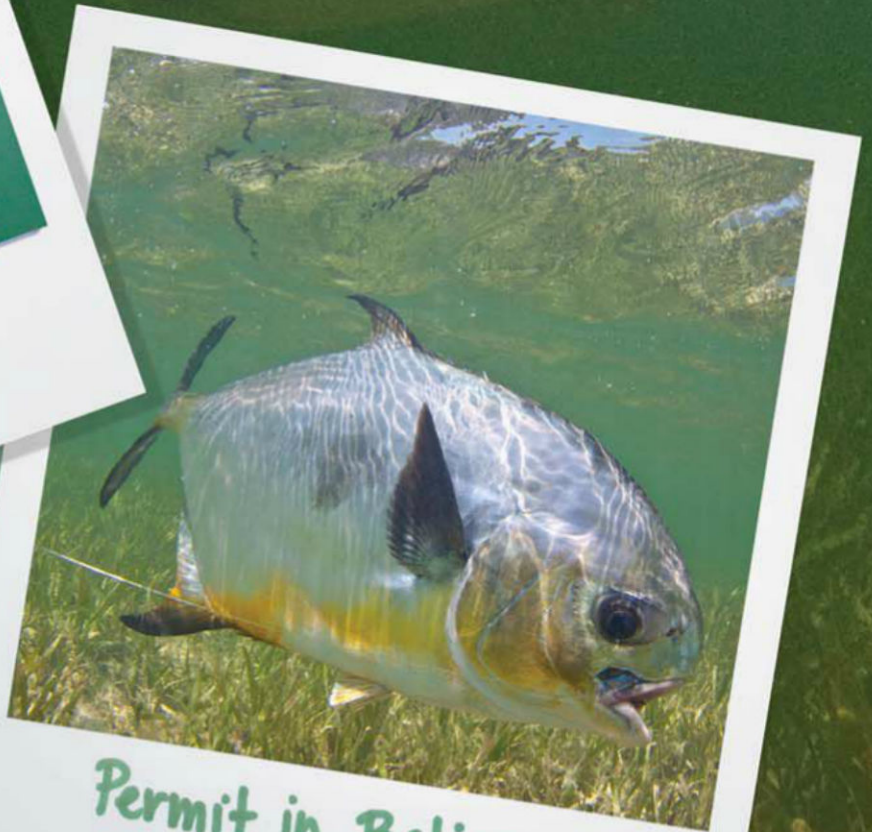


# Fishing in GRAND



Snook in Belize  
June 3, 2012



Permit in Belize  
June 3, 2012



Bonefish in Belize  
2012



# FASHION

## What it takes to catch an IGFA slam

By IGFA World Records Coordinator Jack Vitek

In baseball, a grand slam is hitting a home run with the bases loaded. In tennis and golf, it's winning all of the major tournaments on tour. None of these are easy tasks, and it's no different in the world of sportfishing where a "grand slam" is defined as an angler successfully landing three or four major game fish species within the course of a day. The IGFA recently interviewed members of the Inshore and Offshore Slam Clubs to learn more about all that goes into catching a slam, and why accomplishing one is such a prestigious honor.

### WHAT'S A GRAND SLAM?

Depending on where you fish in the world, there's most likely a variation of a "slam" catering to the available species in that particular area. However, the IGFA's Grand and Super Grand Slam Clubs recognize anglers who catch three or four saltwater game fish, respectively, acknowledged by the international angling community as the most prestigious and well-respected species inshore and offshore.

IGFA receives roughly 100 slam club applications a year. There is no time limit for submitting a slam as long as the catches have been properly documented.





Bonefish, permit, tarpon, and snook are the four eligible species in the IGFA's Inshore Grand and Super Grand Slam Clubs. Mick Kolassa has accomplished the Inshore Grand Slam more times than any other angler in IGFA history and describes the harmony of these species perfectly. "The absolute thrill of having a bonefish or permit strip line from your reel just can't grow old. When it's a tarpon, it's a different thrill; both the raw primal power of a giant over 100 lb and the flat out whacko craziness of a 10 lb tarpon that's just been hooked are great rides. The snook is a different story and, perhaps, my favorite of the four." Together, this collection of fish tests not only the angler's skill and tackle, but their mental and physical strength as well.

