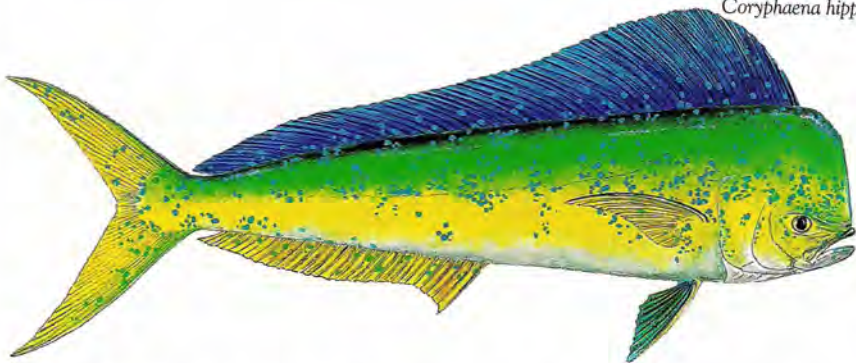


Dolphin

Coryphaena hippurus



DESCRIPTION: The most colorful of pelagic gamefish, the Dolphin is a blaze of blue and yellow or deep green and yellow when in the water, and sometimes shows dark vertical stripes as well when excited. Small dark spots on sides. Dorsal fin extends nearly from head to tail. Head is very blunt in males (bulls); rounded in females (cows).

SIZE: Schooling fish run in similar sizes, from around a pound to nearly 20 pounds at times; larger fish are loners, or else pairs—bull and cow. Big bulls often reach 50 pounds in weight and can exceed 80 pounds on rare occasion. Large cows generally top out at 40 pounds or so. World record 88 pounds.

FOOD VALUE: None better.

GAME QUALITIES: Top of the heap in any weight class—speedy, strong and acrobatic.

TACKLE AND BAITS: With the democratic Dolphin, anything goes. Private-boat anglers typically seek to find a school by trolling or by running and searching for visual signs. Once a school is located, it can usually be kept around the boat by restrained chumming with cutbait and/or by keeping at least one hooked fish in the water at all times. A hot school will eagerly accept jigs or, for that matter, all sorts of casting baits, including flies and popping bugs. If strikes slow down, cutbait often does the trick. Big or wise fish may insist on live baits. Countless Dolphin are also caught, both by design and incidentally, on the entire gamut of rigged trolling baits and artificial lures.

FISHING SYSTEMS: Trolling; Drifting; Casting.

OTHER NAMES:

Dorado

Mahi Mahi

Dolphinfish

RANGE: All offshore waters of the Gulf; unpredictably, it sometimes wanders fairly close to shore.

HABITAT: Dolphin roam the open Gulf in a continuous hunt for food. Anglers seek them along rafted weedlines and around any sort of large floating object. The location of schools may also be given away by feeding birds, particularly frigate birds.