



## **REGIONAL ACTIVITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN OSPECA AND TBF**

**To Standardize Criteria for the Sustainable  
Management of Sport and Tourism Fishing**

Nicaragua, 19 February 2009

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Tourism Fishing**

The member countries of Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA), represented by the Pro Tempore President of OSPESCA, Lic. Steadman Fagoth Muller, Executive President of Instituto Nicaragüense de la Pesca y la Acuicultura and The Billfish Foundation (TBF), meeting in Nicaragua on 19 February 2009,

**WHEREAS**

1. On 1 July 2005, the fishing authorities of the Central American countries have undertaken a Fisheries and Aquaculture Integration Policy for the purpose of establishing a common regional system to increase integrated participation of the Central American Isthmus countries, as well as to contribute to the appropriate and sustainable use of fishing resources and aquaculture products.
2. The marine resources known as billfishes, have a high potential in Central American waters and high economic and social value, in the responsible practice of sport fishing throughout the Central American Isthmus.
3. For this reason it is important and necessary to ensure long-term conservation and sustainable use of these resources and other highly migratory fish species, and therefore the integration policy considered sport fishing associated to tourism as a priority strategic action.
4. To this effect, on 26 February 2008, the Pro Tempore President of OSPESCA signed a cooperation agreement with The Billfish Foundation, called in this document the OSPESCA/TBF Agreement, for the purpose of implementing and supporting the execution of a harmonized regional action plan for biological and socio-economic research and management to strengthen the conservation, management and sustainable harvesting of highly migratory marine species that are vital to foster sport fishing and tourism fishing in the Central American Isthmus.
5. It is indispensable to establish regional coordination and cooperation links to manage common interest fisheries through the possibility of standardizing criteria on fishing policies as well as to implement these policies in regional agreements.

Therefore, OSPESCA and TBF:

## AGREE:

**FIRST:** Starting in the first quarter of 2009, to define and promote a Regional Action Plan on the basis of the activities described in this Agreement, for the purpose of obtaining the scientific and technical foundations on which to base the harmonization of regional criteria for the sustainable management of sport fishing; the plan shall have the financial support of TBF, in particular for institutional strengthening.

**SECOND:** To institutionalize a regional working group consisting of technical staff from the fisheries institutions of the Central American countries, supported by the SICA/OSPESCA Regional Unit, promoting the participation of representatives from longline fisheries and sport fishing to implement the plan of action.

**THIRD:** To undertake a regional inventory of the areas currently designated for sport fishing or those with significant potential to carry out this important activity, that will enable integrated promotion of the development of sport fishing and related activities in the short, medium and long term.

**FOURTH:** To support OSPESCA and thereby the competent offices, in the consolidation of the Regional and National Fisheries Registry, in particular with regard to information pertaining to sport fishing.

**FIFTH:** To explore the viability of identifying specific zones and seasons dedicated to sport fishing, in accordance with the legislation in force.

**SIXTH:** To define and standardize the creation of a Regional Statistical Information System of sport and tourism fishing activities and of the catches by the vessels in these fisheries, with emphasis on species such as: Sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), Blue Marlin (*Makaira nigricans*), Striped Marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*), White Marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*), Black Marlin (*Makaira indica*), Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) and Mahi mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*)

**SEVENTH:** To develop a billfish tagging program in order to generate information on the migration of these species.

**EIGHTH:** To promote regional and national regulations that will take into account, among other things:

- 8.1 Diversifying sport fishing and protecting and assigning value to the region's landscape and environmental surroundings.
- 8.2 Promoting the development of sport fishing infrastructure.
- 8.3 Using good practices (fishing gear and methods) in the capture of billfishes, in particular the "catch and release" method.

8.4 Establishing the mandatory use of more appropriate and environmentally friendly fishing gear for the sustainable use of the target species, especially the use of circle hooks when natural bait is used.

8.5 Harmonizing sport fishing management measures.

**NINTH:** To formulate and propose management and conservation tools for the species in the fisheries and for improvement of the natural marine environment, to foster the recovery of the species and to obtain biological, fisheries and socio-economic data, to enable the definition and implementation of actions and policies for the development and promotion of sport fishing activities in the Central American Isthmus.

**TENTH:** To promote and disseminate the scheduling of dates that will enable establishing a Central American series of regional responsible sport fishing events.

**ELEVENTH:** To jointly seek between OSPESCA and TBF other financial resources needed in the region to consolidate the harmonization of criteria for the sustainable management of sport fishing.

Nicaragua, 19 February 2009

**Signed by:**

**For OSPESCA**

  
Steadman Fagoth Muller  
Pro Tempore President of OSPESCA



**For TBF**

  
Russell S. Nelson, PhD  
Chief Scientist