

ICCAT TAG ACCOUNTING POLICY

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ICCAT

SUMMARY

ICCAT has now accumulated about 11 years of experience handling the buying and shipping of tags for tunas, and in administering the recovery of and rewards for those tags. Inevitably difficulties have occurred; these were accentuated and some new problems created by the extensive tagging carried out during the International Skipjack Year Program.

This document reviews the problems encountered, mentions possible solutions, and then proposes a revised flexible policy which should reduce if not eliminate most of these problems. The SCRS is requested to review this proposal, modify it if necessary, and approve it as a guide for future conduct of ICCAT tagging programs.

RESUME

L'ICCAT dispose maintenant de onze années d'expérience pour ce qui est d'obtenir et diffuser les marques et gérer les retours et récompenses correspondants. Des difficultés se sont parfois présentées, ce qui était inévitable, et les choses sont devenues plus complexes et ardues du fait du degré intensif de marquage effectué dans le cadre du programme d'Année internationale du listao.

Le présent document définit les problèmes décelés, offre des solutions, et propose une version plus flexible des normes, laquelle devrait aider à amoindrir, sinon éliminer, la plupart des problèmes. Le SCRS est prié d'examiner cette proposition, de la modifier si besoin est, et de l'approuver s'il considère qu'elle représente les grandes lignes à suivre pour de futurs programmes de marquage de l'ICCAT.

RESUMEN

ICCAT dispone ahora de once años de experiencia acumulada en la compra y distribución de material de marcado para túnidos, organizando también la entrega de premios correspondientes a su devolución. Naturalmente, hubo que hacer frente a algunos contratiempos inevitables, acentuados en algunas ocasiones con motivo de la campaña intensiva de marcado desarrollada durante el Programa Año Internacional del Listado.

Este documento examina las dificultades encontradas, indica posibles soluciones y propone normas más flexibles que deberían ayudar a reducir, si no a eliminar, la mayor parte de los problemas. Se solicita al SCRS que examine esta propuesta, modificándola si fuera preciso, y que la apruebe para que pueda servir de pauta en las futuras campañas de marcado de ICCAT.

1. Introduction

Since its establishment the Commission has encouraged and engaged in the international cooperative tagging of tunas and tuna-like species.

In 1970, the Sub-Committee on Stock Identification (Convener, A. Jones, U.S.A.) was formed within the SCRS. At the 1971 SCRS meeting, this Sub-Committee established the basic policy and procedure for the accounting of tags and recoveries. The Sub-Committee was dissolved in 1973 and the SCRS has made few changes in the ICCAT tagging policy since then.

When the International Skipjack Year Program (ISYP) started its activities in 1979, the Sub-Committee on Skipjack planned a large-scale tagging program. To suit the special needs of the Program, the Sub-Committee introduced some changes in the tagging policy which were then approved by the SCRS. Some of these changes were applicable only to the ISYP and/or only for tropical tunas, but others affected all species. As a result, there has been some confusion as to the procedure and accounting of tags, release and recovery information, and, particularly, the handling of tag rewards. Earlier in 1982, the Skipjack Coordinator listed some of the difficulties involved, and presented these to the SCRS Chairman. As a result of the correspondence between the Secretariat and the SCRS Chairman, the present document has been prepared to explain the policy currently in effect, discuss the problems encountered and suggest some solutions. Hopefully it will assist the SCRS in formulating decisions on this issue.

2. Tagging policy - past and present

2.1 Policy for supplying tags and tagging materials

2.1.1 Pre-ISYP

Each member country is responsible for purchasing its tagging materials. The Secretariat also purchases tags and other materials (needles, cradles, nets, etc.) and maintains a stock of most items. The materials are sent, on request and free of charge, to those laboratories conducting small-scale tagging experiments. In the past, almost all requests received by the Secretariat were for tags and needles.

