



Cape Fear Flyfishers Meeting Minutes—April 17, 2024

<https://capefearff.com>

President Rick Hettenbach called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM at the St James Community Center. The meeting was preceded at 5:00 PM by another helpful casting clinic led by Rev. Jim White. Approximately 34 members attended the meeting.

NEW MEMBERS/VISITORS:

The following gentlemen joined the meeting:

- Rick Loehr Friend of Paul Askew, was a visitor
- Bruce Harrelson, visitor
- Bob Sparrow joined as a member and is a friend of Jim Murray. He is brand new to fly fishing and owns a 23-foot StarCraft Tri-Toon pontoon boat.

FISHING REPORTS

- Al Roy; South Holston and Watauga Rivers sent an email with results of a trip to South Holston Watauga Rivers, see attached.
- Rick Hettenbach related recent fishing in Dutchman's Creek
- One member reported catching a 31" Bluefish
- Tom Duym mentioned fishing in Rice's Creek

FLY Raffle:

- Rick Winterhalter won the fly raffle

TREASURERS REPORT

Treasurer Doug Donaldson reported that the club' cash balance after anticipated expenses is approximately \$ 4,100 . We have twelve new members. Please see attached details.

UPCOMING EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rick followed up with this calendar

May 1-2	Weldon Striper Trip-Jim
8	Membership Meeting-Annual BBQ
25	Rice's Creek-Rev
June 19	Meeting-Fly Fishing the Surf-Rick

<u>July</u> 17	Pond Fishing
27	Kayak fishing trip-Rick
<u>August</u>	No meeting
<u>September</u> 7	Banquet-need to discuss with the board
<u>October</u> 6-10	Spouses trip Trip-Rev
16	Membership Meeting-
28,29,30,31	Salmon River Steelhead Trip-Rick
<u>November</u> 8,9,10	FFI Morehead City Trip-Rick
20	Membership Meeting-On The Fly South
TBD	Bonefish Trip?
<u>December</u> ?	Holiday Gathering

NORTH CAROLINA FISH TAGGING PROGRAM:



Ami Staples, Marine Fisheries Biologist from the NC Division of Marine Fisheries Multi-species Tagging Program presented via Zoom.. Ami has worked for the Division since 2015. She received her B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Management and M.S. in Forest Resources from the University of Georgia. She specializes in science communication and environmental education, and she is a published author and illustrator.

She discussed the NCDMF Multi-species Tagging Program. The presentation gives a general overview of the program, how they tag the fish, maps of our historic tag releases and recaptures and how anglers can get involved.

Division researchers are studying the migration, growth, habitat use and population status of striped bass, red drum, spotted seatrout, southern flounder, and cobia in North Carolina. Other recent division tagging studies include dolphin, yellow perch and white perch.

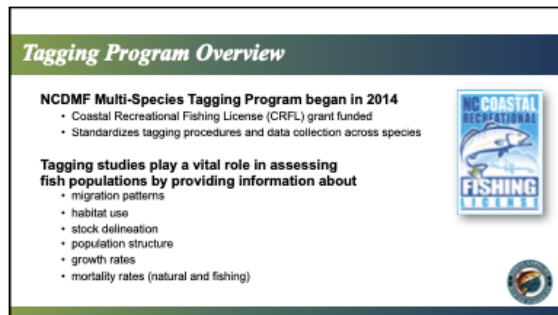
Fish tagging programs are a vital part of a fishery manager's tools for assessing fish populations. Conducted properly, tagging can yield a wealth of information about movement patterns, habitat utilization, population structure and mortality rates of fish.

This presentation was done via Zoom, Rick did a great job of setting up the technical issues for sound and had his large screen for a good presentation. Her slides are attached (*will be attached later*)

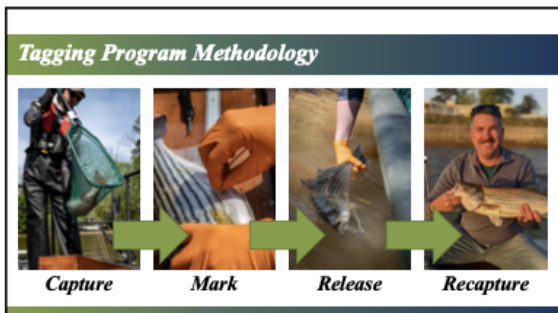
The tagging program dates back to the '70's, and even includes shrimp in some locations. The program is funded by the Coastal Fishing License fees. NC data dates back to 2014, in n2017 Cobia were added to the tagging. Ami asked for our assistance if we catch a tagged fish (see slides on process), there is a reward for providing this information. She assures us our "special fishing spot" will not be publicized. They are also asking for fishers to join the tagging process for which one must receive training. She also presented to the St James Fishing Club, there may be an opportunity for a training session in St James this September.



