation) were the No. 1 cause of tarpon mortality (death) after release. Stress from being handled by anglers was the No. 2 cause of death, resulting from either a wound suffered during improper handling or the fish's inability to recover from physiological stress experienced during the fight.

Approximately 87 percent of the fish tracked in this study survived. If researchers remove the data points associated with tarpon that potentially died from a shark attack and only evaluate fish that died from handling stress, the post-release survival rate increases to 95 percent. This is good news! It appears most tarpon released from normal recreational fishing activities can survive. Please keep in mind, the study did not evaluate all gear and baits used in the tarpon fishery. No tournament fish were evaluated in this study. It is important to note that studies like this provide only an estimated range of fishing mortality rates and not an absolute number.

The next question was if most tarpon survive, how often do anglers catch the same fish? The effort to find the answer began in 2005 when the FWC launched the Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study, which has been growing ever since.

View past issues of the TGRS newsletter and learn more about results from previous years on our website, at MyFWC.com/Research.

Bennett

Tarpon rolling.

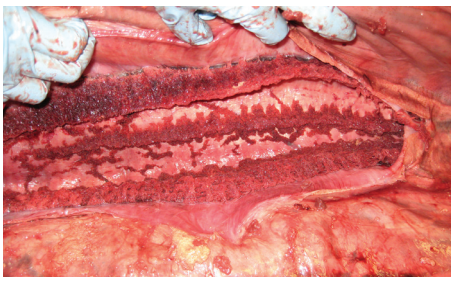
Rolling, rolling, rolling, keep that tarpon rolling

Ever wonder why tarpon roll? A tarpon rolling at the surface is often the primary thing anglers are looking for when they are out for a day of tarpon fishing, whether on the flats, beach, bay, backwater or offshore. For the last decade, FWC researchers have been fortunate to be able to study and observe these fish. Here they share a little of the science behind this behavior.

One reason tarpon roll is to breathe atmospheric air and fill their swim bladders, thus obtaining more oxygen to supplement their gill breathing capabilities. A tarpon's swim bladder has a direct opening to its esophagus, or throat, so it fills quickly and efficiently. Inside the swim bladder are four rows of spongy tissue very similar to a human lung. This tissue is what extracts oxygen from the air to fuel the tarpon's muscles, which is needed for endurance during bouts of exercise. Examples of tarpon "exercise" could be battling an angler on hook and line, performing long distance swimming migrations or out-swimming a shark. Australian research showed that ox-eye tarpon permitted to breathe air at the surface after angling recovered back to "normal" in one hour, relative to tarpon that took several hours to recover if prevented from doing so. Tarpon will also roll more frequently for breathing when inhabiting water with low dissolved oxygen concentrations.

There is also a social aspect to tarpon rising to the surface together. A study conducted in 1940 placed small tarpon (2.5 inches) in tanks for observation. One fish rising to the surface induced others to do the same. The rolling in this study was a social and respiratory movement triggered by the visual cue.

Further experiments in 1941 used artificial objects to test if biologists could induce tarpon to rise together in a more social nature. A wooden model of a tarpon, painted silver, yielded the best results. Statistics showed the induced movement was significant and it was not by chance that the fish rose together. A small school of tarpon in one aquarium even induced the movement of another group of tarpon held in an adjacent aquarium. When researchers blinded some tarpon and placed them in an aquarium with sighted tarpon, no imitative rises occurred by the blind fish when other tarpon rose to the surface. Blind fish still rose to



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Rows of spongy, lung-like tissue inside a tarpon swimbladder.

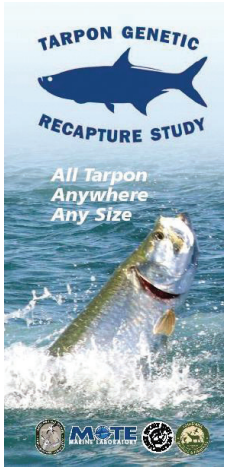
the surface at the same rate as other tarpon, but for breathing purposes.

In 1942, these experiments were repeated in an outside canal with five tarpon four to five feet in length. Scientists found comparable results to that of the small tarpon with one note: the large fish did not rise as frequently as the small tarpon, but when they did, the movements may have been a social response. In larger bodies of water, the authors suggested there may be less mimicking of behavior because such fish can be separated more easily than fish in a river or canal.

