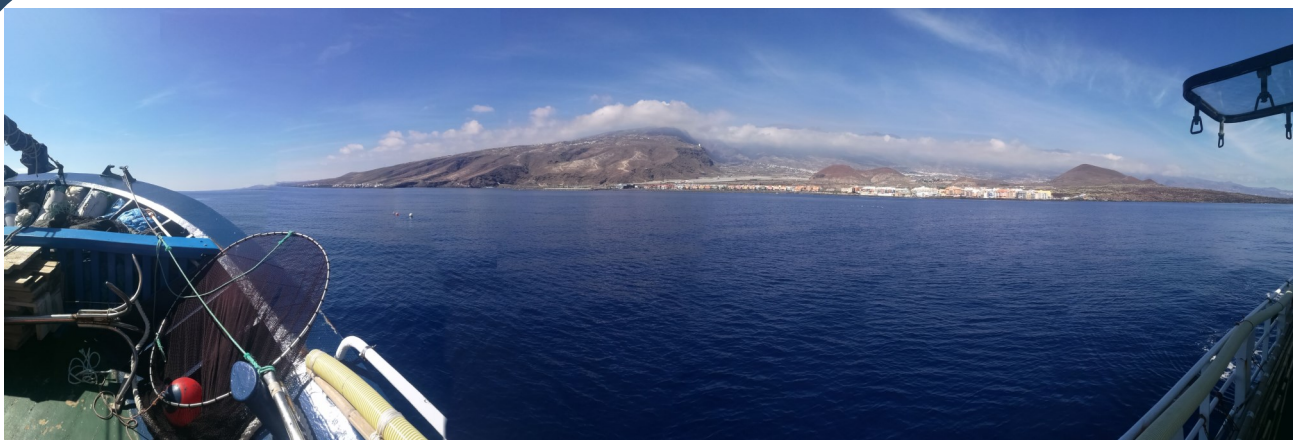


Atlantic Tropical tuna Tagging Programme

ICCAT/AOTTP NEWSLETTER

A quarterly newsletter published by the ICCAT Secretariat

No. 6



View of the Canary Islands from *El Grande Primero* during October 2018.

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

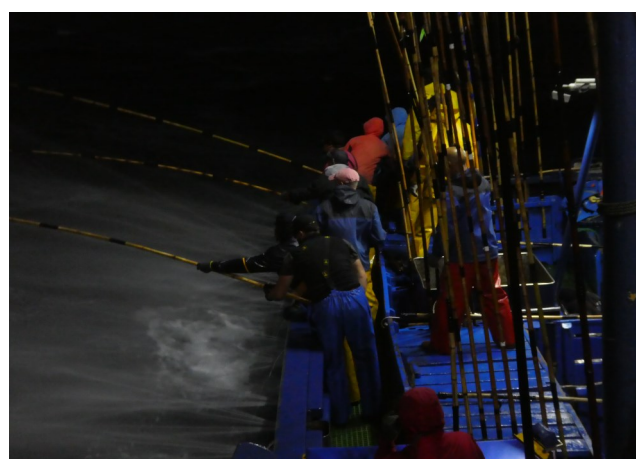


Tagging team on *Ponta Calhau*, Madeira, July 2018.

Tagging at sea: Since the last newsletter was published in July a further 10,000 tuna were tagged and released by AOTTP teams, the total now being 96,000 or 80% of the 120,000 objective. In the seas of São Tomé and Príncipe, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea 7,200 fish have been tagged. Tagging off Cote d'Ivoire, USA, Saint Helena is ongoing; and work restarted in October around the Canary and Cape Verde islands and off Senegal and Mauritania. AOTTP Database Specialist, Jesus Garcia, joined one of the trips around the Canary Islands on board *El Grande Primero* to experience tagging and bait-boat fishing first hand.



Setting off on *El Grande Primero*, October, 2018.



Fishing after dusk on board *El Grande Primero*, south of the Canary Isles, October 2018.

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Tagging team on board El Grande Primero in October 2018.

Recovery of pop-up and internal archival tags continues to be slow. Recently, however, a pop-up tag (deployed on a yellowfin in April 2017 off the coast of Fernando de Noronha, Brazil) was discovered by a metal detectorist buried in 20cms of sand on Flagler Beach, Florida.



Otolith and hard-part reading coordination workshop, Dakar.



Tag Recovery Team at the Dakar office, Senegal.

Tag recovery: More than 14,000 tags have now been recovered in the Atlantic in total with regional breakdown as follows: 314 (Azores); 6,479 (Dakar); 4,670 (Abidjan); 566 (Canary Islands); 131 (Cape Verde Islands); 11 (South Africa); 455 (Ghana); 2,094 (Brazil); 42 (Madeira); and 4 (São Tomé and Príncipe). Overall Tag recovery rates are 22% for bigeye, 22% for yellowfin, and 9% for skipjack. Thank you to all the tag-finders and tag-recovery teams.

Age-determination: Knowledge of growth rates is vitally important for population assessment. In fish this is usually done by 'ageing' hard parts such as otoliths (earbones) which AOTTP is collecting. To organize, discuss, and provide training for this activity a coordination workshop was held at the end of October at the Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal.



Cross-section of a yellowfin otolith showing daily growth increments.



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This project is implemented by ICCAT

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission



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Training in the deployment of electronic tags in São Tomé and Príncipe, August 2018.

Capacity building: The ICCAT Assistant Executive Secretary and Science Coordinator (Dr Miguel Neves Santos) visited The Fisheries Directorate in São Tomé and Príncipe in August 2018 to deliver tags, provide training in internal tag deployment, and discuss tag-seeding protocols.

Two persons will be hired to undertake routine ageing of otoliths in West Africa. It is very difficult to age tropical tuna and extensive training is vital, not only for the ageing, itself but also for hardpart preparation. This will be provided by AOTTP at a series of sessions in West Africa and Brazil.



SCRS football match between AOTTP and GBYP (Bluefin tuna project). AOTTP lost 5-1!



Setting off on El Batabano, October, 2018.

Other news

- Our new hire, Dr Lisa Ailloud (AOTTP Assistant Coordinator), arrived at ICCAT in early September 2018. Welcome to Lisa!
- AOTTP Coordination and the ICCAT Executive Secretary attended a one-day meeting at DG-DEVCO in Brussels in early September 2018. Progress on the project and future plans were discussed with our Project Officer.
- The AOTTP progress was presented at the ICCAT Species Group meeting and at the ICCAT SCRS Plenary meeting during the autumn of 2018.
- AOTTP Steering Committee meeting was held on 29 September 2018.
- AOTTP-ICCAT financial and technical reports for period 3 were approved by the European Union.
- A Call for Tender, soliciting proposals to undertake scientific research into tropical tuna mortality and movement/migrations using AOTTP conventional and electronic tag data, was published in late October. Note the deadline is 28th November 2018.

Email AOTTP: aottp@iccat.int