

## Fishing Vessel Notice

Date: 02-August-2022

Notice Number 004-2022

To: All Ship Owners, Operators, Deputy Registrars, Resident Agents, Representatives, and other Stakeholders

Subject: **BEST PRACTICES FOR THE SAFE HANDLING AND RELEASE OF INCIDENTALLY CAUGHT BLUE MARLINS AND WHITE MARLINS/ROUND SCALE SPEARFISH**

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The following steps should be followed to reduce stress and injury to incidentally caught marlins and round scale spearfish specimens for a maximum probability of survival while minimizing the safety risk to the crew. Skippers and crew should always put their personal safety first when releasing marlins and other large fish. Wear gloves and avoid working around the spear-shaped bill.

- Stop the vessel or substantially reduce its speed.
- Secure the far side of the longline mainline to the boat to avoid that any remaining gear in the water pulls on the line and the animal.
- Bring the marlin as close to the vessel as possible without putting too much tension on the branch line to avoid that a released hook or branch line breaks could shoot hook, weights and other parts toward the vessels at high speed.
- Do not remove the alive marlin from the water boat side while safely removing the hook.
- Limit the number of manipulations.
- Do not gaff the fish in the body.
- If possible, avoid grabbing the marlin by the body and use gloves to grab the marlin by its snout or a snooter.
- In case the hook is visible, lightly flicking the branch line to try dislodging the hook.
- Where feasible rig a measuring device so the fish can be roughly measured in the water (e.g. mark a pole, leader and float; mark the gunwale of the boat with measurement marks)
- If the marlin is vigorously twisting and spinning making it too dangerous to use a dehooker/disgorger or the marlin swallowed the hook that cannot be seen, then use a long-handled line cutter and cut the leader/line as close to the fish as safely possible so that they are not trailing large amounts of line that could reduce post-release survival.

- Help revive the fish by slowly towing it in the water until its color or energy returns (5 minutes or more). Mostly highly migratory species must be kept water flowing over their gills to breathe. With the boat or gear, slowly move forward while keeping the fish's head in the water.
- If hooked, and hook is visible in the body or mouth, use a bolt cutter to remove the hook barb, and then remove the hook.
- Don't wrap your finders, hands or arms in the line when brining a marlin to the boat – you might get pulled overboard.
- Don't lift them using the branch line, especially if hooked.
- Do not lift using thin wires or cables or by the tail alone.

Fishing vessels should have readily available on deck and easily accessible by crew, a lifting device, bolt cutter, dehooker/disgorger, and line-cutter for safe release of live caught marlins.



**Please direct all queries and concern to:**  
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