

## 2024 NZSFC Nationals Supported by Pelagic: Comprehensive Tournament Report

The 2024 New Zealand Sportfishing Council (NZSFC) Nationals, supported by Pelagic, unfolded as an exhilarating showcase of angling prowess, camaraderie, and sportsmanship. Anglers from all corners of New Zealand converged for eight days of intense competition, highlighting the nation's rich fishing culture and the passion of its anglers.

### Day 1: Kickoff and Initial Battles

The tournament kicked off with great anticipation, as 1,139 anglers from various clubs set out from locations such as Whangaroa, Tutukaka, Marsden Cove, Mercury Bay, New Plymouth, Wellington, and Hawkes Bay. The Mercury Bay Game Fishing Club led the charge with an impressive turnout of 168 anglers, setting the tone for a spirited competition. Notable battles ensued in the Albacore, Blue/Black Marlin, Kahawai, Shark, Skipjack, Snapper, Swordfish, Trevally, and Yellowtail categories.





### Day 2: Intensifying Rivalries

Day 2 saw the competition intensify, with over 1,200 anglers now engaged in the tournament. Noteworthy catches included a 192.8kg Blue Marlin, 113.1kg Striped Marlin (with 43 tagged and released), and a 31.6kg Tuna, showcasing the diversity and abundance of marine life in New Zealand's blue waters. Interclub rivalries added an extra layer of excitement, with clubs vying for supremacy in various categories.

### Day 3: Club Dominance and Individual Feats

As the competition entered its third day, anglers continued to reel in impressive catches, further highlighting their skill and determination. The Wellington Surfcasting & Angling Club made a strong showing in the Kahawai category, while the Hawkes Bay Sports Fishing Club dominated the Yellowtail division. The Whangaroa Sport Fishing Club also made its presence felt, leading in the Shark category, only to be challenged by the team Little Einsteins from down the road in Tutukaka in the coming days.

### Day 4: Midway Mark and Conservation Efforts

The halfway point of the tournament was marked by a significant milestone, with over 100 Striped Marlin recorded so far, the majority of which were tagged and released—a testament to the anglers' commitment to conservation. The total number of participants increased to 1,320, with more keen anglers joining as they secured some time off work, thus far representing 107 teams, adding to the event's competitive spirit.

### Day 5: Shifting Tides and New Leaders

Day 5 brought about a shift in the leaderboard, with CD Rods' top team, Escapade, from Whangarei Deep Sea Anglers Club, surging ahead with 1,900 points. The Broadbill Swordfish category witnessed intense competition, while the Yellowtail Kingfish and Trevally categories showcased impressive catches from various clubs.

