

## Rom Whitaker Wins Governor's Cup Award

When the final standings for the N.C. Governor's Cup Billfish Conservation Series 2015 were announced recently, it was no surprise that Hatteras resident Captain Rom Whitaker was the winner of the charter boat captains category. The North Carolina Governor's Cup Billfishing Conservation Series is an annual sportfishing series operating cooperatively with eight major billfish tournaments held along the Tar Heel coast. The Series, managed by the Division of Marine Fisheries promotes conservation, protection, and preservation of our marine resources. Participating boats or teams are awarded Series points for billfish caught and released and for billfish taken which met tournament minimum size requirements. In 2013, Captain Whitaker was awarded the Dale Ward Conservation Trophy. This award recognizes an individual's effort in billfish conservation and the sportfishing community. At the recent reception for participants in the Governor's Cup held at the Governor's Mansion, Capt. Whitaker received his trophy from Governor Pat McCrory (second from right) while Elaine Whitaker (right) helps (it was heavy) and sons, Cameron (far left) and Rom share in the excitement. Randy Gregory, Fisheries Biologist for the NC Division of Marine Fisheries and in charge of this Series stated that "Rom has been a long time participant in the Series, serves on the NMFS Highly Migratory Species Advisory Board and is a well respected conservation minded captain both in our state and along the East Coast." Captain Whitaker is also on the Board of Directors for NC Watermen United and helped found the organization back in 2005.