It appears that tarpon do have a social nature to rise and roll together. Maybe they are not so different from us, since many of us go fishing as a way to socialize with friends. Perhaps some of the DNA samples returned to the Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study were even courtesy of a tarpon revealing his location by a roll. So let's keep those tarpon rolling!

New Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study brochure

Janice Wojcik, a tarpon project volunteer and graphic designer by trade, decided the study could benefit from an educational brochure. She used her professional expertise and an idea supplied by our partners with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to design a colorful, trifold brochure that can be used at trade shows, tournaments and community outreach events everywhere. The brochure contains information on how to get involved and why one should genetically "tag" every tarpon they catch, anywhere and any size. Once it was created, Mr. Pat Gunn, a Tampa businessman and avid fisherman, graciously assisted in printing the brochures. If you are interested in obtaining some of these brochures for inclusion in tarpon tournament bags, fishing club outings or community outreach pertaining to fishing events, please feel free to contact researchers with the FWC or Mote Marine Laboratory at TarponGenetics@MyFWC.com. This research study could not exist without its volunteers, anglers and partner businesses, alike.



Florida Sea Grant video now on YouTube

The Florida Sea Grant and IFAS Information and Communications Services at the University of Florida, with the help of fishing guides from Tampa Bay and Ten Thousand Islands, created an educational video explaining the importance of the study and showing anglers how to take a tarpon DNA sample. To watch the six-minute YouTube video, visit MyFWC.com/Research, click on "Saltwater," and select "Tarpon Genetics" under "Tarpon." When you're done, please pass it along!

Can useful information be obtained from a dead tarpon?

The reality of fishing is not all animals survive after they are released. Research along the Gulf Coast showed approximately 87 percent of the tarpon survived after release, and the short-term survival rate rose to 95 percent in the absence of shark predation. Ultimately, even a dead tarpon found washed ashore or floating in the water can provide useful information.

As long as the tissue is not too decayed, a DNA sample can be obtained from a dead tarpon. If you have a DNA sampling kit, scrape until you see silver (skin cells) on the sponge. If you do not have a DNA sampling kit, remove a scale or clip a piece of the fin from the carcass and place it in the freezer until it can be placed in a sample vial. If you collect a sample from a carcass, be sure to write that the tarpon was "found dead" on the data slip. Researchers use only the samples from live fish to estimate statewide recapture rates. Though they omit samples from dead fish from that calculation, biologists can use DNA samples from dead tarpon for population analysis and to determine if a fish has been caught and sampled before. If a fish was a recapture, staff can still obtain the information relative to its seasonal movement and habitat usage patterns.

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FWC biologist takes DNA from a dead tarpon on the beach.

Tips for a successful catch-and-release

When handled with care and respect, a tarpon can typically recover. Research-based suggestions to maximize survival when you release a tarpon after fishing include:

- Take the time to revive your tarpon. A tarpon should be able to swim on its own after release. Doing so allows it to escape predators and breathe at the surface, if needed, to help speed its recovery from the fight.
- Try not to foul hook your tarpon. This can decrease survival.
- If a tarpon swallows the hook, cut the line and leave the hook in the fish.
- Avoid releasing tarpon in shark infested waters. Research showed shark attack was the No. 1 cause of tarpon mortality after release.
- Avoid handling a tarpon by the gills.

Giants and juvies: 1,000 samples for two tarpon anglers

Sampling large tarpon – Two at a time

Some tarpon guides in Florida have participated in the study since its inception. Robert McCue has collected an impressive 929 tarpon DNA samples and hopes to pass the 1,000 sample mark next year. Most of his 216 samples in 2012 were obtained from adult tarpon by clients fishing on one of his charters in the famous Gulf coast tarpon fishery, sometimes catching two at a time. McCue said, "The competitiveness has really helped to generate enthusiasm amongst the tarpon anglers, which in turn, has helped the Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study gain momentum." At the same time he realizes, "The only way it helps is if people get involved to help increase the recaptures, which is where the valuable data comes from. Science is being developed that didn't exist before, and I believe it has helped to increase awareness of this magnificent fish." May we all wish him well to reach his goal in 2013.