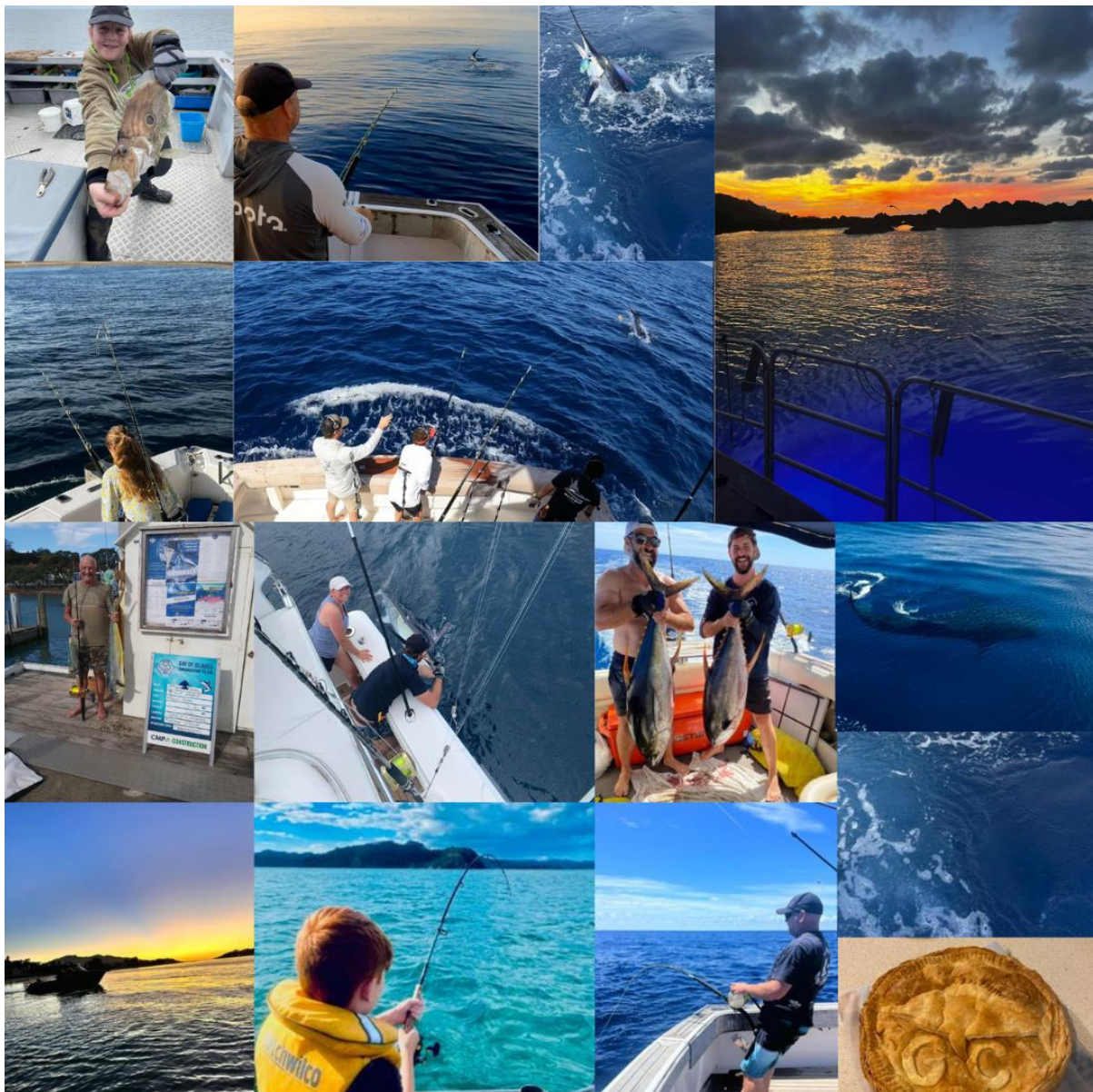


**Day 6: Dominance and Triumph**

Tauranga Sport Fishing Club's vessel, "Lady Doreen," emerged as the leader for the Nationals in the Blue/Black Marlin category, while Mercury Bay Game Fishing Club's "Smuggler" claimed victory for the Day in the Mahimahi category. Counties Sport Fishing Club's "Phleigh" dominated the Striped Marlin section, underscoring the club's expertise in this category.