2.1.2 ISYP policy

During the two or three years of ISYP data collection, exceptions to the established policy were made to assist developing countries with large-scale tagging. Funds were allotted from both the Regular and Special Skipjack Budgets to support tagging of skipjack and tropical tunas during ISYP cruises. These exceptions, which included shipments of large numbers of tags and needles, were made upon special formal request. Here below is a list of the approximate number of tags sent to the individual countries:

Brazil	1,000
Congo*	6,000
Cuba	5,500
Ivory Coast	9,000
Japan	3,000
Korea	3,000
Portugal	2,100
Senegal	14,300
Spain	6,000
U.S.S.R.	6,600
Total	56,600

Obviously, exceptions were applied not only to developing countries, but to developed countries as well. The reasons were that the country's own tags were not available in time for tagging cruises, or that the country had no access to tag manufacturers, etc. In principle, no further exceptions were admitted after December 31, 1981.

The approximate costs (1980) of this policy were as follows:

Raw material (plastic) for body of tag	\$ 1.30/1,000 tags
Numbering and lettering	260.00/1,000 tags
Tag heads	34.00/1,000 tags
Assembly of bodies and heads (est. by Floy tag)**	45.00/1,000 tags
Shipping and miscellaneous	6.00/1,000 tags
Total	\$346.00/1,000 tags

2.1.3 Possible future problems

With the termination of the ISYP, the amount of tagging will decrease. However, because of the experience gained through the Skipjack Program, the level of tagging by various countries will continue to be higher than before. Furthermore, since many countries cannot manufacture their own tags, they may prefer to continue asking ICCAT for tags rather than to purchase them from foreign manufacturers.

*A part of these tags were transferred to Ivory Coast and Senegal.

**In fact, assembly was performed at the Secretariat at a lesser cost.

We foresee, therefore, that we will continue to be asked to supply tags. (We are already starting to receive such requests.) The ICCAT Secretariat can continue to provide tags until the present stock (approximately 5,000 tags) runs out. The stock may be supplemented by recalling unused tags for which there are no immediate plans. Afterwards, we have a budget allotment to cover only a limited supply of tags for small-scale tagging (e.g. less than 500), as in pre-ISYP days.

The SCRS should consider whether ICCAT should revert to past policy, or establish itself as a supplier of tags. Several other considerations, including control of tag numbers, availability of release information and cost bear on this decision.

2.2 Policy for control of tag numbers

2.2.1 ICCAT policy

Countries which buy their tags for the Atlantic program are supposed to check with ICCAT as to what letter series and numbers should be printed on the tags. All letter series manufactured should then be registered with ICCAT.

2.2.2 Problems

This policy has not been closely followed. As a result, tags with the same identification letters and numbers are being manufactured and released by different countries. As far as our records indicate, we have the following duplications:

A series	Ivory Coast Japan Korea U.S.A.
B series	Canada Japan U.S.A.
R series	U.S.A. ICCAT

Of course all of the above tags have different addresses printed on them. However, if only the number is reported upon recovery without the tag itself, we have a serious identification problem. Moreover, our present computer program only distinguishes tags by number and not by address.

2.2.3 Possible solutions

- Try to control strictly the series numbers before tags are ordered to avoid duplication of numbers.
- Assign pre-selected letter codes (preferably two-letter codes) to each country (e.g., Angola — AN, and Angola can further add another letter such as AN A, AN B, etc.).
- Issue all tags from ICCAT.

2.3 Policy for the administration of release information and identification of release agencies

2.3.1 Pre-ISYP policy

When a country (or agency) releases tagged fish, it is requested to report general release areas and periods, series numbers of tags used, and a summary of other information (such as number of tagged fish by species) to the ICCAT Secretariat. Unfortunately, few countries have followed this request.

The SCRS recommended that the Secretariat announce, on a real-time basis, all the tag releases made by any country. When the Secretariat receives release summaries these are mentioned in the ICCAT Newsletter. Unfortunately, release summaries are notified to the Secretariat so infrequently that the announcements of this information on a timely basis have not been possible.