McCue

Robert McCue's Labor Day double.

Sampling small tarpon – All day, every day

Ah… to be retired and living near prime tarpon nursery habitat. The canals and mosquito ditches of the Space Coast have proven quite productive for recreational angler John Mallory, who selects juvenile tarpon fishing as recreation. Having sampled 975 this year, he confesses to have learned a thing or two. Mallory said participating in the study since 2009 has given him quite an education on the type of fishing he does and has driven him to help educate and share his experiences with other anglers and non-anglers, alike. One can only hope his passion for the fish, and fishing, rubs off on a few more east coast anglers and inspires them to start sampling their tarpon. Wouldn't it be great to learn that the juvenile tarpon Mallory is sampling in the Space Coast's nurseries this year are recaptured as adult tarpon five years from now?

MacInnis

John Mallory smiles with this juvenile for a quick photo before release.

Northern Gulf anglers make DNA sampling part of the tarpon experience

Engaging anglers in collecting DNA samples from the tarpon they catch is the key component to the study's success. Last year we made a special call to anglers in the Panhandle and northern Gulf, where the study lacked representation based on the number of samples being returned. This year, there is good news to report. A few samples each were returned from Citrus, Levy, Taylor, Wakulla, Franklin and Escambia counties! Recreational anglers, professional fishing guides and several new tackle shops collecting samples and distributing kits helped the study reach this 2012 goal.

Larry Pentel, a fishing guide out of Gulf County in the Panhandle decided to make DNA sampling part of his charter experience. He stated, "Why would you not participate in the Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study? You get to see the actual science involved in the study, and if you're a guide, it's something you can get your charters involved with." He believes it is hard to manage a fishery without actual data and understands that "the Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study is getting some real science done." Pentel added, "Without this science, management is just a guessing game."

Recreational anglers, not fishing guides, also had some thoughts to share with us about their participation. Cassie Dunn of Citrus County thinks that it's great to see everyone pulling together and learning where these fish come from, where they're traveling and learning the different size structure. She added, if you want your children to see the same fish you're seeing today, you should participate in the study to help insure that these fish are around for generations to come. Hayden Olds, who is actually a resident of Fairhope, Alabama, turned in samples he collected while fishing in Escambia County (Florida). He too shared the following: The knowledge that the data provides, as far as relating the populations from area to area, is such valuable information. The DNA sampling is a very easy process, there's nothing to it and it's great to get this much-needed data in return.

If you fish in the area and need a kit, several shops along the coast carry tarpon DNA sampling kits and willingly serve as a place tarpon anglers can drop off their samples at the end of their fishing season. Ruth Ann of Ed's Tackle Shop in Crystal River likes that the Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study gets people participating in the actual science to help benefit the tarpon fishery. She stated, "Anglers should get involved in the study; it really helps for the future of the fishing industry." Robert, who works at one of the newest shops to participate – Mangrove Creek Outfitters in Chiefland – states, "It's great that we can track the migratory patterns of these fish and see where they are going, and if there are resident fish." This is wonderful to hear coming from folks along the Nature Coast, as this is an area of the state where researchers really hope to increase sampling efforts. He believes the study is beneficial to anglers and tarpon. We hope his shop visitors feel the same. Let's keep this momentum in the northern Gulf going in 2013!

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Congratulations!

Congratulations to the anglers who won the end-of-year random drawings. Remember, even if you catch one tarpon all year, that single DNA sample is extremely important to helping advance our understanding of tarpon distribution, movement, habitat preferences and survival. Without samples, there are no recaptures. Without recaptures, we gain no new information. Every sample is as important as the next.

Joel Bickford	Rob Hollander
Nathan Brown	John McLay
Justin Cauffman	Heather Messick
David Chatham	Wright Taylor
George Couch	Jeff Totten

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Bimonthly drawings

Each randomly selected recipient of the bimonthly drawings was awarded a $250 gift certificate donated by SeaSucker through Mote Marine Laboratory.

January-February
Ed Nader, Miami, Fla.

March-April
Bill Miller, Tampa, Fla.