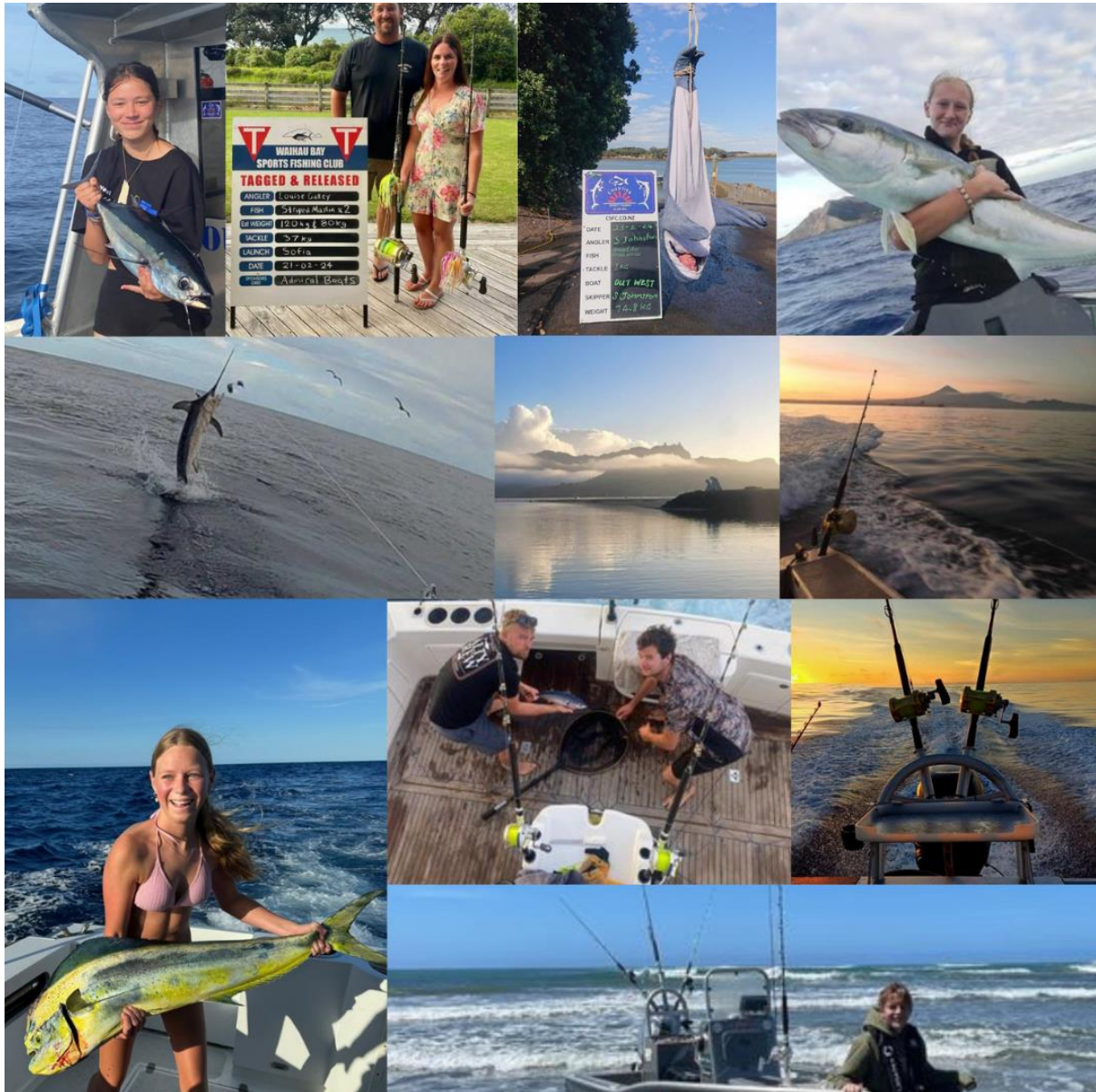
**Day 7: Achievements and Milestones**

Day 7 marked another milestone with a total of 200 Striped Marlin recorded so far, with an impressive 95% tagged and released. Notable performances included Gary Pearce from Counties Sport Fishing Club landing a 100.2kg Striped Marlin on 10kg line, showcasing exceptional angling skill with this notable 10:1 fish.



## Day 8: The Grand Finale and Final Results

As the tournament reached its final day, 1388 anglers were determined to give their all in a bid to secure top honours. The day culminated in the announcement of the winners across all categories, with each angler and club celebrated for their achievements and contributions to the sport.