At the end of the year, the Secretariat requests the submission of detailed data for all tags released. Some countries supply this information, while others send release information only for recovered tags.

2.3.2 ISYP policy

The ISYP maintained the same policy as was established earlier. Because more attention was given to the matter by everyone concerned, more summaries as well as annual details of releases have been reported than before.

2.3.3 Problem

If the release agency is not known, the Secretariat cannot transmit recapture information appropriately. The release agency is not known when non-ICCAT tags are reported without the tag or address, or when ICCAT tags are exchanged between releasing agencies without informing ICCAT.

On occasion, non-ICCAT tags have been returned to the Secretariat with no prior report of their release. Some of these were recovered in Puerto Rico and could have been released in the Pacific Ocean, raising questions of eligibility for reward and entry in the lottery.

2.3.4 Solution

To increase awareness of the problems of duplicate numbers, "mystery tags", and problems arising from exchanges of tags between releasing agencies, ICCAT can circulate an "Annual Tag Return Directory." Such a directory was already circulated in 1982 listing the location of all known manufactured tags by number. It has facilitated direct return of recovered tags from the point of recovery to the releasing agency, and drawn attention to missing or incorrect information which has resulted from neglectful reporting of exchanges.

2.4 Policy for publicity of tag rewards

2.4.1 Pre-ISYP period

Each tagging agency publicized its program by making posters, etc. In addition, ICCAT prepared posters in eight languages (English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese and Arabic) for world-wide distribution.

2.4.2 ISYP period

Posters especially designed for the ISYP were made in three languages through ICCAT (English, French and Spanish). Later a Portuguese version sponsored by ICCAT was made by Cape Verde. Also, a special leaflet was prepared to publicize the program and to inform tag finders of release and recovery data.

2.4.3 Post-ISYP

The SCRS should decide whether posters should be supplied by ICCAT or by individual countries. Posters, less fancy than those of earlier years, can be developed by the Secretariat for general tagging publicity.

2.5 Policy for recovery information

2.5.1 Pre-ISYP period

The agency which releases the tagged fish is responsible for recording receipt of the tag and informing recoverers of release information, as well as for reporting recovery to the ICCAT Secretariat.

All recoveries, with associated release and recovery data, are reported to ICCAT annually as enrollments for the lottery. ICCAT does not attempt to keep track of recoveries between annual calls for lottery data.

If national tags are used (with release agency address on them), most recoveries are sent directly to the releasing agency by the recoverers or through fishery officers at landing points. Some are reported to the ICCAT Secretariat which are then transmitted to the releasing agencies.

ICCAT-supplied tags were first returned to the Secretariat and then transmitted to the releasing agency. A few were returned first to fishery officers in ports, and if the port was in a country which was releasing tags, the tag might be sent directly to the releasing agency (to be forwarded to ICCAT if the tag was not one of theirs).

2.5.2 ISYP policy

The increase of tagging activities resulted in an increased number of tags being received at the ICCAT Secretariat. However, during the ISYP more and more ICCAT tags have been sent directly from fishery officers to the releasing agency. This has been made possible by greater activity of fishery officers in recovering tags, and by circulation of the "Tag Return Directory". The only tags now regularly sent to ICCAT are those recovered in artisanal or sport fisheries.

2.5.3 Problem

See Section 2.3.3 – problems in identifying release agencies

2.6 Policy for paying rewards

2.6.1 Basic policy

The policy established by the Commission in 1971 is as follows (extract from Biennial Report 1970-71, Part III):

- "A. That, if possible a standard amount of reward (U.S. \$2 or closest even amount of local currency equivalent) be paid by all member countries for returned tags. In any event the amount of a tuna tag reward paid by a country should be uniform within that country.
- "B. That the amount of the reward should not be placed on the tag.
- "C. That all rewards will be paid by the countries to whom the recoveries are reported, regardless of the agency that released the tags or the nationality of the reporters.
- "D. That the ICCAT Secretariat make the necessary arrangements with non-member countries to insure that fishermen and other persons who return tags will be paid at once by their agencies. A standard reward is preferred but it is recognized that this will not always be possible. If necessary, the rewards paid by said agencies may be reimbursed later by ICCAT.
- "E. That for recoveries which are sent directly to ICCAT, Madrid, the standard reward be paid by ICCAT.
- "F. That if the total amount of recovery rewards paid by one country exceeds the budget allocated by that country for this purpose, and reasonably based on its own tagging program, ICCAT will reimburse said country for the additional amount...."