May-June
James Roehm, Seminole, Fla.

July-August
Sage Jackson, Cumming, Ga.

September-October
Michael Wrenn, Cape Coral, Fla.

A second winner this period, Mark Paquin, received a gift basket from Tropical Seas Reef Safe.

November-December
Bill Corrigan, Cape Coral, Fla.

Anglers who contributed five or more samples in 2012


Nielsen

In 2012, 420 anglers submitted a total of 4,346 samples. Only samples received prior to the October 31 deadline were included in this total, which omits samples returned by FWC staff during routine sampling.

The Top 10 Samplers in 2012:

1. Jon Mallory
2. Robert McCue
3. TJ Stewart
4. Paul D'Antoni
5. Carl Ball
6. Russell Kleppinger
7. Skip Nielsen
8. Jeff Malone
9. Ed Walker
10. Dale Sparling

The following anglers, listed in alphabetical order, each provided at least five samples.

100 +

Paul D'Antoni
Jon Mallory
Robert McCue
T.J. Stewart

50-99

Mike Badarack
Carl Ball
Russell Kleppinger
Paul MacInnis
Jeff Malone
John Manuel
Skip Nielsen
Dale Sparling
Ed Walker
Clark Wright

30-49

Raymond Baird
Rob Gorta
Ken Knudsen
Billy Miller
Frank Ortiz
Joey Samways
Troy Sapp
Owen Schroeder
Jay Withers

20-29

Chris Barron
Joel Bickford
Monty Cabe
Dave Dennison
Alex Fajet
Jim Huddleston
Chrissie Jackson
John Jackson, III
Dave Kostyo
Pete Rapps
Lance Schouest
Bouncer Smith
Tom Stephens, Jr.
David Varble
Ted Wilson

10-19

Kenneth Balseca
Bill Burrows
Justin Cauffman
Scott Clemens
John Crawford
Jeffri Durrance
Ashley Epperson
Thomas Gibson
Mike Hinegardner
Shannon Hoeckel
Nelson Italiano, III
Bill Jones
Tom Karrow
Frederick Lieb
Jeremy Loercher
Dalan Markett
Brandon McGraw
Brandon Mench
Paul Messick, III
Bill Miller
Oscar Mohn
Rick Murphy
Jeff Owens
Vincent Parkinson
Artie Price
Mary Quinette
Mike Rementer
Larry Rudisill
Robert Taylor
Trisha Tobin
William Whitney
Chris Wittman
Michael Wrenn
Tommy Ziesmann

5-9

Jeremiah Acevedo
Nestor Alvisa, Jr.
Kenny Balseca, II
Marty Benson
Jim Bollmann
Steve Bowler

(continued on next page)

Elbow grease required – Scrape means SCRAPE!

It only takes a few seconds to collect a tarpon sample, but one must use enough pressure to get silver onto the sponge. Silver or white indicates that adequate DNA has been removed and scientists will be able to uniquely identify your tarpon. With a good scrape, the odds for obtaining a good genotype increases tremendously! Without a good scrape, we will not be able to determine if you have captured a previously sampled fish. Don't waste your opportunity to genetically "tag" your tarpon by rushing through the scraping process.

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5-9 (continued)