**\*\*\*\* Notable Champions at conclusion of competition, Notwithstanding 48-hour disputes period:\*\*\*\***

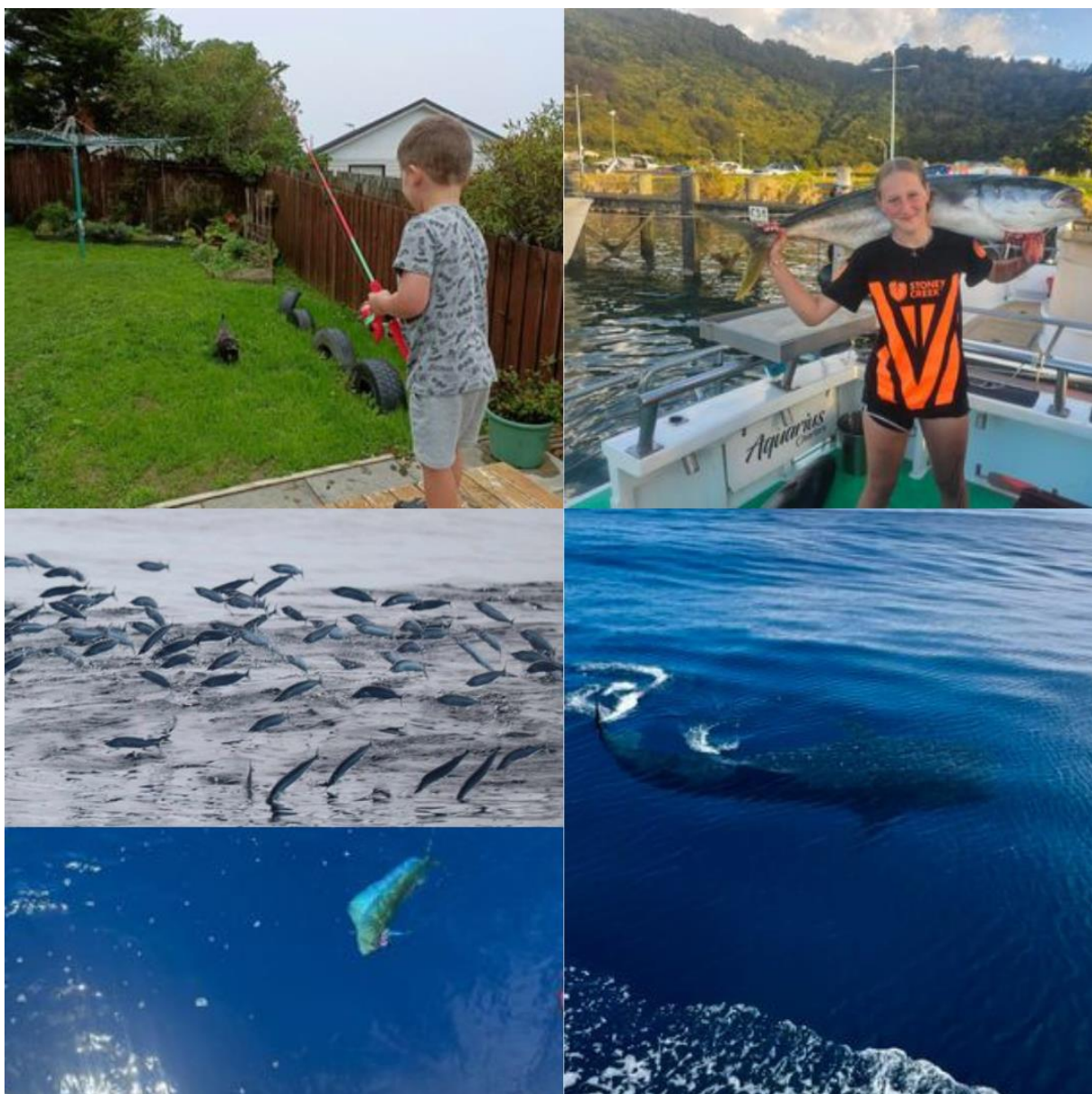
### Section 1 - CD RODS TOP TEAM:

The CD Rods Top Team category witnessed a fierce battle, with the top three teams showcasing exceptional skill and determination over the eight days of fishing. In the end, it was Kyca Kola representing Counties Sports Fishing Club that emerged victorious, attaining an impressive 1984.32 points. They were closely followed by Kylee

from Counties SFC with 1966.25 points, and Escapade from Whangarei Deep Sea Anglers Club with 1900 points, with a mere 84.32 points separating them, highlighting the intense competition.

**Section 1 – Albacore:**

In the Albacore category, Good Lures representing Hawkes Bay Sports Fishing Club secured the top spot with 814.88 points, demonstrating their prowess in targeting this species. Sea Witch representing Wellington Surfcasting & Angling Club followed closely with 747.50 points, while team Oarsim from New Plymouth Sport & Underwater Club secured the third spot with 611.67 points (Also winning the Skipjack and Slender Tuna) These results showcasing the diversity of clubs excelling in this category.