Until the Skipjack Program was begun, most countries performing tagging were developed, and since they often had their own addresses on their tags, they handled the payment of the rewards and ICCAT was unaware of the transaction. In the case of some limited recoveries by developing countries, ICCAT may have paid the reward. The Secretariat also paid rewards when the tag was returned first to

the Secretariat. However, such payments were limited only to a few tags per year. Also \$2 per recovery was the standard ICCAT reward, though some countries set higher rewards for their recoveries. (For example, \$5 was paid by the U.S. for billfish and \$5 was paid by Spain.)

2.6.2 ISYP policy

During the Skipjack Program, the basic reward policy for tropical tuna tags was changed. In contradiction to point C of the basic policy (Section 2.6.1), the releasing agency was made responsible for paying rewards with the same exceptions as for the purchase of tags, i.e., in the case of developing countries special funds were set aside in the ISYP budget (for skipjack) and in the Commission's Regular Budget (for other tropical tunas) to cover rewards to be paid for recoveries from their tagging programs. These exceptions will be continued through to December 31, 1982, to allow for continued recovery of tags released in 1981, and for the reward of "Skipjack Program tags" which were left over from stocks in 1981 and which were released in early 1982.

Other changes included an increase from the \$2 standard reward to \$4 per tag. Also, a \$16 reward was paid for the fish if it was recovered with a red tag attached (indicating a tetracycline-injected fish). Furthermore, the recoverer had a choice of a monetary reward or a T-shirt specially designed for the ISYP.

2.6.3 Difficulties and possible solutions

Most of the difficulties we experienced in coordinating tagging policy were related to paying rewards.

2.6.3.1 Who is responsible for paying rewards

As mentioned above, a contradictory policy for the payment of rewards has been established and practiced. At present, releasing agencies are responsible for paying rewards for tropical tunas. However, for temperate species the country where recoveries were first reported is responsible for payment.

This problem can only be resolved by the approval of a standard flexible policy. Such a policy is proposed in the final section of this document:

2.6.3.2 Problems relating to T-shirts as rewards

Because of the size of tagging operations during the Skipjack Program, and because we provided a choice of \$4 or a T-shirt as a reward, accounting for rewards and billing the releasing countries which were not exempted from payment has proven to be a major task for ICCAT. In particular, buying, shipping and accounting for T-shirts has been onerous.

An additional problem has arisen with T-shirt rewards. In the case of Ivory Coast, arbitrary and exorbitant duties have been charged on shipments of T-shirts. Should T-shirts be used in the future, ICCAT should be given some recommendations as to who should pay such expenses, the tagging agency, ICCAT, or the country itself. The easiest solution is to abandon T-shirt rewards.

2.6.3.3 Different amount of rewards paid

Payment of different values of rewards by different agencies causes some confusion and problems. The worst confusion was experienced at Puerto Rico where many IATTC and ICCAT tags were returned to either NMFS or IATTC port technicians. Rewards paid by the IATTC were \$2 and by ICCAT \$4. The technician sampling for IATTC would only pay \$2 for ICCAT tags, and the NMFS technician sometimes had to pay another \$2 to angry fishermen who had surrendered their ICCAT tag to the IATTC technician! The situation was corrected by local arrangements between the technicians.

In the future, efforts should be made to standardize rewards world-wide, so far as possible.