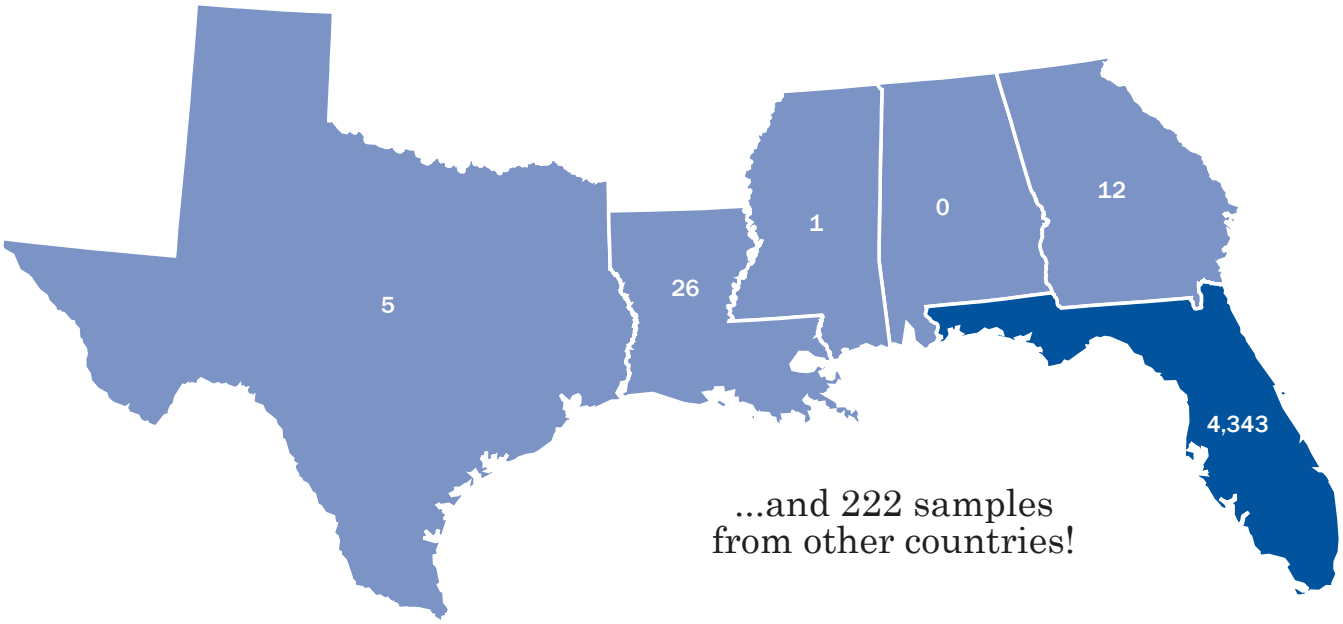
Craig Bullara
Jimmy Burnsed
Bryon Chamberlin
Ganesh Chatani
Cody Chivas
Butch Constable
Chris Cooley
Bill Corrigan
Mark Crawford
Aaron Crisp
Robert Davenport
Marshall DeMott
Nicholas Fischer
Brad Fontaine
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Frederic Grand
Rick Grassett
Jeff Hagaman
Phil Haley
Brian Hart
Phil Hartman
Bob Heagey
Rob Hollander
David Holzhauer
Tim Humphries
Larry Jett
Doug Johnston
Grant Johnston
Michael Klein
Doug Krebs
Alan Kuhre
Jeffrey LeMieux
Ozzie Lessinger
Joe Lowery
Chad Manning
Eric Mannino
Dave Markett
Robert May
John McLay
Heather Messick
John Mester
Ed Nader
Clark Nash
Judy Ozuna
Tom Pierce
Rick Redd
Brian Robinson
James Roehm
Jeff Schmid
Lawton Shafer
Brandon Spears
Nathan Steinhauer
Gregory Stover
Wright Taylor
Robert Thomas
Jeff Totten
Mason Tush
Ray Van Horn
Gene White
Mike Wilson
Gerald Winkler
Bobby Woodard
Ryan Young

Hook 'em up!

A tarpon DNA sampling incentive began in summer 2012, courtesy of the Florida Guides Association, TJ Stallings and Daiichi® hooks. The first 300 anglers who returned a DNA sample received a packet of tournament-winning circle hooks. Lucky winners have already received their packets of hooks in the mail.

2012 Study Results

We received 4,387 samples from the United States...

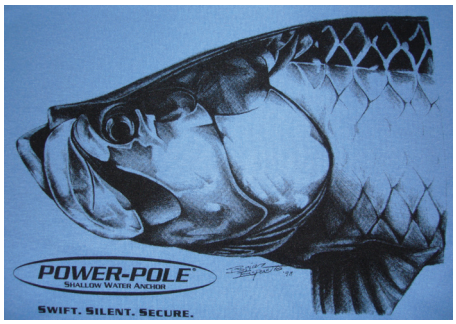


GRATITUDE! ACCOLADES! PRAISE! THANKS to our 2012 Sponsors!

