

# 2025 NZSFC Nationals Supported by Pelagic NZ – Full Wrap-Up



Dylan Hull sporting his new Nationals shirt for 2025 during the competition

The 2025 NZSFC Nationals have drawn to a close, leaving behind eight days of grit, glory, and game fishing at its finest. With 811 fish caught across 27 clubs, this year's competition proved once again that New Zealand is home to some of the world's best sport fishers.

From the brutal opening days of "character-building conditions" to the final frenzy as last-minute entries hit the water, the 2025 Nationals tested every angler's skill, patience, and ability to adapt. In a year when the weather demanded a change in tactics, those who could pivot their approach rose to the top, while others were left wishing they'd been more flexible.

## Weather, Adaptation, and the Art of Strategy

If there was a lesson to take from this year's Nationals, it was this: change or be left behind. The first few days saw testing conditions, with many boats hunkered down waiting for a break in the weather. But the fish were still there for those willing to work with what they had.

We saw the West Coast clubs and Hawkes Bay anglers making early gains, capitalizing on their local weather advantages. With strong winds and unpredictable seas, some north eastern based anglers switched tactics completely, shifting focus to snapper, kahawai, trevally, and kingfish in sheltered waters while waiting for their shot at the big pelagic species.

By Day 5, the weather began to turn, leading to a flurry of activity as boats made up for lost time. Those who had been biding their time surged forward, proving that the Nationals aren't won in a single day—it's about playing the long game, managing your points, and making every fish count.

## Tagging Takes Centre Stage

This year's Nationals once again showcased the NZSFC's commitment to conservation, with record-setting tag-and-release efforts.

- **Striped Marlin:** 95 caught, **93 tagged (97.89%)**, including **13 using NZ's N-Series tags**.
- **Broadbill:** 28 caught, **21 tagged (75%)**, including **8 with N-Series tags**.
- **Shark:** **100% of the 12 caught were tagged**.
- **Tuna:** 205 caught, with **160 tagged (78%)**.

Tagging efforts were led by Maz Dunn of Mercury Bay, who topped the Striped Marlin section with 7 tagged fish (4,200 points), and Danny Bos of Muriwai, who secured Tag & Release Broadbill champion with 5 tagged fish.

A special highlight of the tournament was the successful deployment of a pop-off satellite tag on a striped marlin by NZSFC's immediate past president, Ian Steele, fishing with the New Plymouth Sportfishing and Underwater Club. This satellite tag will provide invaluable data on the movements, depth preferences, and behaviors of marlin, helping to improve the future of fisheries management.

## Standout Performances & National Champions

While every angler had their moment on the water, a few names stood out in the battle for NZ's top fishing honours.

## Most Impressive Individual Efforts

- **NZ Champion Line Weight Broadbill Angler:**  
**Danny Bos (Muriwai SFC) – 236.4 kg on 37 kg line**  
*Danny dominated the broadbill section, securing 3,638.92 points with five tagged and one weighed fish.*
- **Most Points Team Tuna:**  
**Aquarius (Whakatane SFC) – 30 yellowfin tuna tagged, 4,500 points**  
*A masterclass in targeting **volume over size**, proving that consistency is key.*
- **Carol Atwood Memorial Trophy:**  
**Tania Randrup (Son de la Mer, Waihou Bay SFC) – 37.00 kg on 8 kg line, 462.50 points**  
*A top effort from one of the standout female anglers of the tournament.*
- **Champion NZ Angler Kingfish:**  
**Ian Carrick (Southern SFC) – 11.18 kg on 10 kg line, 111.80 points**  
*The only weighed kingfish of the tournament, proving that sometimes, patience pays off.*
- **Champion NZ Angler Snapper:**  
**Lee Drummond (New Plymouth SFC) – 5.245 kg on 1 kg line, 524.50 points**  
*Light tackle, precision casting, and masterful fish-fighting skills secured Drummond's title.*
- **Champion Line Weight Angler – Kahawai:**  
**Lee Drummond (New Plymouth SFC) – 2.72 kg on 1 kg line, 272.00 points**  
*A second title for Drummond, showing that sometimes **finesse trumps brute force** in fishing.*

## Top Teams & Clubs

The battle between clubs was **fiercely contested**, with **some of the closest finishes we've seen in years**.

- **CD Rods Top Team Trophy:**  
**Team Oarsim (New Plymouth SFC) – 7 fish, 1,638.50 points**
- **Most Points Team Albacore:**  
**Kaizen (Pegasus Bay GFC) – 3 fish, 926.50 points**
- **Most Points Team Skipjack & Slender Tuna:**  
**Lexington (Hawkes Bay SFC) – 3 fish, 490.25 points**

*Just 1.25 points ahead of Rapid Fire (Hawkes Bay SFC) in a mates-vs-mates showdown.*

- **Most Points Team Yellowtail:**  
**Marlena (Whangaroa SFC) – 5 fish, 510 points**

## **Final Day Madness**

With one day left - the fight for the top spots was tighter than ever. Some anglers went all in, targeting that one big fish to change their fortunes. Others meandered home, fishing their way back to port past previous hotspots, hoping to end the tournament on a high.

And just when we thought we'd seen it all, breaking news hit:

- **A 16kg wahoo** was caught off Mayor Island on the final day.
- **An albacore of similar size was landed on the way home.**

Though neither fish was part of the Nationals, they proved that the ocean always has one last surprise up its sleeve.

## **The 2025 Nationals in Numbers**

- **811 fish caught from 27 clubs**
- **95 striped marlin caught, 93 tagged (97.89%)**
- **28 broadbill caught, 21 tagged (75%)**
- **12 sharks caught, all tagged**
- **205 tuna caught, 160 tagged (78%)**
- **One pop-off satellite tag successfully deployed**

## **Looking Ahead to 2026**

The 2025 NZSFC Nationals will be remembered as the year of adaptation, where changing strategies, tagging commitment, and the ability to pivot under pressure separated the good from the great.

With record-breaking tagging efforts, new names rising to the top, and some of the closest team battles in years, one thing is clear—the future of NZ sport fishing is bright.

A massive congratulations to all anglers, teams, and clubs who participated in the 2025 NZSFC Nationals supported by Pelagic NZ.

We'll see you next year—bigger, better, and ready for another eight days of world-class sport fishing.



Team Smuggler fishing out of Raglan for Mercury Bay SFC – Blake Wilkins and Maz Dunn