

Atlantic Tropical tuna Tagging Programme

ICCAT/AOTTP NEWSLETTER

A quarterly newsletter published by the ICCAT Secretariat

No. 3



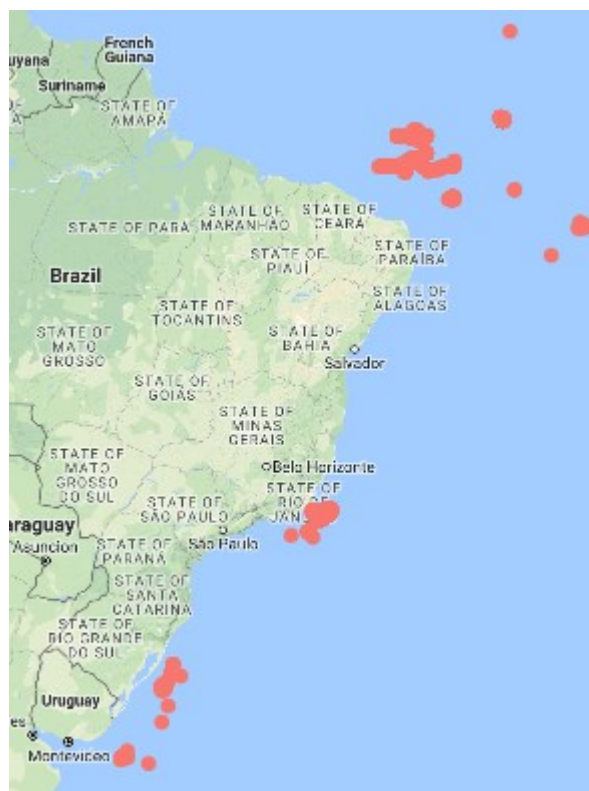
Overview: The AOTTP Programme (<http://www.iccat.int/AOTTP/en/>) is collecting tag-recapture data from Atlantic Ocean tropical tuna fisheries to improve their management.

Tagging at sea: AOTTP is now tagging tuna actively in the Southwest and Northwest Atlantic Ocean. First phase tagging in the Southwest Atlantic has finished and the target of 13,000 fish tagged was reached. Tuna were tagged over a vast area from the remote São Pedro and São Paulo Archipelago off northern Brazil to Uruguay in the far south.

Overall 64,500 tuna (53% of the target) have now been tagged and released in the Atlantic Ocean by AOTTP.



Tagging large tuna off Uruguay.



Locations of (3566) yellowfin tuna tagged and released by AOTTP in Southwest Atlantic in 2017.



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The Saint Peter and Saint Paul Archipelago: 15 islets and rocks in the central Atlantic approximately 510nmi (940km) from the nearest point of mainland South America (the town of Touros, Brazil).



The Transmar I tagging tuna around the São Pedro and São Paulo Archipelago.

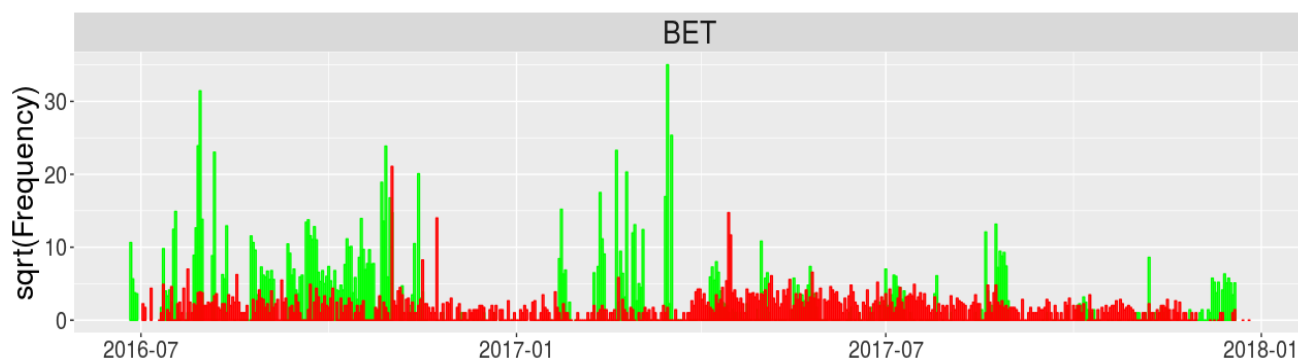
Tag recovery: Since we last wrote, 500 additional tags have been found with the total now at just over 11,500. Tag-recovery rates have slowed down gradually since tagging in the core fishing grounds off West Africa stopped at the end of March 2016.

ICCAT-AOTTP runs a lottery every year into which all tag-finders are automatically entered. The prizes are 500 euros cash. The draw always takes place at the SCRS Plenary meeting and the lucky winners this year came from Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire.

AOTTP tag recovery and awareness raising activities are expanding to the Far-East where Atlantic tuna are often taken for processing. Colleagues in Japan have recently translated AOTTP posters into Japanese.



Lottery winner receiving cash prize in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.



AOTTP overall tag release (green) and recovery (red) frequencies between June 2016 and January 2018 for bigeye tuna. Note the continuous recovery of tags which reflects the high fishing rate but also the dedication of the tag recovery officers and the effectiveness of the awareness raising activities.



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Capacity building: The first AOTTP workshop was held at ICCAT HQ in Madrid in December 2017. Nineteen of our colleagues from around the Atlantic Coastal states attended, representing 10 different countries. The structure of the AOTTP database and data collection protocols were described, and then useful applications of various Open Source softwares to the data were demonstrated (e.g. R, QGIS, Libreoffice, and PostgreSQL). The workshop was relaxed and fun, and the AOTTP Coordination Team received positive feedback on the general organization and material covered. The workshop also provided an opportunity for the AOTTP taggers and tag-recovery officers to meet with each other, with AOTTP coordination, and many aspects of the project were discussed.

The state of the population of bigeye tuna will be assessed in 2018 by ICCAT. Knowledge gained during the workshops will be a launchpad for increased involvement by ICCAT developing country partners.



ICCAT Executive Secretary presenting Attendance Certificates to participants during AOTTP Workshop 1 in Madrid.

A second AOTTP workshop was organised in Abidjan between 15th and 19th January 2018. The focus this time was on growth and mortality estimation from the tag-recapture data. A third workshop studying tuna movement will be held in Madrid in April 2018.



AOTTP Workshop 1: Introduction, access and use of ICCAT -AOTTP conventional tagging databases.

Other activities

- AOTTP tags recovered in St Helena.
- Proposal for Tagging 5000 tuna in NW Atlantic using sport fishers was received in mid-December and is being evaluated.
- Proposal for tagging 11000 in the territorial waters of Cote d'Ivoire using a blend of commercial live-bait boats and sport fishers is also being evaluated.
- Calls for Tender for Phase 2 Tagging in SW Atlantic, and SE Atlantic have been launched.

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