2.6.3.4 Losses and robberies

Loss or theft of tags in the postal or customs services has occurred. This raises the possibility that tags may be returned with false information to get rewards, though this would have to be done cleverly to avoid discovery, and to date has, to our knowledge, not occurred.

Tags being sent to countries where theft or loss is most common should, if possible, be carried in the luggage of a visitor from ICCAT or of a participant to an ICCAT meeting.

Missing tags should be reported to ICCAT as soon after receipt of a shipment as possible, so that a list of identification numbers can be circulated for which rewards should not be paid.

2.6.3.5 Tags released by non-member countries

Tags could be released by non-member countries who might expect a reward to be paid for recovery without making prior arrangements for reimbursing ICCAT or recovering country.

This has not yet been a problem, although a joint tagging program by the Congo and Ivory Coast using some ICCAT tags has drawn attention to the possibility.

2.6.3.6 Rewards for invalidated tags

Whether or not we should pay rewards for recovery information unaccompanied by the tag itself, or for tag returns without any information about the fish or its recovery, is a delicate problem.

All tagging programs rely upon the goodwill of finders to return recovered tags. This goodwill is fostered by prompt and willing payment of rewards, and supply of release data to the recoverer. The tagging programs of all countries operating in a given area could easily be sabotaged by the release of tags for which rewards are not paid, or are paid with delay or reluctance.

A basic policy of on-the-spot payment is the best answer to this problem, and all countries are encouraged to facilitate such payment when possible. The problem of reimbursing the technician, institute or country making these on-the-spot payments is a separate one addressed in the final section.

2.7 Tagging lottery

2.7.1 Pre-ISYP policy

The lottery was established in 1973 to encourage tag returns. Two \$300 rewards were paid to tag finders selected by lottery from tags recovered from tropical tunas (YFT, SKJ and BET), and from temperate tunas and tuna-like fishes.

Our circular requesting tag return information states: "All tags ... recovered and reported to the national offices and agencies conducting tagging between January 1 and December 31 (of a given year) and thereafter ... reported to the ICCAT Secretariat by March 31 (of the following year), will be eligible for the lottery."

The experience of the Secretariat indicates that the above definition for eligibility to the lottery is the best for avoiding confusion, omission, or double entries between two consecutive years.

2.7.2 ISYP policy

To publicize the ISYP and increase the incentive to return tags, two additional lottery rewards were added and all rewards were increased to US\$500. Lottery rewards of \$500 have been given in 1980, 1981 and 1982 for tags returned in the following categories:

- Skipjack released in the eastern Atlantic
- Skipjack released in the western Atlantic
- Tropical tunas (except skipjack)
- Temperate tunas and tuna-like fishes

The Secretariat proposes that even if very few recoveries are eligible for one of the special skipjack rewards in 1982, the category should be maintained for the lottery held in the spring of 1983.

Thereafter, \$500 rewards should be given, one each for temperate and tropical tunas, as was the case before the ISYP. If no entry is made for any one of the categories, two rewards should be given to the category which has the largest number of entries.

2.7.3 Problems and possible solutions

2.7.3.1 Delayed reporting

Any tag that may have been kept in a drawer for several years can still enter the lottery held in the spring of the year following that in which the tag was finally returned to the releasing agency. These delayed tags are few in number, but every year there are some. It was felt that their exclusion might discourage returns. Even delayed returns provide useful scientific information, and the Secretariat believes these tags should be included in the lottery.

2.7.3.2 Delayed entry of the latest reported recovery

Tags that are recovered and returned promptly in December of any year often cannot arrive at the release agency before January, and therefore, are only eligible for the lottery to be held 1-1/2 years later. Unless the lottery is held every half-year, this 1-1/2-year delay cannot be avoided.