For offshore anglers, billfish have long been considered the pinnacle of all game fish species. Marlin, swordfish, sailfish, and spearfish are revered worldwide for their power, speed, intelligence, and beauty. To become a member of IGFA's Offshore Grand or Super Grand Slam Club, an angler must catch three or four different species of billfish in a single day – an achievement less than 200 anglers have accomplished in the IGFA.

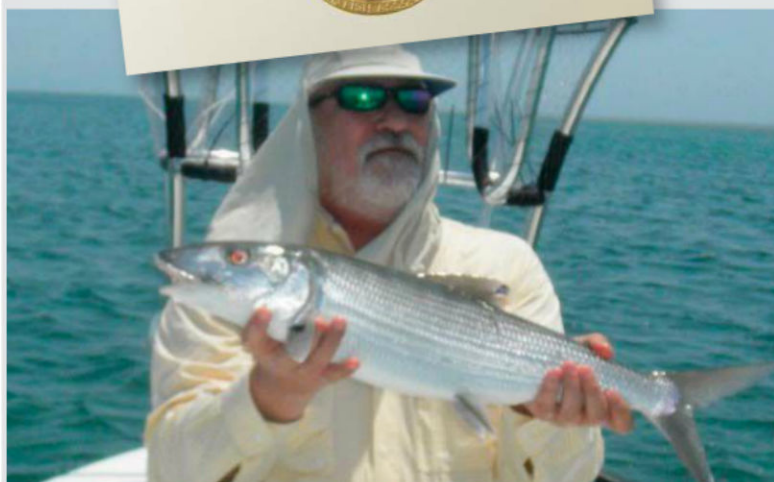
## Slam Appeal

While the targeted species and techniques may be different, both clubs appeal to the saltwater angler seeking the ultimate challenge in their sport: landing three or four of the toughest species in a single day. Some anglers, however, choose to make the task even tougher.

*“I love to look for snook at low tide under and at the edge of mangroves. It requires pinpoint casting, a quick hook set, and a no-nonsense fight to get them out of the brush and into open water. Everything can go wrong, and it often has.”*

*- Mick Kolassa*

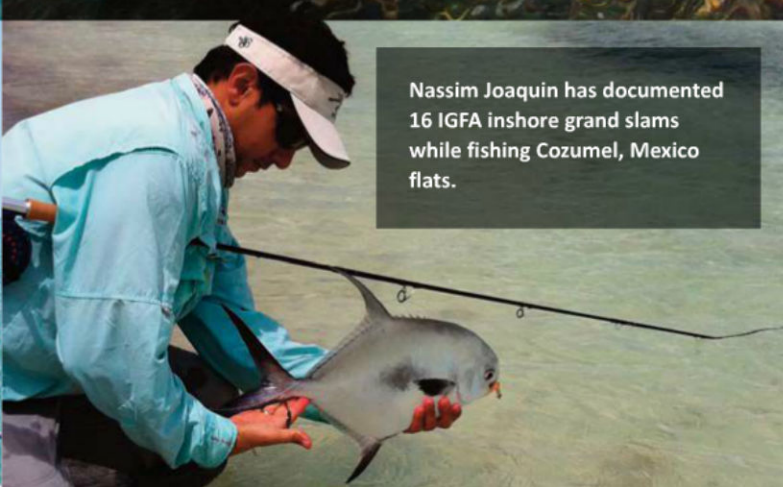
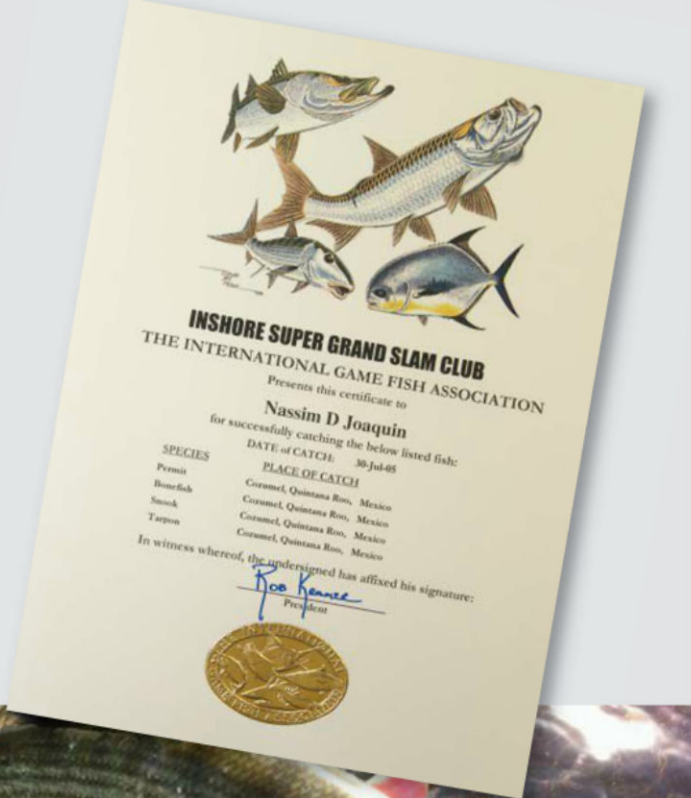
Since recording his first slam in Cozumel Island, Mexico on July 9th, 2000, IGFA Representative Nassim Joaquin has achieved nearly 20 more. "What I have done for the last year, which I personally consider a bigger challenge," Joaquin shares, "is target the combination of tarpon, bonefish and permit." Mick Kolassa



