Appendix A

Examples of single tagged (flounder) and double tagged (red drum and speckled trout).
ANGLERS—BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR TAGS IN FISH YOU CATCH. Check both sides of fish near base of top fin.

SOME FISH MAY HAVE 2 DIFFERENT TAGS—tags can work out of a fish’s muscle so tag retention studies may be underway. IMPORTANT TO REPORT IF FISH HAS 2 TAGS.

REPORT recaptures of tagged fish to 757-491-5160 in Virginia Beach (VA Saltwater Fishing Tournament office). REWARDS available (caps, T-shirts, tackle boxes, etc.).
Hallprint Tag Options for Target Species & Fish Reporting Option with T-Bar Tags

(A) **T-bar tag**—the primary tag used for smaller specimens of target species (flounder of any size always tagged with this tag); anchored in fish using “tagging gun” (see Fig. 1); (B) **Dogleg Dart Tag (note tip of tag’s barb changes angle)**—used with 3 mm OD hollow tagging needle in short tagging stick; showing promising tag retention rates in double tagging trials with T-bar tags in 14-26 inch red drum and speckled trout; also being tried in sheepshead; (C) **Small Dart Tag**—also used with same tagging needle as (B); being tried in sheepshead; (D) **Stainless Steel Dart Tag**—used with slotted tagging needle (see Fig. 1); has stainless wire through core of streamer; used for 27 inch and larger red drum, black drum, and cobia.

(A) **T-bar Tag**—(usually orange, but green tags also used); used with (E) internal anchor tag for double tagging select species; (E) **Internal Anchor Tag (yellow and with soft vinyl anchor tab)**—a high retention tag inserted through abdominal wall muscle just behind pectoral fin (a scalpel is used to make small incision through muscle); tag only used by 2-3 select taggers for double tagging trials with T-bar Tag secured somewhere along base of second dorsal fin; to date used in 14-26 inch red drum and speckled trout. Occasionally a fish may be “triple tagged” by adding a Dogleg Dart Tag at base of the first dorsal fin.

**T-bar Tag**—tag of normal length with streamer about 2 inches long; (B) **Shorter T-bar Tag**—tag steamer only about 1.25 inches long because tip with TAG# on it has been cut off by angler for confirming TAG# when calling in report of recaptured fish. This is often done when catching an undersized tagged fish which is going to be thrown back alive anyway. The TAG# is also duplicated at the opposite end of the tag where it is anchored in the fish, and the tag’s remaining middle section still shows “REWARD-Call 757-491-5160.” Therefore the tag is still completely functional; however this can only be done once to a tag. Another option for leaving tag in tact in fish to be released is to write down, or key into your cell phone, both the TAG# and PHONE# on the tag. Release the fish with its tag and call in the tagged fish report to get a reward.
Tags Covered with Algae and Tag Sheaths Discolored or Abraded.

Top tag is new; compare with bottom tag from flounder covered with brownish algae material; usually tag # and phone # can be read by rubbing fouling material off with fingers or gently scraping streamer using finger nail. Try not to scratch streamer’s outer sheath as scratches can make #’s hard to read.

Flounder tag appears to be discolored underneath sheath possible due to algae or sun damage—Tag # and Phone # finally determined but hard to read; sometimes removing such tags and using a magnifying lens helps in reading numbers. Tag came from flounder at large almost one year; tagged in July 2007 at the York River Coast Guard Pier and recaptured in June 2008 at the Gloucester Point Fishing Pier.

Two abraded, discolored tags from 23-24 inch red drum recaptured in Avon, NC surf in November 2007 within 9 days of one another; after calls to NC DMF determined not NC tags, the NC anglers K. Newcomber and K. Beck called in recaptures to VIMS; fish had both been tagged at York River Power Plant discharge canal (at 14.5-15.5 inches) in Oct. 2006 and March 2007 by E. Shepherd.

Tag heavily fouled with algae from a 13-15 inch flounder recaptured at the Gloucester Point fishing Pier June 13-19, 2006; fish one of several recaptures from flounder tagged almost exactly one year earlier at the pier; Tagger Ed Shepherd recaptured his own fish, replacing the tag with a new tag. But anglers can rub algae off with fingers and read tag # and phone # for reporting fish and getting a reward.
STAINLESS STEEL DART TAG & TAGGING STICK INSTRUCTIONS

Stainless Steel Dart Tag

The “SS” series tag is recommended for large fish (26-28 inches or larger); i.e. adult red drum, black drum, and cobia. The tag consists of orange tubing (5.75 inches long) bearing the tag number on both ends. It is attached to a sharp, pointed metal anchor. A special stainless steel applicator, glued into a hole drilled in the end of a wooden dowel or pole, holds the dart tip in place during the tagging procedure.