Thank you to all the individuals and businesses that contributed valuable time and great products for angler drawings, end-of-year prizes and event gift baskets. We are grateful for their support in helping instill sportsmanship and enthusiasm in the Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study.

Our sponsors included: Bass Pro Shop of Fort Myers; Fran Bays; Bob's Machine Shop; Breathe Like A Fish; Cabela's; Castalia Outdoors; CB's Saltwater Outfitters; Chattaway; Clyde Butcher Venice Gallery & Studio; Coastal Angler Magazine; CUTCO Cutlery; Daiichi®; Discount Tackle Outlet-Bradenton; D.O.A. Fishing Lures; Doudney Sheet Metal Works; Economy Tackle/ Dolphin Dive and Kayak Center; El Capitan Marine & Fishing Center; Environeers; Captain Brian Esposito; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Gunn Printing & Lithography, Co.; Guideline EyeGear, High Roller Lures; J.L. Marine Systems, Inc./ Power Pole; Mote Aquarium; Mote Marine Laboratory; Mr. Bones BBQ; New Pass Grill & Bait Shop; Richard Powers; Red Zone Apparel; SeaSucker; Silverscorpionaz; SnookZGraphics; StickIt Anchor Pins; Sugarloaf Marina-Pisces Prints of Key West; TackleWebs; The Old Salty Dawg; Tropical Seas, Inc./ Reef Safe; West Marine; Wojcik & Short Associates, Inc.; and Woody Wax.

Donations were provided by these entities as program support through Mote Marine Laboratory.