Mick Kolassa has documented 20 IGFA inshore grand slams while fishing the Belizean flats.







disagrees, arguing that snook provide the better challenge. “I love to look for snook at low tide under and at the edge of mangroves. It requires pinpoint casting, a quick hook set, and a no-nonsense fight to get them out of the brush and into open water. Everything can go wrong, and it often has.”

IGFA Representative and multiple record holder Enrico Capozzi is a highly distinguished angler with over 10,000 billfish to his name, including those he caught for his 15 Offshore Slams - 14 Grand and one Super Grand Slam.

“Accomplishing an Offshore Slam is so appealing because it is so difficult to achieve. Even in the few locations where you actually have a chance to land multiple billfish species, it’s such a rare occurrence given all the things that have to go right. It’s an incredible achievement for the crew, captain, and angler.”

**“Accomplishing an offshore slam is so appealing because it is so difficult to achieve. Even in the few locations where you actually have a chance to land multiple billfish species, it’s such a rare occurrence given all the things that have to go right.”**

**- Enrico Capozzi**

Capozzi goes on to describe his most memorable slam, when he became the first angler in IGFA history to accomplish the offshore grand slam on fly. “We were fishing in Costa Rica and looking for tippet class records on marlin. That morning we went out and caught a striped marlin that was too small for the record, and then we were able to land a blue that was also too small. After the blue, we realized that we had something special, so we went looking for sailfish. We ran in to the edge, and before too long had a sailfish come up and we got him. We didn’t end up with any records that day, but that is something very special to me, and something that I will never forget.”

Many anglers – including Mick Kolassa – find the personal challenge associated with slams is what makes them so special. As Kolassa says, “It is difficult fishing, to catch three or four species in a single day. The appeal of the slam is that it’s not a single fish or even a single species, but different fish that, for the most part, you have to catch in different ways. It is quite a challenge. But the bigger the task, the bigger the reward.”



## Catching a Slam

Although some anglers have achieved multiple slams, don't be fooled; accomplishing an IGFA slam is not easy. No matter how skilled the angler, how knowledgeable the captain, and how hot the bite, the odds of landing the necessary species in one day are still low. Location, weather, tackle preparation, crew knowledge, and good ol' fashioned luck must all align. But that doesn't mean you can't increase your chances.

## Location

One of the fundamental keys to successful angling is finding the fish. Individually the species in the Inshore and Offshore Slams have very large geographical ranges and often overlap. However, few locations in the world provide anglers a realistic opportunity to land all necessary species in a single day.

## Inshore

More Inshore Slams have been caught in Mexico than anywhere else in the world. Ascension Bay, Boca Paila, and Espiritu Santu Bay offer anglers ample shots at snook, tarpon, bonefish and permit. Joaquin, a native Mexican angler says, "my favorite place for slams would be Ascension Bay, Mexico. There you have plenty of permit, tons of bonefish and you only need to focus on the tarpon or the snook at the end of the day." He also goes on to praise the inshore fishing in Cuba, specifically places like Cayo Largo and Jardines de la Reina, which have produced large numbers of slams.

