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Notes on Tagging

a. Lowestoft Laboratory - by G.C. Trout

1) Notification of U.K./Liberations

a) Overseas:

As tagging is carried out primarily from research vessels, the first notification is contained in cruise reports distributed to interested countries.

Release lists are prepared as soon as possible after the cruise and circulated to the heads of research organisations of countries likely to be fishing the populations under study.

Serially numbered tags are used and the release lists contain:-

- 1) fish lengths against each serial number,
- ii) release positions of each group of fish (i.e. from each separate trawl haul),
- iii) the date of release, and
- iv) the range of depths encountered during the release period.

b) Interval:

Administrative officers at the major fishing ports, who are responsible for collection of tags and payment of rewards, are also supplied with release lists, so that fishermen may be informed immediately of the release history of each fish returned.

c) Lists from other countries:

These are normally retained at the Lowestoft Laboratory, through which all English recaptures, whatever their origin, are finally channelled.

d) Payment:

A flat rate of five shillings has been instituted for all species (except for the herring which remains at ten shillings), irrespective of the amount of information accompanying the fish or tag.

Returns are summarised annually and the balance of payments between other countries is made at the end of the Financial Year - i.e. March 31st.

e) Publicity:

Coloured posters are displayed prominently on all fish markets liable to handle tagged fish. Information derived with return of tag is listed and includes date, position and depth of water, name of vessel and gears used.

Small handbills are also sent to individual ships, and circular letters to skippers of trawlers explaining the aims of the experiment have also proved effective publicity. An attempt is being made to provide circulars for inclusion in pay packets of both trawler crews and fish market personnel.

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2) In view of the degree of co-operation operating amongst I.C.E.S. countries, it would be advantageous if the procedure of I.C.N.A.F. countries were comparable.

3) As far as U.K.'s work in the I.C.N.A.F. areas is concerned, there is no need for a special meeting on tagging, but the U.K. delegation will be prepared to participate in such a meeting and to amplify this brief statement if necessary

b. Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen - by H. Wood

Tagging Routine

Fish tagging is done from the research vessels, except in the case of herring, haddock and whiting, which may be tagged from commercial fishing vessels as well as from research ships.

Serially numbered tags are used.

At liberation, length is measured and recorded against the serial number in the case of plaice, lemon sole and halibut.

A small sample of scales is taken from lemon sole before release. In the case of round fish, scales are not taken, nor are length measurements made.

A record is kept of date and position of release as well as depth at the tagging position.

The lists of fish tagged are kept at the Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen. They are not circulated to Fishery Officers or to other research institutes.

Rewards

A reward of 10 shillings is paid for the return of herring tags.

A reward of 5 shillings is paid for the return of all other fish tags, along with the return of the fish and information of date and place of recapture.

For tags returned without details of capture the reward is 2/6d.

A reward of 2/6d. is also paid for lobster tags.

Rewards are paid for all foreign tags landed in Scotland. Reciprocal agreements for the payment of all tags are in operation between Scotland, Norway, Holland and U.S.S.R. A reciprocal agreement pertaining to herring is also in force between Scotland, Sweden and West Germany. In all other cases rewards are paid and settlements between Scotland and the countries concerned are made annually, at the end of the financial year, i.e. March 31st.

Tags may be returned through Fishery Officers, who are authorised to pay the appropriate rewards, or may be sent direct to the Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen.

It has been found that Scottish fishermen generally attach more value to information concerning the fish and its movements than to the actual reward. Accordingly, a note is sent to each finder from the Marine Laboratory giving all the known details concerning age, growth and movement. This written record is much appreciated by fishermen.

Publicity

Publicity is achieved by public notices in fish markets and in curing yards, and through the Scottish Fisheries Bulletin.