



Madrid – July 13, 2009

## ICCAT CIRCULAR # 1839 / 09

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR TAGGING INFORMATION WITH RECOVERY DATA FOR  
INCLUSION IN THE ICCAT TAGGING LOTTERY**

Tagging information constitutes an important base for the assessment of the stocks. This information results in improved knowledge on the displacements, migrations, growth, stock structure, as well as improved estimates of natural mortality of the species in question. Some Parties have developed tagging programs on tunas, tuna-like species and sharks in the Convention area. The majority of this information is maintained in a database at the Secretariat.

The objective of this circular is to request all the Tagging Correspondents to submit to the Secretariat all the tagging information available (summary of tagging activities, release-recovery data on conventional tagging, and release data on electronic tagging) in 2008, as well as any information prior to 2008 that, for any reason, has been revised or has never been transmitted to ICCAT.

### 1. Information requested

The current request on tagging information already contemplates the revised tagging data requirements and formats recommended by the SCRS in 2007.

#### 1.1 Datasets

The request for tagging information of all tuna, tuna-like species and sharks, tagged in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, is now classified into three datasets:

- (a) **Summary of tagging activities:** General (summarized) information on tag release activities, whether is associated to a specific tagging survey or to opportunistic tagging made by sport or professional fisherman.
- (b) **Conventional tag release-recovery data:** Detailed information on releases and corresponding recoveries (if available) of each specimen tagged.
- (c) **Electronic tag release data:** Detailed information on releases of all archival/electronic tags of each specimen tagged.

#### 1.2 Submission forms and deadlines

On the basis of the above mentioned dataset revision, the Secretariat has developed three electronic tagging submission forms, **ST-TAG01**, **ST-TAG02** and **ST-TAG03** (in <sup>©</sup>MS-Excel 2003/2007), for datasets (a), (b) and (c), respectively. These forms, with standard structures, formats, and embedded ICCAT codes, were created aiming to normalize and facilitate the submission of tagging information. The forms are available on the ICCAT web page (<http://www.iccat.int/submitSTAT.htm>)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> If you have difficulty in accessing the ICCAT web page, please let the Secretariat know the manner in which you wish to receive the tagging forms (i.e., fax, email, etc.).

New and historical data relative to each dataset should be submitted taking into account the following forms and deadline specifications:

<i>Dataset</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Deadline specifications</i>
(a) Summary of tagging activities	ST-TAG01	<p><u>Scientific surveys</u>: 2008 data (sent usually after the end of a tagging survey) should be sent no later than <b>July 31, 2009</b>.</p> <p><u>Opportunistic tagging</u>: 2008 data should be sent no later than <b>July 31, 2009</b>.</p> <p><u>Historical data recovery</u>: This new SCRS data requirement could imply a complex and time consuming recovery process. There is no specific deadline given its implicit long-term task. However, a suggestion is made to scientists to proceed with a backwards recovery plan (2006, 2005, etc.) and submit the data during the year. This information is crucial for qualifying and validating the available tagging information in the ICCAT tagging database.</p>
(b) Conventional tag release-recovery data	ST-TAG02	<p><u>200 data (new)</u>: Should be sent no later than <b>July 31, 2009</b>.</p> <p><u>2007 and prior revisions (historical)</u>: Should be sent no later than <b>July 31, 2009</b>.</p> <p>In both cases, release-recovery data by specimen are inseparable entities and must be sent together. For example, when a new recovery is obtained the corresponding release data must always be sent (even if it was sent before).</p>
(c) Electronic tag release data	ST-TAG03	<p><u>2008 data (new)</u>: Should be sent no later than <b>July 31, 2009</b>.</p> <p>Historical revisions (prior to 2008) can be optionally re-submitted with the new standard formats, no later than <b>July 31, 2009</b>, as the information currently available in the ICCAT tagging database is incomplete (for example, in many cases the accompanied conventional tags used were not reported).</p>

## 2. Reporting procedures

### 2.1 General guidelines

Tagging information should be sent using the standard electronic forms (hereafter referred as *eform(s)*) specified above. Older ICCAT tagging forms will also be accepted.

Each *eform* has specific instructions and codes that can help to fill in the various fields with the correct data and formats. Please, see the “Instructions” sheet available in each *eform*.

More than one form can be used if necessary (e.g. to separate release-recovery information from two different tagging surveys) to submit data.

Each element of the form (fields in header and detail sections) is important. Completely and correctly filled *eforms* always improve data substance, quality and potential. Whenever possible, avoid leaving “blank” fields in the *eforms*.

Completed and *eforms* must be sent (as attachments) by e-mail to the ICCAT Secretariat ([info@iccat.int](mailto:info@iccat.int)) with the subject of the e-mail being: “Tagging data from [Country].”

### 2.2 Additional remarks

When an Agency reports “orphan” recovery data (release data are unknown, mostly due to tagging made by foreign Agencies/Countries/Scientists), it should be clearly written in the “Recovery Notes” field of **ST-TAG02**: “orphan recovery” (no need to fill the release section). The ICCAT Secretariat will try to identify and complete the unavailable missing part (checking if the corresponding release information exists in the ICCAT database, identifying the tag owner and request the data, etc.) and report it to the submitting Agency.

When submitting Conventional release-recovery data with *eform* **ST-TAG02**, it is essential for the ICCAT lottery that, the complementary tables (Vessels and Persons in sheet "ST-TAG02abc") identifying the Person/Vessel responsible for the recovery, be completed. This information will be kept confidential and used only for the lottery.

### 3. Lottery for recovered tags

To promote the recovery (and subsequent report) of tags placed by Contracting Parties, ICCAT holds an annual lottery. Eligible tags will enter in the lottery system only once.

In 2009, there will be a lottery for each of the following categories:

- **Billfish** (blue marlin, black marlin and white marlin, sailfish, spearfish and billfish unclassified)
- **Temperate tunas** (bluefin, albacore and swordfish)
- **Tropical tunas** (bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack, small tunas and other tuna-like species)
- **Sharks** (all shark species with tags recovered available)

In each of the four draws, the "recoverer" of the tag bearing the winning number, will be awarded US \$500.

All tags on tunas and tuna-like species (as defined by the ICCAT Convention) released in the Atlantic Ocean and its adjacent seas, which were recovered, reported to, and verified by the national offices and agencies during 2008, and thereafter were reported to the ICCAT Secretariat by the deadlines specified above, will be eligible for the 2009 lottery.

Tags recovered prior to January 1, 2008 and not submitted for entry in previous lotteries may also be included.

The winning tag numbers will be announced as soon as the draws have been held, and the corresponding prizes will be sent to the winners.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.



Driss Meski  
*Executive Secretary*



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