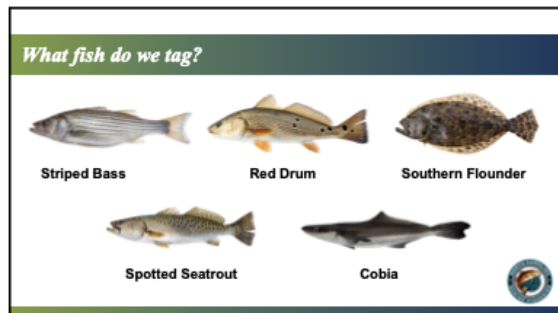
1



2



3



4

When do we tag fish?



Striped bass - April through May during spawning season, October through May (Cape Fear only)

Red drum – throughout the year, bull drum especially in August through October

Southern flounder – during cooler months, September through May

Spotted seatrout – during cooler months, September through May

Cobia – May through July during migration through NC waters, and sometimes August



5

Who tag the fish?




Striped Bass – NCDMF, NCWRC

Red Drum – NCDMF, volunteer taggers

Southern Flounder – NCDMF, university researchers in partnership with commercial pound netters, volunteer taggers

Spotted Seatrout – NCDMF, volunteer taggers

Cobia – NCDMF, university researchers, volunteer taggers

6


How many fish do we tag each year?

Three main goals for Striped Bass, Red Drum, Southern Flounder, and Spotted Seatrout:

- Tag a minimum 1,500 – 2,500 individuals per year with low reward tags
- Double tag a calculated percentage to assess tag loss (10-25%)
- Conduct high reward (\$100) tagging to assess reporting rates (10-25%)

Cobia:

- Tag a minimum 100-200 individuals per year with high reward tags
- Double tag a calculated percentage to assess tag loss (20-25%)
 - Pilot study in 2017



7


What do the tag colors mean?

North Carolina uses two main tag colors for all species and the color determines the reward the angler receives:

YELLOW = Low reward (\$5, hat, towel, fish pin)

RED = High reward (\$100)

Using two different reward amounts allows us to assess tag reporting rates by anglers.




8

How many fish have we tagged?

Multi-Species Tagging Program Effort (2014-2022)

Species	Total Fish Tagged (#)	Total Fish Recaptured (#)
Striped Bass	99,386	3,255
Red Drum	12,644	1,416
Spotted Seatrout	12,358	795
Southern Flounder	8,007	551
Cobia*	547	97
Total	132,942	6,114

*Cobia tagging data reported for 2017-2022. Cobia tagging study began in 2017.




9


Spotted Seatrout Tags

Spotted seatrout – Floy FM-95W internal anchor tag with wire core

- 12-inch minimum size
- Red and yellow tags
- Yellow tags can be doubled
- Tag number starts with "G"
 - Ex. G49873



