

Atlantic Tropical tuna Tagging Programme

ICCAT/AOTTP NEWSLETTER

A quarterly newsletter published by the ICCAT Secretariat

No. 10



Trolling for tropical tuna off the coast of St. Helena island in November 2019.

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 at sea: The project is now very close (97%) to its overall tagging target of 120,000 tropical tuna. In November 2019 tagging began around a fixed oceanographic buoy 600 nautical miles off the north coast of Brazil at 7.90°N and 38.0°W. The boat undertaking this work on behalf of AOTTP is the Thavisson with an overall length of only 15.5m. She is based in Areia Branca from where it is a 6 day journey just to arrive at the fishing grounds! Their main target is bigeye, and on the first trip the crew managed to tag 939 of these plus 75 yellowfin. They also tagged 28 fish chemically and deployed 7 electronic archival tags. Congratulations to them and thanks also for what is undoubtedly a long, potentially dangerous and difficult trip. On other fronts tagging is ongoing around St Helena, in the Caribbean Sea, and off the East Coast of the USA.



Recreational fishers tagging for AOTTP off Guadeloupe in November 2019.



This project is funded by the European Union, ICCAT Contracting Parties and Cooperating Entities.

This project is implemented by ICCAT.

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The 26th Meeting of the ICCAT Commission (Palma, Mallorca, November 2019).

AOTTP Side Event: AOTTP coordination organised a 'Side Event' (on Saturday 18th November) during the ICCAT Commission meeting. It was an excellent opportunity to communicate the objectives and results of AOTTP to a diverse range of tropical tuna fisheries stakeholders including; managers, scientists, conservationists, and fishers' representatives. The AOTTP Coordinator and Dr JM Amade, who has run both AOTTP tagging and tag recovery activities in Côte d'Ivoire, gave a short presentation on AOTTP, highlighting its most important achievements to date. This was followed by drinks and snacks. A fun and informative evening then came to a close after a raffle draw at which prizes were presented to a lucky few.



Presenting AOTTP at the Side Event.



Participants at AOTTP Side Event.



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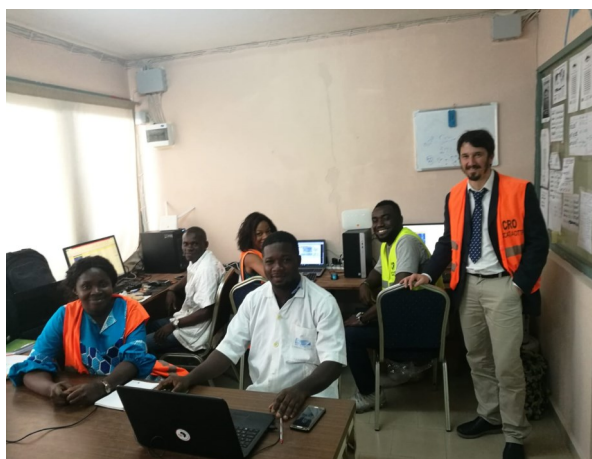
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Data quality: There remain some discrepancies with both the AOTTP tag-release and tag-recovery data. There are, for example, duplicate tag numbers due to typos and both negative times of liberty and growth. It is important that these errors are corrected before the end of the project in November 2020. AOTTP Coordination and partners have recently been making renewed efforts to identify and resolve these issues where possible. As part of this campaign AOTTP Database Manager, Jesus Garcia, has recently travelled to Tema, Abidjan and Dakar to work directly with the Tag Recovery Officers. We are very grateful to all the teams for hosting Jesus and for their cooperation.



AOTTP Data Manager with tag recovery team, Ghana.



AOTTP Data Manager with tag recovery team in Abidjan



AOTTP Lottery Prize presentation in the Canary Islands.

Other

- AOTTP was evaluated by consultants in late 2019 and their report and recommendations will be finalized and disseminated soon. Thanks are extended to everyone involved.
- Registration for the AOTTP Final Symposium in June 2020 is now open, <https://www.iccat.int/aottp/en/aottp-symposium.html>
- Tag Recovery contracts in West Africa and Brazil have been extended until the end of September 2020 while ICCAT has secured funding to keep the activities going until the end of 2020.
- Partners in the Canary Islands held a presentation for the AOTTP lottery winner in late 2019.
- AOTTP Assistant Coordinator attended an important bigeye and yellowfin hard part ageing workshop in Panama City, USA.
- AOTTP Assistant Coordinator attended the FAO International Symposium on Sustainable Fisheries in Rome.

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