How to Apply the “SS” Tag

1. Bring or guide the fish alongside the boat. One person should hold the leader.

2. If you can reasonably net the fish, ease the fish into the boat, keeping it in the net if possible. Lay the fish over a flat ruler or on a measuring board to get as good a straight total length as practical. If fish is too large to net then see below for method of tagging it in the water.

3. Very Large Fish - The tagger should be positioned slightly behind the fish to get a good angle for tagging.

4. Bend tag dart into a curve, then push tagging needle into slot of tag on top of curved dart surface. Work dart point under scales and push into fish’s muscle at the base of the dorsal fin.

5. Measuring from fish’s snout, make a good estimate of total length (to longest part of tail) and fork length (to fork/middle area of tail).

6. Record the information on the tag card/sheet before tagging another fish.

Tagging fish from a pier or the beach works best with a tagging stick 6-10” long (possibly attached to your belt). A handy trick is to cut a V notch in the opposite end of the stick to assist in removing hooks from thrashing fish.

To mount the tag applicator in the tagging pole, drill a 5/32-inch hold exactly 1-½ inches deep being careful that the hole is perfectly aligned with the pole. Place a small amount of strong bonding glue (epoxy works well) in the hole and on the base of the applicator.

Holding the applicator in the middle of its length with vise grips or pliers, center the large end over the hole, driving the applicator exactly 1½ inch down into the pole by hammering on the pliers or vise grips NOT ON THE APPLICATOR.

Hammering on the end of the applicator will close the slot for the tag and usually breaks the applicator.

How to construct a tagging stick for “SS” series tags

Tagging poles are usually made from ¼ to 1-inch diameter wooden dowels. Poles of varying length are needed depending on the type fish intended to be tagged and whether you will be tagging from a boat with low or high freeboard.

See instructions/diagram (next page) detailing curved dart portion of tag.
Notice curve of dart; this increases tag retention.

**FOR USE ON RED DRUM OVER 27” LONG TO TAG A FISH WITH A STEEL DART TAG**
*(Courtesy of NC Div. of Marine Fisheries-Carol Etheridge)*

1) Lay fish on its side and measure total length (and fork length) from tip of snout.
2) Write down the two lengths and the number of the tag you are going to use.
3) Be sure steel dart is curved as in picture above. Curve of dart prevents the tag from easily backing out of fish.
4) Count down 1 scale row (2nd row) between the leading edge and the middle of the first dorsal fin. Making sure the tag head is turned towards the fish, wedge the point under a scale (may help to remove a scale).
5) Hold the applicator at a 45-degree angle and jab in a forward and downward direction. Push the dart in until buried about an inch deep in the flesh and remove the tag applicator. Securing the tag into the fish in this manner helps stabilize the streamer. Shallow tags have a tendency to wallow around, aggravate the entry wound and may back out causing tag loss.

Questions or comments? Call Jon Lucy (804-684-7166); Email: lucy@vims.edu
Objective: To document fish migrations between VA and NC waters.

Double-tagging indicates if tag losses are excessive for certain types of tags.

Please Report Tagged Fish
1-757-491-5160
Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program
Virginia Beach, VA

- Please check Speckled Trout and Red Drum for tags.
- Some fish are DOUBLE-TAGGED.
- Important: If fish has two tags, report BOTH tag numbers.
- If releasing fish alive, consider leaving tag(s) in fish, recording tag number(s) and reporting capture.
- Reward available.

Questions: Call Claude Bain (757) 491-5160 or Jon Lucy at (804) 684-7166 or email: lucy@vims.edu

Project funded by Virginia saltwater fishing license funds.

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Tagging and Releasing Fish in Virginia Gets Anglers' Attention from Chesapeake Angler Magazine's Use of Tagged Fish Photos (cover images used with permission of magazine)

September 2007, Chesapeake Angler Magazine

Quoted from Table of Contents page: “Andrew Mode of Chesapeake, VA caught, tagged and released this citation black drum at the 3rd Island of the CCT while fishing on the Chesapeake Angler Magazine boat with Captain Max King. He was taking part in the Kids Fishing School hosted by the Chesapeake Angler Magazine held this summer.”

July 2008, Chesapeake Angler Magazine

Quoted from Table of Contents page: “Mac McGee caught this pretty 24-inch release citation speckled trout on June 3rd while fishing in the Mobjack Bay with Capt. Ed Lawrence of Speckulator Charters.” What is not mentioned is the fish was “tagged” before being released. Capt. Ed Lawrence is a long-time tagger with the Game Fish Tagging Program and Mr. McGee joined the tagging program in February 2008 through one of its required Angler Tagging Training Workshops. It’s possible tagging of the fish was not mentioned when the photo was submitted; also space was needed to identify other angler’s cover photo catches.
Tagged juvenile flounder recaptured by veteran tagger Ed Shepherd at Gloucester Point Fishing Pier and released with its tag (Jon Lucy photo).