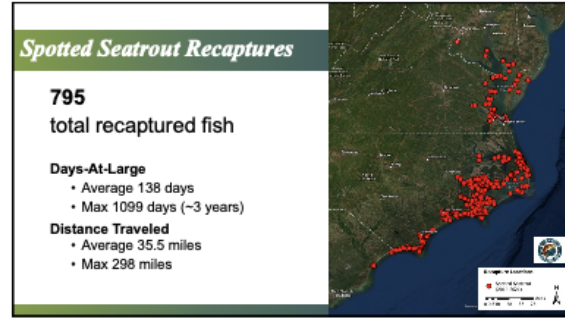
Floy FM-95W, ~3.5 inches long



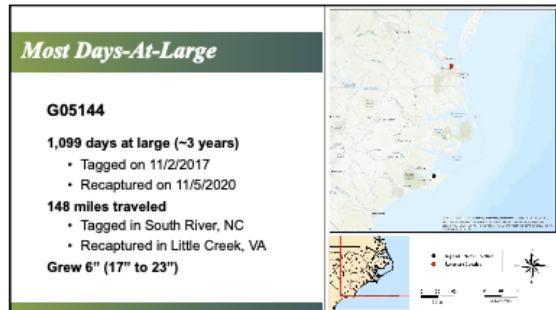
10



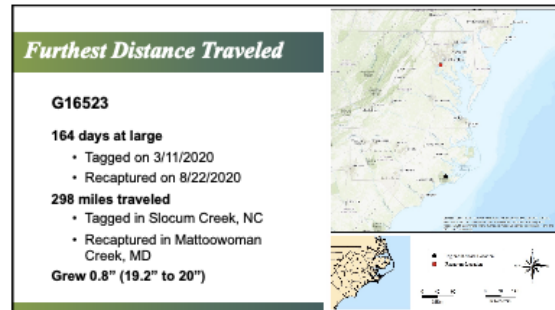
11



12



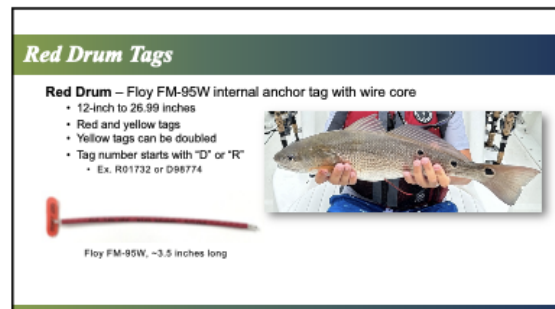
13



14



15




16


Red Drum Tags

Red drum – Floy FH-69 stainless steel dart tag with wire core

- 27-inch minimum size
- Yellow tags only
- No double tags
- Tag number starts with "D" or "R"
 - Ex. R01732 or D98774



Floy FH-69, ~5 inches long



17

Red Drum Releases

12,644
total tagged fish




18

Red Drum Recaptures


1,416
total recaptured fish

Days-At-Large

- Average 231.7 days
- Max 2,258 days (~6.2 years)

Distance Traveled

- Average 17.3 miles
- Max 276 miles



19

Most Days-At-Large


D75668

- 2,258 days at large (~6.2 years)
- Tagged on 6/30/2015
- Recaptured on 9/4/2021

147 miles traveled

- Tagged behind Oregon Inlet, NC
- Recaptured in Tangler Sound, MD

Grew 10.5" (31" to 41.5")



20

Furthest Distance Traveled

D76905

- 437 days at large (~1.2 years)
- Tagged on 6/30/2015
- Recaptured on 6/10/2017

276 miles traveled

- Tagged at Pony Pen, NC
- Recaptured in Atlantic City, NJ

Grew 16" (16" to 32")



21

What we know about Red Drum

High site fidelity


- Young fish tend to stay in same system for first two years of life
- Adult fish return to same areas by season

General movements

- Adult inshore movement (spring/summer); outward (fall/winter)
- Some portion of stock migrates between NCVA
- Spawn in estuary and inlets

Managed as one stock NC and north

- Based on tagging and genetics




22

Volunteer Tagger Tags

Southern flounder– Floy FT-4 spaghetti tie loop tag

- 11-inch minimum size
- Red and yellow tags
- Yellow tags can be doubled
- Tag numbers start with "N"
 - Ex. N03441



Floy FT-4, ~12 inches long

23

Southern Flounder Releases

8,007
total tagged fish



24

Southern Flounder Recaptures

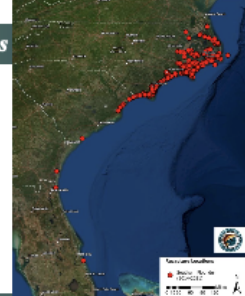
551
total recaptured fish

Days-At-Large

- Average 141.0 days
- Max 1,753 days (~4.8 years)

Distance Traveled

- Average 16.6 miles
- Max 518 miles



25

Most Days-At-Large

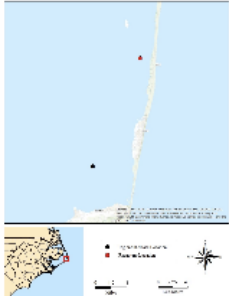
N01663

- 1,753 days (~4.8 years)
- Tagged on 9/2/2015
- Recaptured on 6/20/2020

8 miles traveled

- Tagged in Cape Channel behind Hatteras, NC
- Recaptured between Little Kinnakeet and Gull Shoal, NC

Grew 14.6" (13.4" to 28.0")



26

Furthest Distance Traveled

N00017

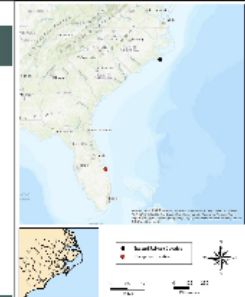
184 days at large

- Tagged on 10/13/2014
- Recaptured on 4/15/2015

518 miles traveled

- Tagged Hog Pen Bay, NC
- Recaptured in Hobe Sound, FL

Grew 0.4" (21.1" to 21.5")



