



INTERNATIONAL GAME FISH ASSOCIATION

October 5, 2012

Letter from IGFA,

Today, President Obama signed the *Billfish Conservation Act* into law, effectively banning the importation of all billfish into the continental United States. The signing marks the culmination of a united undertaking by a diverse coalition of angling and conservation organizations working in cooperation with a bipartisan group of congressional champions. Although there are no commercial fisheries targeting billfish in the US, the US has been the largest importer of billfish in the world, importing about 30,000 billfish annually.

"This is a tremendous success for these highly migratory species," National Coalition for Marine Conservation President (NCMC) Ken Hinman said. "Marlin, sailfish, and spearfish do not know country boundaries and travel through three of the planet's oceans. Giving them greater protection in the United States sets the stage for better protection worldwide."

With the largest buyer out of the market, the NCMC and the International Game Fish Association (IGFA), who championed the bill, will now turn their attention to the international challenges facing these imperilled species. And with populations of three species of marlin having declined by more than 50%, their efforts come not a moment too soon.

"Recreational anglers and ocean conservationists have been the primary supporters behind the *Billfish Conservation Act*," IGFA President Rob Kramer commented, "and I am confident that with this strong step by the United States, we will be able

to raise support for more robust measures elsewhere."

The support of the *Billfish Conservation Act* by groups like the American Sportfishing Association, the Center for Coastal Conservation, the Coastal Conservation Association, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, Keep America Fishing, the National Marine Manufacturer's Association, OCEARCH and numerous partners in the environmental community played an integral part in the bill's success.

"We have sound science that indicates that billfish are not doing well on a global level," IGFA Conservation Director Jason Schratwieser added. "Better international protection for these fish benefits open ocean ecosystems and recreational anglers around the world."



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