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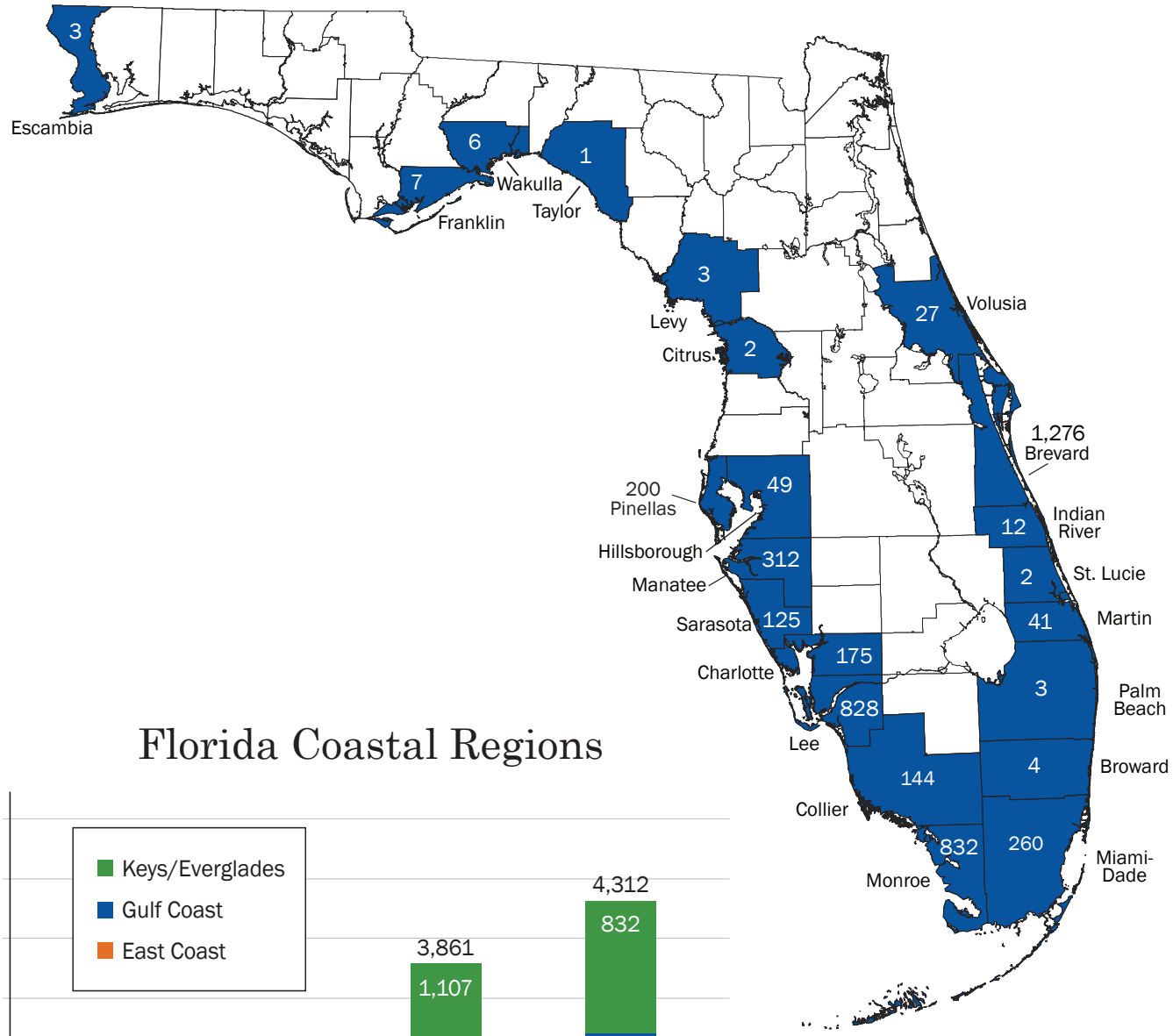
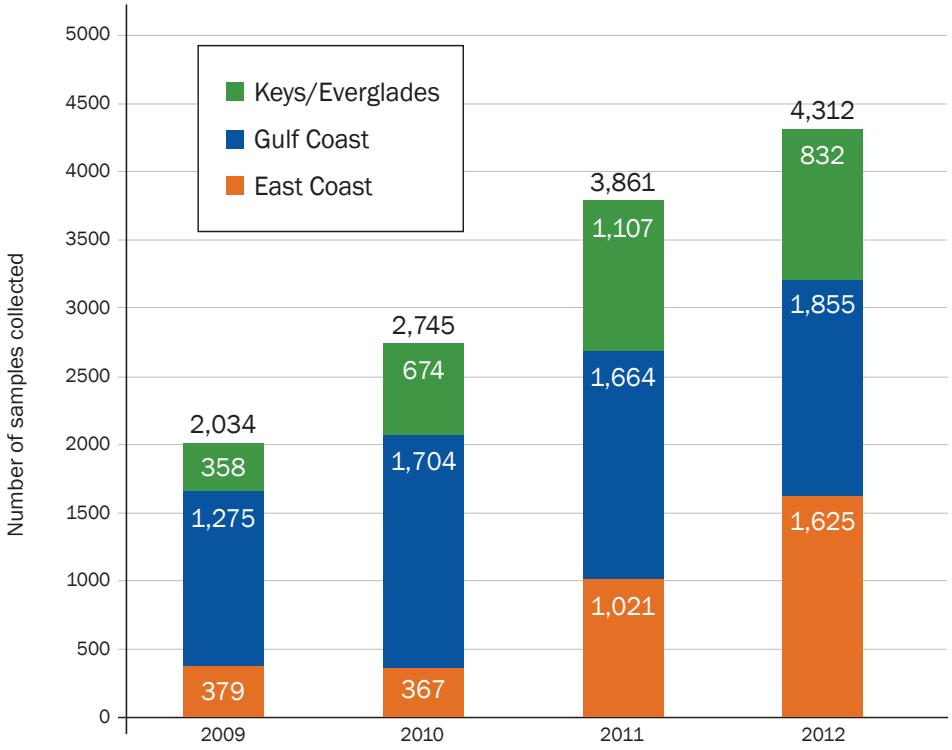
Thank you to JL Marine Systems, Inc./ Power Pole and artist Brian Esposito of Pompano Beach for his 1998 black and white tarpon print. Their generosity provided the funds and artwork needed to create the third collectible Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study T-shirt. Every angler who returned five or more tarpon DNA samples in 2011 received a shirt. We had 141 anglers earn this award. Great job volunteer tarpon anglers!!!

Samples returned by county in Florida

*does not include 31 samples returned with no county specified



Florida Coastal Regions



Participating 2012 tournaments

These tournaments allowed presentations about the study at their events, distributed sampling kits to anglers, offered incentives or otherwise encouraged anglers to collect DNA samples from the fish they entered in competition.