27

What we know about Southern Flounder


High spring and summer site fidelity

- Most fish tagged early in season are recaptured in same system prior to fall migration
- Larger fall tagged fish are highly migratory

General Movements

- Remain near settlement locations through summer some through the next year
- Larger or mature fish migrate to ocean beginning late summer and early fall
- Some portion of stock migrates south to SC, GA, FL
- Some evidence fish return to NC estuaries after migration into ocean
- Limited tagging data from SC and GA suggest a low probability that adult fish move north into NC waters

New assessment combines FL, GA, SC, and NC into one unit stock in the U.S. South Atlantic.



28

How can I participate?

Catch
Cut
Report

29

Tag Returns

If you **CATCH** a tagged fish, **CUT** off the tag and **REPORT** the tag to **1-800-682-2632**.

REWARDS for tag information include program hats, towels & even up to **\$100**.

30

What information do I report?

1. Date of capture
2. Location of capture
3. Tag number
4. Species
5. Gear used for capture
6. Length (TL)
7. Fate of fish

31

Reward Packets

Letter & Certificate **Reward**

32

How do I become a volunteer tagger?

Complete the online application

Attend an in-person volunteer tagger training

- Overview of the Tagging Program
- Review of tagging procedures and data collection
- Hands-on tagging demonstration and practice with real fish
- One-on-one time with biologists

Receive your tagging kit and start tagging!

33

Contact Information

Ami Staples
Tagging Program Biologist
ami.staples@deq.nc.gov
252-948-3913

34

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM. Fourteen members continued discussions at Paul's on Oak Island.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Falkenstein

CFF Officers for 2024 are:

Rick Hettenbach -President/Club Officer
 Al Roy-Vice President/Club Officer
 Doug Donaldson-Treasurer/Club Officer
 Dennis Falkenstein-Secretary/Club Officer
 Jim White
 Steve Moore
 Jim Larson
 Joe Fetter
 Dominick Sangillo

Board Member
 Board Member
 Board Member
 Board Member
 Director-Education
 Director-Webmaster/Conservation
 Board Member
 Board Member
 Board Member

Cape Fear Flyfishers

Treasurer's Report (3/20/2024 - 4/16/2024)

<u>Beginning Cash Balance (3/20/2024)</u>		\$6,363.74
(allows for 2022 gift of \$2,500)		
<u>Activity Since 2/20/2024</u>		
Dues Collected	\$271.00	
Hat Sales	\$0.00	
Fly Raffle	\$30.00	\$301.00
		<hr/>
Subtotal:		\$6,664.74
<u>Less Payments:</u>		
Bank charges	-\$1.52	
Paid Conner Bryant - Speaker honorarium	-\$100.00	-\$101.52
		<hr/>
<u>Ending Cash Balance (3/19/2024)</u>		\$6,563.22
<u>Less: Known F/Y 2024 Liabilities:</u>		
2024 SJCC Hall Rent - Bal. due	(Annual: \$1,137.25)	-\$853.25
FFI Renewal Dues (7/1/24)		-\$1,620.00
		<hr/>
<u>Available Uncommitted Cash</u>		<u><u>\$4,089.97</u></u>

Membership Status

YTD 2024

55 Renewals

12 New

67 Membership Total

20 not renewed from 2023

12/31/2023 - 75 Members

South Holston Watauga River Trip by Al Roy

- As the weather warms and the effects of Cabin Fever increase, an early season trip to Eastern Tennessee is always in order. It's still chilly in the Tennessee mountains, but the tailrace fishery in these waters is close to normal level of aquatic activity.
- Only a few BWO's and midges were hatching, but the trout were readily feeding on nymphs, scuds and worms. Guides John Stunkard, Andrew Bright, Brandon Brower and Sam Persutti did their usual outstanding job of positioning our group for fine catches. Pumping some of the catch showed their recent meals.
- The typical rigs consisted of an attractor worm or egg pattern with a small nymph dropper. The most effective nymphs simulated nymphal sulfurs. Frenchies and perdigons in size 16 and 18 were most commonly used. Several good size brown and rainbow trout were taken by the anglers.
- Meals at the South Holston River Lodge featured Veal Chops, Filet Mignon, Grilled Mahi and Osso Buco. All were outstanding.
- The trip cost was \$2900 for 4 nights and 3 days of drift boat fishing.