2.7.3.3 Problems concerning East-West skipjack lottery rewards

With the creation of East-West lottery rewards, two other problems have arisen. First, in which lottery should tags be entered which have been released in the east and recaptured in the west (or vice versa)? We have assumed they should be entered in the lottery for the area of recapture. Where the area of recapture is not reported, we have assumed for purposes of the lottery that it is the same as the area of release. Second, if tagging is less successful than expected, we may end up holding a lottery for very few tags, as happened in 1980, when the skipjack lottery for the west Atlantic had only four tags entered, and in 1981, when only one tag was entered for western skipjack. While as a lottery, a draw between four tags, or a lottery with one tag, may appear ridiculous, the incentive to return tags could be correspondingly high, and in a new fishery this might be useful in helping to achieve a high return rate.

3. Proposed ICCAT tagging policy

In light of the Secretariat's experience, the following policy is proposed for handling tags and tag rewards. The policy permits flexibility in its administration, and attempts to include the solutions to all problems reviewed above.

3.1 Policy for supply of tags and tagging materials

3.1.1 Stocks of materials at the Secretariat

The Secretariat should attempt to maintain a stock of between 5,000 and 10,000 tags, and 1,000 and 5,000 tagging needles. Costs in 1982 estimated from Section 2.1.2 can be summarized as follows:

Purchase and assembly of 10,000 tags	\$4,000
Tagging needles (1,000)	\$4,000
Miscellaneous (mailing, etc.)	\$2,000

These costs will increase with time.

3.1.2 Free tag supplies

Annual requests for 500 tags and/or 200 needles or less should be granted free of charge. Two thousand tags and 1,000 needles should be reserved for these requests.

3.1.3 Tags purchased by the Secretariat

The Secretariat should be prepared to sell at cost up to 2,000 tags per country to meet emergency needs. These would be available on a first-come first-served basis.

3.1.4 Tag orders through the Secretariat

Countries planning to use more than 500 tags and/or 200 needles per year may purchase their tags through ICCAT if they wish. Orders of more than the above quantities should be placed *at least* a year in advance of needs. They would be sold at cost.

3.1.5 National legend for tags

Countries may order and purchase their own tags printed with their own address directly from a manufacturer. This would enable the country to use the same tags in waters other than the Atlantic. However, such countries are strongly urged to consult the Secretariat concerning prefix letters to be used before they order tags, otherwise they risk duplicate numbering (see Section 2.2.2). Also they must notify the Secretariat of the identity (address, letter and number series) in advance of their release if returns are not to be delayed (see Section 2.3.3).

3.1.6 Tag Return Directory

The Secretariat should circulate an "Annual Tag Return Directory" (see Section 2.3.4), listing by number the location of all known manufactured tags likely to be released in the Atlantic Ocean.

3.1.7 Tag release report

Unless the tag series released differs from those previously given to the Secretariat and appearing in the "Annual Tag Return Directory," there is no need to report releases until the annual call for lottery data. Should a country require current year releases from other countries, these data can be obtained more reliably through individual correspondence.

3.2 Policy for publicizing tag rewards

Posters in three languages can be developed by the Secretariat for general tagging publicity. Costs of these posters could probably be covered by the Commission's Regular Budget.

3.3 Policy for recovery information

Previous policy (Section 2.5.1) should remain unchanged, that is, the releasing agency is responsible for recording receipt of the tag, informing finders of where and when the tagged fish was released, and reporting the tag number with release and recovery information to the Secretariat at the annual call for lottery data.

So far as possible, recovered tags should be sent directly to the release agency, and not to the Secretariat. Exceptions would occur when the release agency is unknown (the tag series does not appear in the current Tag Return Directory), or when mail service between the two countries concerned is unreliable.

3.4 Eligibility for rewards

3.4.1 Tag but no information

The return of information is encouraged by interviewing the finder when paying the reward or by writing to him, but payment should not be delayed or made dependent on provision of information.

3.4.2 Parts of tags

All finders should be rewarded for their efforts to return a tag or a piece of tag, irrespective of information, unless there is a strong suspicion of deceit or fraud (e.g. chopping a tag into pieces to get a reward on each part!).