15 inch speckled trout tagged and released by Chris Newsome off Stingray Point spring 2006 (Jon Lucy photo).

27 inch flounder tagged and released by Trisha Kneill 5 November 2007 at Triangle Wrecks 30 miles offshore. Recaptured 17 November 2007 more inshore at the Tower Reef; 13 miles off Virginia Beach (Ken Neill photo).

27 inch release citation speckled trout tagged by Kevin Whitley (K. Whitley photo).
15 inch tautog tagged Rudee Inlet rock jetties 1 April 2007 (Jon Lucy photo).

8 inch juvenile black drum tagged fall 2007 by Ed Shepherd at York River Hot Ditch, recaptured and released with tag at same location (Jon Lucy photo).

23-24 inch release citation tautog tagged at concrete ship at Kiptopeake (kayakkevin.com photo).

Release citation black drum caught by Charles Southall and tagged (Ken Neill photo).

8 inch juvenile black drum tagged fall 2007 by Ed Shepherd at York River Hot Ditch, recaptured and released with tag at same location (Jon Lucy photo).
33 inch cobia tagged and released by Kevin Whitley (*kayakkevin.com* photo).

Chuck Harrison holds a 46 inch cobia tagged for release (*Stan Gold* photo).

24-25 inch sheepshead tagged for release at the CBBT during summer 2006 (*Ken Neill* photo).

6 inch juvenile sheepshead tagged and recaptured again during fall 2007 at York River Hot Ditch (*Jon Lucy* photo).
50 + inch red drum tagged by Ric Burnley off Cape Charles Light for a release citation ("Kayak Kevin" Whitley photo)

Double tagged sub-adult red drum (15-16 inch fish) released in Rudee Inlet (Jon Lucy photo)

Medium size spadefish with T-bar tag ("Kayak Kevin" Whitley photo).

Larger spadefish tagged at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel ("Kayak Kevin" Whitley photo).

9.5 inch black sea bass caught with T-bar tag; note brown algae ("grass") partially covering tag # and phone # for calling in recaptured fish; gently rubbing off "grass" makes numbers readable.

Releasing a 17-18 inch double tagged black sea bass on offshore wrecks for studying T-bar tag retention; sea bass recaptured within about 12 months of tagging typically retained both tags, but fish out over longer periods often had lost the T-bar tag (Jon Lucy photo).
In this article, veteran angler-tagger Chuck Harrison is joined by 10 year old Drew Camp on Captain Stan Gold's charter boat Blind Date for a mid-May day of catching (and tagging-releasing) trophy black drum. While the article demonstrates Chuck Harrison's gift for getting you into the fishing action as if you were there, a special element is on the other side of this page. See Drew's version of the day titled "Plan B & Second Chances" (used with permission of Drew and his parents). Chuck Harrison is shown about to release a 43 inch tagged drum. It is Drew's generation which will soon be the ones safe-guarding our saltwater recreational fishery resources. There is little doubt he will help lead the way!
Plan B & Second Chances
by Drew Camp

At the first spot, we had one good hook up, but it came off after about two minutes. After that nothing happened. Just as it was getting dark, we got a call from a friend of Captain Stan who said there was a good black drum bite not far away. We picked up the anchor and ran over. Captain Stan found a really good spot and we dropped anchor. In about 10 minutes my rod went off on a long run and then Mr. Chuck hooked up, too. Mr. Chuck got his to the boat and it measured 43 inches. Captain Stan tagged it and slid it back in the water. I fought mine for another 10 minutes, but I couldn't get it in. It stayed about 20 feet from the boat and then it came off. I was so frustrated.

Captain Stan hooked up next and got his in pretty quick. It measured 45 inches and we tagged it. Things got quiet for awhile and then it was my Dad's turn. He felt the fish nibbling on the bait and slowly cranked the circle hook right into the jaw. His fish swam up current and then turned back. Captain Stan netted the fish; it measured 48 inches and was tagged and released. It was about time to go (home) when we got another bite. Since I had not landed a fish yet, I got another chance. This fish ran up current and then crossed over the anchor line. We had to unzip all the curtains so I could follow the fish around the boat. He fought for about 20 minutes. When Captain Stan said he needed help to lift it in the boat, I knew it was big. It measured 51 inches and it had a 40-inch girth —it is the biggest black drum I have ever caught! We tagged it and released it. It was awesome. We caught all of the drum on clams. Sometimes we put a crab on at the same time, and Captain Stan calls that a "Drum Sandwich."