Battle for Bella Benefit Fishing Tournament
"Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament
Don Hawley Invitational Tarpon Tournament
Ed Alber Tarpon Rodeo All-Release Tarpon Tournament
Faro Blanco Invitational Tarpon Tournament
Gold Cup Invitational Tarpon Fly Tournament
Guy Harvey Ultimate Shark Challenge
HaHa's KBYC Working Man's Tarpon Tournament
Ladies Tarpon Tournament
Oriental Rotary Club Fishing Tournament
Outback Golden Fly Tarpon Tournament
Professional Tarpon Tournament Series
Raymond James Boca Grande Classic
Robert James Sales S.L.A.M. Celebrity Tournament
Sarasota Tarpon Tournament
Space Coast International Surf Fishing Tournament
Suncoast Tarpon Roundup
Tarpon & Redfish Classic Fly Fishing & Light Tackle Kayak Fishing Tournament
Tarponian Tournament
The Tournament @ The Legendary Ocean Reef
Women's Professional Tarpon Tournament Series
Women's Spring Tarpon Fly Tournament
World's Richest Tarpon Tournament

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Ding Darling Tarpon Tournament participants point out that their team missed the DNA sample, but they tried.

Collecting DNA is as easy as…

1) collect a sample,

2) fold the sponge into the liquid-filled bottle,


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3) put the cap on tight!

Community outreach

The following organizations and community event sponsors provided education and outreach opportunities to promote awareness of the study.

2012 Scientific Angler Seminar Series-Rookery Bay
26th Annual Run for the Turtles*
27th Annual Palm Beach International Boat Show
6th Annual Hunting ~ Fishing Expo
Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, Tarpon Workshop (pictured at right)
Community Haven*
Dauphin Island Sea Lab Discovery Day
De Soto Heritage Festival SeaFood Fest*
Florida Sportsman Expo-Fort Myers
Florida Sportsman Expo-Fort Walton Beach
Florida Sportsman Expo-Tampa
Florida Sportsman Expo-West Palm Beach
Florida State Fair
Fort Myers Beach Tarpon Hunter's Club
Fort Myers Spring Boat Show
FWC-FWRI MarineQuest
ICAST 2012
Orlando Kayak Fishing Club
Sarasota Film Festival *
Sarasota Nautical Flea Market
Sci-Café Series at Fathom's Steam Room and Oyster Bar, Carrabelle
Shark Tooth Festival 2012*
Sixth Annual Sarasota Springfest 2012*
SRQ Spring Fest-SRQ*
Tampa Bay Boat Show
The Coastal Conservation Association of Florida, Tampa Chapter's 27th Annual Banquet & Auction
Tampa Fishing Outfitters Seminar
Tampa Tribune Outdoors Expo & Boat Show
The Backcountry Fly Fishers of Naples, Florida
The Gasparilla Inn & Club*
West Palm Beach Fishing Club
William H. Bashaw Elementary School*

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*Attended by the Mote Mobile Aquarium Unit

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The FGA/FWC Spirit of Tarpon DNA Sampling Challenge

The FWC's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute and partners at Mote Marine Laboratory have been using DNA fingerprinting to track tarpon for several years now. This year the Florida Guides Association (FGA) and the FWC are joining ranks to promote The FGA/FWC Spirit of Tarpon DNA Sampling Challenge. The name of the award recognizes the spirit of tarpon in the fight and the spirit of volunteers willing to help improve science. The challenge encourages anglers to participate in the study.

Anyone is eligible to participate in the FGA/FWC challenge, which is issued to all interested recreational anglers year-round per calendar year. 2012 is the first year for this award, and a winner was not yet determined at the time of printing. There is only one simple rule: most samples wins.

Awards will be issued in 2013 and presented in four categories: Grand Champion and West Coast, East Coast and Florida Keys Champions. The prize packages are being determined by FGA members, as were the rules and guidelines for this challenge. If you have an idea to help get more anglers involved in this citizen-based research, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us at TarponGenetics@MyFWC.com or call toll-free, 800-367-4461.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
MyFWC.com

MOTE MARINE LABORATORY

Saltwater Recreational Fishing Licenses