But for Kolassa, it's all about Belize. "I believe the chances of a slam or super slam are better around the mainland around Belize City than anywhere else, simply because of the availability of the species." Kolassa makes a strong case, as each of his 21 slams have come from

## What do I need to submit an IGFA SLAM application?

**Criteria you will need when sending in your slam info**

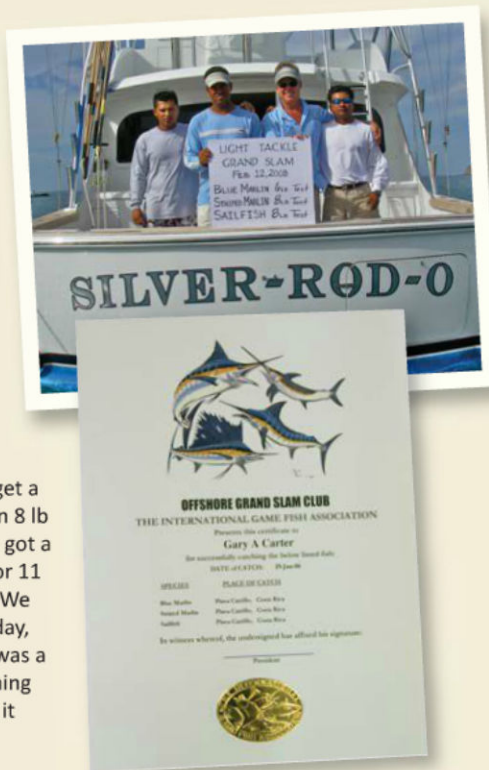


Photography by Pat Ford

## A Passion for Light Tackle Angling Blends into a Pursuit of Slams

**IGFA Trustee Gary Carter on catching Offshore Slams**

IGFA Trustee Gary Carter is a light tackle aficionado with an impressive collection of World Records. His passion for light tackle angling has blended into his pursuit of slams. Carter explains, "The only time I have purposefully left the dock to target a slam is when we were trying to get a slam on 8 lb line. The first day didn't give us our goal: we got a sail and four blues, stayed on the last blue for 11 hours, and got back to the dock at 4:30 am. We took a day off, then were out the very next day, and that's when we got all three species. It was a great reward, because we had taken something that was already hard to achieve, and made it even more challenging."



To qualify for a Grand or Super Grand Slam, the angler must:

- Catch all of the required species in the course of a day and in compliance with IGFA's International Angling Rules.
- Submit a completed, signed and notarized Slam Club Application, which is available on IGFA's website.
- Provide either photos of all the catches or contact information for the captain/guide, or witness to the catches.

**No weights or measurements are required, which encourages the live release of all catches.**

For more information about slams, call IGFA World Records Coordinator Jack Vitek at 954-924-4246 or email [jvitek@igfa.org](mailto:jvitek@igfa.org)



Belize. The Florida Keys have also produced a large number of Inshore Slams, and can offer anglers multiple shots at the required species.

### Offshore

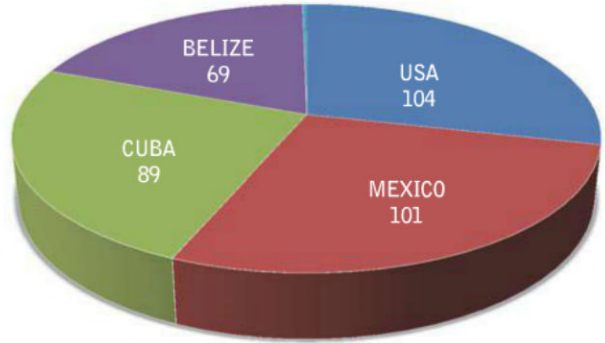
Venezuela's numbers speak for themselves when it comes to Offshore Slams. According to Capozzi, "Hands down, if I were looking to get an Offshore Grand Slam, I would go to Venezuela. You consistently get shots at three, four and even five billfish species in a day. There are other great fisheries out there that produce multiple species, but none compare to Venezuela." He adds, Venezuela is the only place where five species of billfish have been caught by one angler in a single day, achieving what is known as a Fantasy Slam.

