

The Worlds First Carbon Negative Fishing Tournament By Captain Dan Kipnis

I would like to respond to Byron Stout's January 9th article regarding the world's first carbon neutral fishing tournament.

My involvement as founder of three south Florida billfish tournaments, Miami Billfish (26th Year), Florida Billfish Masters and The Sailfish Tournament, as well as being the fishing coordinator for eleven other fishing tournaments and with my long time participation in Florida fisheries through involvements in fisheries management and conservation, environmental causes, the fishing industry both recreational and commercial and as proponent for the industry, has given me a substantial level of respect and values in the angling community. This acknowledgment goes along way in turning the tide of skepticism about global warming, helping to motivate a powerful boating community into taking action on this critical issue.

Unfortunately, billfishing is inherently carbon intensive. Anglers will fish every chance they get regardless of whether there is a tournament or not. Regarding global warming, the same green house gases (GHG) will still be added to the atmosphere. For example, getting to a location off Ft. Meyers where a billfish might be caught entails a good 60 mile run. Fortunately off southeast Florida good sailfishing is a mere three miles offshore and weekly tournaments during the sailfish season are a sound economic driver for our industry. Unlike many fisheries, sailfishing in south Florida is a robust conservation oriented fishery that was initially promoted and championed by billfish tournaments. Our tournaments were the first ones to go all release, mandate the use of circle hooks, eliminate tagging to reduce release stress and promote a myriad of conservation causes. In the case of the Miami Billfish Tournament, over a million dollars has been raised and distributed to conservation and the habitat.

Following these principals, for the first time ever, a fishing tournament is trying to operate on a carbon neutral or carbon negative basis. To accomplish this goal the Sailfish Tournament has calculated its CO₂ footprint and has purchased climate mitigation credits that will more than offset its green house gas output for the weekend. Additionally, in conjunction with Environmental Defense I have developed a tournament greening program that will enable other tournaments be they salt or freshwater, inshore or offshore to participate in the protection and enhancement of the natural world we hold so dear. Participating tournaments offer Environmental sponsorships to interested parties raising cash used to purchase climate mitigation credits. These credits will go directly to the capture and use of agricultural methane gas (23 times more powerful that CO₂ as a green house gas) and its conversion into clean electricity. This is not a carbon credit "slight of hand" trick. The methane is physically captured and used to create electricity.

Additionally, the participating tournaments will have a profound educational effect on the public due to their broad reach and popularity. The solution to the problems of catastrophic climate change lie with the people and the power of "ONE" combined over and over. What better way to reach a passionate angling public than through tournaments? I have encountered skepticism and ridicule many times in the past and I am sure it will continue into the future, but this only strengthens my resolve to continue with this critical message. I have found that many more people appreciate the message than those wishing to ridicule it. The resounding response of audiences at one of my "Global Warming - A Fishing Report" Power Point presentations is all I need to know that anglers and the public at large desire answers and when given, a direction to take.

To this end, angler's and boater's new and expanded awareness of the risks we face with our resource will shepherd in new awareness and sensibility ushering in a more conservative and sustainable approach to the passions we share in our sport. The world will be a better place.

Captain Dan Kipnis, who has held multiple fishing world records, serves as a director at large for the Florida Wildlife Federation and chairs the Economic, Social and Health Committee for the Miami-Dade County Global Warming Task Force.

Contact:

Captain Dan Kipnis
3156 Royal Palm Av.
Miami Beach, Fl. 33140
305-672-3807
kipnisd@atlanticbb.net