**Section 1 – Blue/Black Marlin:**

The Blue/Black Marlin category saw Lady Doreen representing Tauranga Sport Fishing Club emerge as the champion with 1200 points, showcasing their skill and dedication. Kylee from Counties SFC secured the second position with 766.50 points, followed by Ocean Monarch from Tauranga SFC with 635.14 points. A total of 19 Blue Marlin were caught during the eight days of fishing, highlighting the abundance of this species in New Zealand waters.

**Broadbill Swordfish:**

In the Broadbill Swordfish category, the competition was fierce as anglers aimed to conquer one of the ocean's most challenging species. Team Swordfish Mojo, representing the Bay of Islands Swordfish Club, emerged victorious with an impressive 4800 points, showcasing their exceptional skill and expertise in targeting these elusive giants. Their dedication and strategy paid off, securing them the top position in this demanding category.

Adding to the excitement of the tournament, renowned TV personality and fishing legend Matt Watson shared his unforgettable experience participating in the NZ Sport Fishing Nationals aboard his new boat, 'Swordfish Mojo'. Despite facing initial challenges, Matt and his team persevered, ultimately landing an impressive tally of 8 swordfish, along with a thresher shark and a striped marlin.

Matt's reflections on the week encapsulated the spirit of the tournament – a perfect blend of competition, camaraderie, and pure love for the sport. Despite the inevitable challenges and setbacks, the joy of being out on the water with fellow anglers made every moment memorable. As a bonus, Matt and his crew emerged as the top swordfish boat in New Zealand, adding an extra layer of accomplishment to an already unforgettable experience.

Following closely behind, No Limits from Counties SFC secured the second position with a commendable 3000 points, demonstrating their proficiency and determination in the face of stiff competition. Brenda L from Warkworth Gamefish Club also put up a strong performance, claiming the third position with 2400 points, further highlighting the high level of talent among anglers in the tournament.

Throughout the event, a total of 34 Broadbill Swordfish were caught, testament to the skill and perseverance of the participating anglers. Each catch represented a significant achievement, as these majestic creatures are known for their elusive nature and formidable fighting spirit.

**Sect 2 NZ Champion Angler:**

The NZ Champion Angler category witnessed outstanding performances from individual anglers across various species. Joe Bicknell representing Hawkes Bay emerged as the champion in the Albacore category with a single fish worth 339.19 points. Ethan Brierley representing Hauraki Gulf SFC showcased his skill in the Kahawai category, scoring 279 points. Terry King representing Doubtless Bay secured the top position in the Kingfish category with his fish worth 225.00 points. James Mitchell representing Whangamata Ocean Sports Club demonstrated his prowess in the Mahimahi category with a fish worth 83.47 points. Brent Miles representing Counties SFC showcased his angling skills in the Snapper category with his top fish worth 528.00 points.

**Section 4b Champion Angler Striped Marlin:**

In the Champion Angler Striped Marlin category, a total of 260 striped marlin were recorded for the week, with an impressive 95% tagged and released. Rowan White representing Counties emerged as the champion with his 7 tagged striped marlin scoring 4200 points. Daniel Franks representing Raglan secured the second position with his 6 tagged striped marlin scoring 3600 points. Jack Mountain representing BOISC secured the third position with his 6 tagged striped marlin scoring 3600 points, taking more time to get his 6th tag, thus securing the third place.

**Section 5 Carol Atwood Memorial Trophy – Most Meritorious Tuna:**

In the Carol Atwood Memorial Trophy category, Joe Bicknell from Hawkes Bay emerged as the champion, scoring 339.13 points from his 13.57kg Albacore caught on 4kg line, showcasing his exceptional skill and determination in this challenging category.

**Celebrating Excellence and Looking Ahead**

The 2024 NZSFC Nationals supported by Pelagic was a celebration of angling excellence, showcasing the talent, passion, and sportsmanship of New Zealand's anglers. Congratulations to all the winners, participants, sponsors, weighmasters, and recorders for making this event a resounding success. A special thanks to Pelagic for their generous support. As the sun sets on this year's tournament, anticipation builds for next year's event, promising another unforgettable showcase of Kiwi fishing culture.