IGFA Trustee Gary Carter adds that, "Costa Rica and Panama also offer great opportunities to anglers searching for an Offshore Slam. Costa Rica has plenty of sails, stripes and blues. Panama offers the same, and also gives you a better shot at seeing a black." Other top locations in the northern hemisphere include the Bahamas, Hawaii, and the eastern seaboard of the United States. In the southern hemisphere, Kenya, Brazil, Australia, and New Zealand offer the potential for three to four different species.

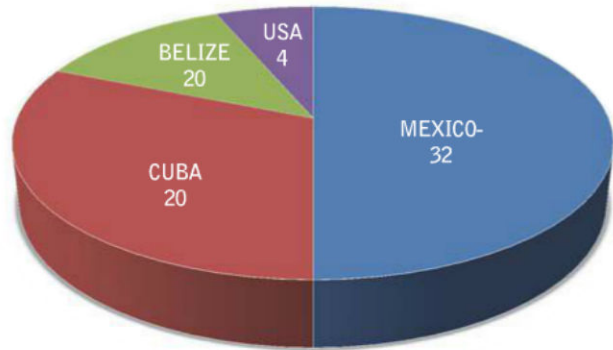
## Where do IGFA Inshore Slams Come From?

(Valid through June 2012)

### IGFA Inshore Grand Slams



### IGFA Inshore Super Grand Slams



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## Preparation & Knowledge

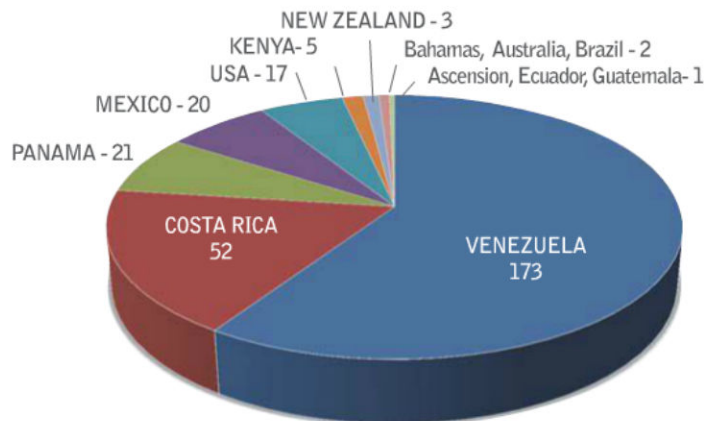
“The biggest thing is knowing what you are trying to do,” explains Carter. “If you are seriously targeting a slam, you’ve got to have an understanding with the other anglers onboard.” When fishing with other anglers, Carter suggests nominating a “slam angler” every day before heading out. The “slam angler” reels in the first fish, and all ensuing bites are distributed based on what species are still needed by the “slam angler.” For example, if the first fish landed is a sailfish, additional sailfish can be taken by other anglers onboard. But should another species come up, like a white marlin, that fish belongs to the “slam angler.”

For Joaquin, it’s all about being prepared for the different species you may encounter. “I usually have three rods rigged and ready, one for permit, one for bonefish, and one for tarpon/snook. One is in my hand and the other two are as close to me as possible. There are areas where as many as three different species may appear out of nowhere. You’ve got to be ready to change rods when that happens.”

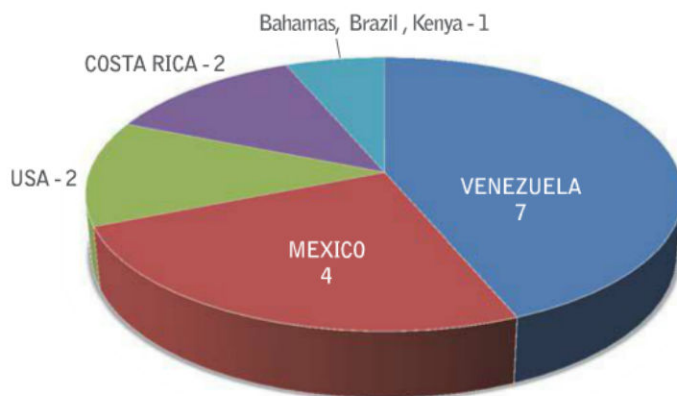
## Where do IGFA Offshore Slams Come From?

