

Series No. 1392Document No. 96ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1964Review of Tagging Publicity Methods used by ICNAF Member Countries

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An ICNAF Subcommittee preparing the Marking Symposium held in Woods Hole 1961 reviewed the tagging publicity methods used by member countries in 1958 (McCracken in Redbook 1959, pp. 22-26).

Since then, however, defects in reporting of recaptures have been pointed out. Such defects are of two main sources:

- I. Tags are not observed.
- II. Tags are not reported although observed.

Re I. To improve the observation of tags, more visible tags could be introduced or tags could be fixed on the fish in a better way or position than hitherto used (e.g. in front of dorsal fin instead of in gill cover). Various papers submitted to the North Atlantic Fish Marking Symposium, Woods Hole, 1961 (ICNAF Spec. Publ. 4) deal with this problem and it is supposed that member countries have got new ideas of improvement from this symposium.

Re II. To ensure the reporting of observed tags, member countries use various systems of reporting and various publicity methods to improve the reporting. The Tagging Subcommittee at the 1963 Annual Meeting found that it might be of some value to review once more the various methods and recommended that member countries prepare a short written report of their propaganda and reporting systems for the 1964 meeting (Recommendation 30a) and that member countries make analysis of their tagging experiments so as to discover weaknesses in their reporting systems and where possible make seeding experiments (Rec. 30b). A circular letter concerning these recommendations was distributed to member countries by March 2nd, 1964. Replies have been received from most member countries. In the following a short review of these answers is given together with some remarks of special interest.

1. Summarized lists of taggings are distributed to other laboratories via ICNAF Card Release System. All member countries apparently do so when tagging is carried out in ICNAF Area (See Doc. 3).
2. The Lowestoft Laboratory, England, furthermore informs fisheries officers in main harbours about details of tagging experiments so that these officers can inform fishermen submitting tags about the details of their tag.
3. To inform fishermen about tagging experiments going on, member countries use different announcements. Personal contact is normal for Germany, Iceland, USA, and especially Portugal. Poland and Portugal furthermore announce by posters on board vessels. Many member countries use posters in harbours, fish plants, cold storage plants, etc. Portugal and partly Germany and England also make announcements in fishermen's journals. Canada (St. Andrews) has a special broadcasting program for fishermen, in which

of course tagging experiments are announced. Germany and Poland also give lectures on the problem in fisheries schools. Canada (St. John's) at the present moment announces only by the information on the tag itself.

4. A very important link in the reporting system is what the fisherman has to do with the tag he discovers. Portugal presumably has solved this problem in an excellent simple way. The fisherman simply gives the tag to the captain of the vessel and the captain collects the tags and delivers them to the laboratory when the vessel returns to harbour. Some countries mainly use fisheries or harbour officers as receivers of tags, while Canada (Grande Riviere and St. John's) and Germany have most of their tags delivered (or mailed) directly from fisherman to the laboratory.

5. The information required is similar for all countries. When information is lacking Canada (St. Andrews) uses a special "follow-up card" to ask for additional information.

6. The reward is paid in different ways. Right on the spot paying is used only by Portugal (by captains), England (fisheries officers) and USA. Greenland fishermen go to a special office to get the reward. Canada (St. Andrews) sends the reward out from the laboratory after receiving the tag.

It seems to be normal to pay the full reward although some information is missing. If the fish is delivered together with the tag, Canada pays a fixed extra reward of \$1, while Greenland, England, and perhaps others, pay the value of the fish. The size of the reward varies from \$0.45 to about \$1.60 (US). In addition a lottery system has been introduced in Norway.

7. Most countries, but not all, inform the fisherman about the release data of his return. Canada, Iceland and USA use a map-letter. England informs the fisherman verbally by fisheries officers (see point 2). Poland, Portugal and, to some extent, also USA, publish the name of the fisherman returning the tag in fishermen's journals or on posters. USA furthermore gives main results of their tagging experiments on posters in harbour.

8. No countries regard the reporting by their own fishermen to be poor, although some countries admit that reporting could be better. It is, however, evident that the reporting is not always as good as it ought to be. It is generally agreed that Portuguese fishermen have a very good reporting record. The points in the Portuguese reporting system which enables this fine reporting seems first of all to be the possibility of the fisherman to deliver tags and information to the captain who pays the finder right on the spot, and, secondly, the fine contact between captains and the laboratory. Finally, the publication of the finders' names in fishermen's journals seems to be stimulating.

In addition to this summarized information, the following remarks are worth noting:

Canada, Grand River (Marcotte): We doubt that we are getting the maximum returns. More tags are caught but not returned. To interest the fishermen, it would be necessary to pay them right on the spot when they bring the tagged fish or the tag itself. But on account of our administrative procedure it is impossible to do so.

To improve this situation, we intend in 1964 to ask the managers of cold storage or fish plants to collect the tags for us and to pay the managers \$0.50 for each tag collected. We would supply them the form to be filled. That way the fishermen would be interested in bringing back the whole tagged fish with the certainty of being paid \$2 for it. Otherwise, it is quite complicated for a fisherman to collect tags, to write a letter, etc.

I think we are wrong to haggle over the price to be paid for tag returns. Taggings are very expensive by themselves and we need not to hesitate when the time comes to get the returns and results we expect from those taggings.

Canada, St. John's (Templeman): We place a complete address, amount of reward and request for necessary information on the tag and otherwise do not advertise at present. We believe the reporting of the Newfoundland fishermen to be fairly good. Many of our best tags have had 30-35% or higher returns.

Germany (Messtorff): In several cases data of recaptures are incomplete or uncertain even if reported by fishermen because the finder puts the tagged fish aside without reporting at once... In this direction efforts must be made to improve the reporting system. But it seems to be dangerous to refuse rewards if data of recapture are incomplete.

Iceland (Jonsson): There are certainly some recaptures not reported and we suppose they tend to increase when it becomes commonplace for a fisherman to catch tagged fish.

Poland (Chrzan): The rather small number of tags found by our fishermen in the ICNAF area seems to be due to the mechanical processing lines. It may also be due to the fact that our factory vessels are trawling at higher depths where the tagged fish may be less numerous.

Portugal (Monteiro): A special box for sampling otoliths is now introduced.

U.S.A., Woods Hole: Results of major tagging experiments are published on posters in harbours.

One man in Woods Hole has the primary duty of processing tag returns and generally supervising the tag recovery system to assure its being maintained at peak efficiency.