3.4.3 Information but no tag

If tag numbers with reliable recovery information are reported, and a reasonable explanation is given for not being able to submit the actual tag, a reward should be paid.

3.5 Amount of rewards

3.5.1 Tags

ICCAT should maintain the \$4/tag reward and ban T-shirt rewards until otherwise decided (see Section 2.6.3.2). So far as possible, the amount of rewards for tags should be standardized between ICCAT countries, and between ICCAT and other Commissions who may have tagging programs for tuna (IATTC and Indian Ocean Commission currently are commissions which should be consulted or appraised).

3.5.2 Rewards other than tags

During the ISYP, rewards were given for tetracycline-injected fish. These fish were identified by red (instead of yellow) tags. The reward for such fish was \$16 (or equivalent in T-shirts).

Such programs require special advertising and instructions, the costs and administration of which must be considered for each individual program.

3.6 Responsibility for paying rewards

3.6.1 Final bill

In principle, countries releasing tags are responsible for finally paying or reimbursing payments for rewards. An exception to this rule may be granted to developing countries which have limited funds for tagging. However, arrangements for payment by ICCAT must be made prior to any tagging by such developing countries.

3.6.2 Paying rewards on the spot

The fisheries officers or research institutes which have the first contact with tag recoverers in the field are responsible for paying rewards to the recoverers immediately upon confirmation of tag recoveries (Section 3.4). In support of this responsibility, and in the event of any problem obtaining reimbursement through regular methods (Section 3.5.4), ICCAT will guarantee reimbursement to fishery officers for rewards paid and properly documented with tag numbers.

Where institutes or countries cannot pay on the spot even for a small number of tags, ICCAT may advance a sum to cover the recoveries expected. To aid ICCAT in anticipating the number of recoveries, release agencies must report the approximate number and location of releases planned for the year before tagging commences. The person to whom the advance is made must later justify his expenses with a list of tag numbers for which rewards have been paid.

3.6.3 Accounting and reimbursing for rewards

The system of administering funds for payment of rewards should be flexible, so that accounting needs can be met by the simplest means possible. The following are suggested guidelines which may need revising as practice dictates:

- In principle the country or institute which pays rewards in the field may bill the releasing agency directly. If there are only a few recoveries, they may agree to pay the rewards without requesting reimbursement from the releasing agency.
- If the above principle is impractical (e.g., too many different releasing agencies are involved, or many complications in money exchanges, etc.), the institute or country paying rewards may bill ICCAT rather than the releasing country or countries. Payment will be guaranteed by ICCAT provided a list of tag numbers accompanies the bill (tag numbers can be checked later against recoveries recorded).
- ICCAT may or may not seek reimbursement for rewards it has paid, depending upon the size of the bill and prior agreements.
- When large-scale tagging programs are envisaged (as for the Skipjack Program), ICCAT should develop appropriate accounting procedures for recuperating the cost of rewards from the countries releasing the tags. With inclusion of additional information, this might be done on the same forms used for requesting lottery information. Extra administrative costs (time) should be monitored and the need for extra assistance recognized (see Section 2.6.3.2).

3.7 Annual lottery

Current policy should be maintained. This may be summarized as follows:

- All tags recovered and reported to national offices and agencies conducting tagging between January 1 and December 31 (of a given year) and thereafter reported to ICCAT by March 31 (of the following year) will be eligible for the lottery.
- With the exception of the years 1980-1983, when special lotteries were held for the International Skipjack Year Program, there are two lottery rewards annually: one for tropical tunas (YFT, SKJ, BET) and a second for temperate tunas and tuna-like fishes. The prize for each of these drawings should be \$500 until otherwise determined.
- The winners of the annual lottery should continue to be publicized as widely as possible.
- If additional lotteries should be desired in the future, the experience with the special Skipjack lottery (Section 2.7.3.3) should be taken into consideration.

The Secretariat proposes that the SCRS review and, where necessary, revise the above policy (Section 3) and then adopt it *as a guide* for conduct of future tagging programs.