(Valid through June 2012)

### IGFA Offshore Grand Slams



### IGFA Offshore Super Grand Slams



Enrico Capozzi with his 10,000<sup>th</sup> billfish.



Yet despite how hot a location may be, or how prepared you are, it is equally important to fish with a captain or guide who is knowledgeable about the fishery, as Capozzi explains. “It’s definitely the location and the knowledge of the captain, because you will have to adjust and move to make the slam happen. For example, if we have two different species of marlin and we are looking for the sail, a good captain will know to pick up and run closer to shore, because that’s where the sails will be. You can get lucky, for sure. But I’d rather have the knowledge.”

### Put in Your Time and Don’t Try

Despite the staggering number of slams between the four anglers interviewed, they all admit most of their slams weren’t planned. As Joaquin explains, “None were ever planned. It



just happens as the day goes by. As I once said, a Grand Slam is a gift, but you have got to work for it." The same is true for Capozzi, who caught each of his 15 Offshore Slams while in pursuit of billfish world records. "For my slams, we are usually looking for a record on one particular fish, so maybe we will get a couple blues and sails, and then we realize we're only one fish away from a slam, and start looking for a striped marlin. Never have I left the dock specifically targeting a Grand Slam."

While it may seem like these anglers just "get lucky" and inadvertently catch multiple slams, don't think they haven't put in their time on the water. "I have spent several thousand hours in pursuit of these fish – sooner or later, even if by accident, I was going to take a slam or two. I think that's true for anyone." Kolassa

states an obvious, but important fact about targeting slams, and sport fish in general - you simply have to put the time in.

## Accepting the Challenge

IGFA's Slam Clubs offer anglers a personal challenge on some of the world's most prestigious game fish species. "In our sport, it's one of the things we lack – defining goals," observes Gary Carter. "Aside from world records, there's not much else. Slams are great angling goals for someone looking for a personal challenge. And for anything you are going to be spending a lot of time on in your life, you have got to have goals." If you love sport fishing and enjoy challenging yourself, set your goals on a great angling challenge - an IGFA Grand Slam.

## IGFA Slam Clubs

### The application process

There are now several types of Slam Clubs – the Inshore Super Grand Slam and Inshore Grand Slam, the Offshore Super Grand Slam and Offshore Grand Slam, the Mediterranean Super Grand Slam and Mediterranean Grand Slam, the Boat Super Grand Slam and Boat Grand Slam, the Atlantic Coast Super Grand Slam and Grand Slam which feature both the Offshore and Inshore categories, the Tuna Super Grand Slam and Tuna Grand Slam, the Pacific Coast Inshore and Offshore Grand and Super Grand Slams, and the North Pacific Grand Slam. Download a Grand Slam Club application via this link

<http://www.igfa.org/images/uploads/files/Grand%20Slam%20Application.pdf>

All Grand Slams have an application fee of \$50 (US). Members receive an embossed certificate depicting their catches and recognition in the *IGFA World Record Game Fishes* book.



**2012 HibT**  
**Kailua-Kona HAWAII**  
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 August 4-10, 2013  
 HAWAIIAN INTERNATIONAL BILLFISH TOURNAMENT  
 COUNTY OF HAWAII  
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## BONTHE HOLIDAY VILLAGE



### TARPON FISHING IN SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone is in the tropics in West Africa

The new fishing camp at Bonthe is now open. Bonthe is a remote, attractive, old town on an island off Sierra Leone. It used to be a trading centre for agricultural commodities. The camp has easy access to the estuaries of the Sherbro and Kittam rivers, home of 12 currently listed IGFA world record catches of tarpon. There is also fishing for barracuda, grouper and jack nearby and for marlin, tuna and sailfish on the shelf 10 miles out to sea. The camp provides luxury accommodation, bar and restaurant. A wide range of seagoing and river boats is available.

Visit our website [bontheholidayvillage.info](http://bontheholidayvillage.info)

Further information is available from Mrs. Samake at

[samake.joy@gmail.com](mailto:samake.joy@gmail.com)