

# BLUE MARLIN

*Makaira nigricans*



courtesy NOAA

photo by NOAA:

[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/hmsdocument\\_files/BILLFISH.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/hmsdocument_files/BILLFISH.htm)

## Billfish Basics

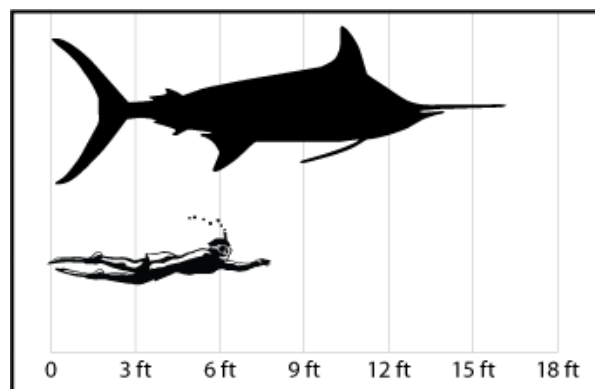
**Diet:** mackerel, dolphinfish, tuna, sardines, anchovies, herring, squid

**Size:** Up to 16 feet (5.0 m) and 2000 pounds (906 kg)

**Lifespan:** Up to 28 years

## Range and Habitat:

Preferring the blue water of the open ocean, blue marlin spend most of their lives far out at sea, following warm (greater than 75° F) ocean currents. Scientists once believed that blue marlin in the Atlantic were a different species than those found in the Indo-Pacific, but genetic studies have concluded that they are different stocks of the same species. Providing further support for the existence of a single pantropical species, tagging studies have documented interocean movement. One blue marlin tagged off Delaware in the Atlantic waters of the United States was recaptured near the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean.



## An Eye for a Meal

The blue marlin's eyes are specifically adapted to cope with the low light conditions of deeper water where they often hunt for food. The upper part of the retina, the part that looks down into the deep, contains a dense arrangement of enlarged photoreceptors called twin cones that are specialized for light sensitivity but cannot discern color. The lower part of a marlin's eye contains smaller twin cones as well as single cones that enable the marlin to distinguish hues, enhancing the contrast between light and dark objects as the fish looks up toward the bright sunlight.

for more info, visit <http://www.takemarlinoffthemenue.org>