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Harp and Hooded Seals Tagged and Branded by Canada, 1971-74

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Table 1. Summary of Tagging and Branding.

	Gulf				Front Harps	
	Harps		Hoods		Ad	Yg
	Ad	Yg	Ad	Yg		
1971		A 60	SS 4 (17)	S 13		
1972	L,N 495	B 550	L,LL 39 (68)	N 29		
1973		X 70	XX 3 (6)	X 3	"73" 211	Tags* 991
1974		H 400	"73" (20)			
Totals	495	980	(111)		211	991

*Strap tags of monel metal: Nos. within range 13001-14955

In recent years, adult harp seals and young and adult hooded seals have been branded by means of a flash-branding gun (Homestead, Beck and Sergeant, 1971; 1972) but there have been no recoveries reported to date from this technique. More successful has been branding by means of heat, using either a portable forge built onto a sled, started by propane and wood and continued as a coke brazier (1971, 1972), with conventional hot irons, or a blow torch with template connected to a liquid propane reservoir and carried in a back-pack (1973, 1974). This was applied to young harp and some young hood seals. In the above table young harp seals were branded by this method with a different symbol annually - A, B, X, and H to date.

Tagging was carried out at the Front in 1973 towards a capture-recapture experiment. This was not greatly successful, because of the range limitations of a helicopter, but tag returns can be expected to continue from this experiment. Taken together, tagging and branding should give good information on mixing. Results to date are shown below.

Table 2. Brand recoveries to date from young harp seals branded in the Gulf in experiments, 1971-73.

Tagged/Recovered ICNAF Subarea	1972			1973			1974		
	4	2 & 3	1	4	2 & 3	1	4	2 & 3	1
1972	1		2			2			2
1973									1
1974									

Table 3. Harp seal recaptures from tagging, Front, March 1973; 991 animals tagged.

Year	Season	ICNAF Subarea	Agency	No. Recoveries
1973	Spring	2 & 3	Ships	82)
		2 & 3	Landsmen (C)	55)
	Summer	1	Landsmen (D)	6
	Autumn	2 & 3	Landsmen (C)	1
	Spring	2 & 3	Landsmen (C)	1

In addition one animal tagged in the Gulf in 1969 was recovered in the same area in 1974. It was an adult male. There are not enough such recoveries of tagged animals after attainment of maturity to estimate degree of homing or cross movement (Gulf to Front, etc.) but branding should soon give better results.

References

Homestead, R., B. Beck and D. E. Sergeant. 1971. A portable instantaneous branding device for permanent identification of wildlife. Proc. Eighth Ann. Conf. Biol. Sonar and Diving Mammals, 1971, 12 p., Mimeo.
1972. J. Wildl. Mgmt. 36: 947-949.