



TAGGING NEWS

NEWS FROM THE ORI TAGGING PROJECT
NUMBER 25



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IN THIS ISSUE

PROGRESS TO DATE (2)

PERCENTAGE OF FISH TAGGED
ALONG THE SA COAST (3)

TOP 10 SPECIES TAGGED (3)

INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC
TAGGING (4)

KWAZULU-NATAL SHARKS
BOARD TAGGING (4)

COMMERCIAL CHARTER
GROUPS (4)

SPECIAL THANKS (4)

ANGLERS WHO HAVE TAGGED
10 OR MORE FISH (5)

MAIN SPECIES TAGGED (8)

LINE-FISH RESEARCH IN
DWESA-CWEBE MPA (9)

MOVEMENT PATTERNS OF
POENSKOP (10)

MOVEMENT PATTERNS OF
LARGESPOT POMPANO (11)

BILLFISH TAGGING IN SOUTH
AFRICA (12)

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Welcome to this the 25th edition of the Tagging News! What a year 2011 has proved to be. Not only did we nearly match the number of fish tagged in 2010, but we also broke several recapture records, one of them possibly even being a world record (see recapture highlights)! After more than 27 years the ORI Tagging Project continues to bring in valuable information on fish movement patterns, growth rates, mortality rates and population dynamics of our important linefish species. This information is extremely valuable and continues to be used by students, scientists and managers around the country for policy and decision-making on linefish management. At a recent scientific linefish symposium the question was asked whether ORI should continue with the project, particularly since funding has been an ongoing problem. The response from scientists and managers alike was unanimously positive and we have decided to do our best to try and keep this project going for as long as possible, come rain or shine! This is particularly important since despite the large quantity of important data being collected, the Tagging Project has also made a major contribution towards changing the ethic of anglers towards catch and release, which undoubtedly goes far beyond the scientific value of the data collected. Not only do anglers now have a reason to capture and release a fish, they are in actual fact contributing to a better understanding of the biology and ultimately conservation of that species. This added bonus goes a long way towards improving angler awareness about our marine linefish species as well as contributing towards sustainable fishing.

Overall, 2011 was another excellent year for the ORI Tagging Project - a further 155 new members joined the project, bringing the total number of participants to 5 130 anglers since the project's inception in 1984. A total of 10 262 fish (only 61 less than 2010) were tagged and a remarkable 697 (6.8%) recaptures were reported during 2011, which was slightly lower than the record breaking recapture rate (8.8%) achieved in 2010. Galjoen (15.6%), spotted grunter (7.1%), dusky kob (6.7%), garrick/leervis (5.5%) and white steenbras (4.7%) were the top five species tagged. Western Cape (23.2%), Eastern Cape (19.5%), Southern Cape (14.4%), Zululand (12.9%) and Transkei (10.1%), were the regions where the bulk of tagging took place during 2011.

The web-based tagging database is working well and the homepage was recently revamped as many of you will have already seen. The website continues to allow our members to keep track of their own tagging performance and has proved to be a very useful method for anglers to check and validate data entered onto the system by the Tagging Officer. So for those of you who have not already seen your tagging profile, please go to www.oritag.org.za (to login you need to enter

your tagging reference number as a six digit number, e.g. TA4218 and repeat this number as your password). The tagging instruction booklet was also upgraded to incorporate many of the changes that have taken place in the past four years. If you have not seen this updated version, it is available with this newsletter on our website as mentioned above.

The Tagging Project acquired a dedicated cell phone number (079 5290711) in 2010, which has enabled taggers to sms recaptures to us immediately. This cell phone number and the dedicated email address (oritag@ori.org.za) were printed directly onto the streamers of all the new tags ordered from Hallprint© Australia in 2011. This is a positive step forward for the ORI Tagging Project and will hopefully increase the reporting of recaptures (and judging by the number of recaptures being reported, it already has!). These 'new' tags have already started to be issued so look out for them when you get your next batch of tags. Along with the new information on each tag, a new tag type for billfish, known as the M-tag, was also ordered for the first time. This tag has replaced the old B-tags for the tagging of billfish. The B-tags are now only issued out to specialised shark anglers, such as those from the Kwazulu-Natal Sharks Board. Over 500 of these new M-tags have already been issued and, along with the cell phone number and email address printed on the streamers, will hopefully increase the billfish recapture rate which is currently less than 1%. Please note that the M-tag also requires a different applicator, so you will need to purchase a new applicator when you are issued with M-tags.

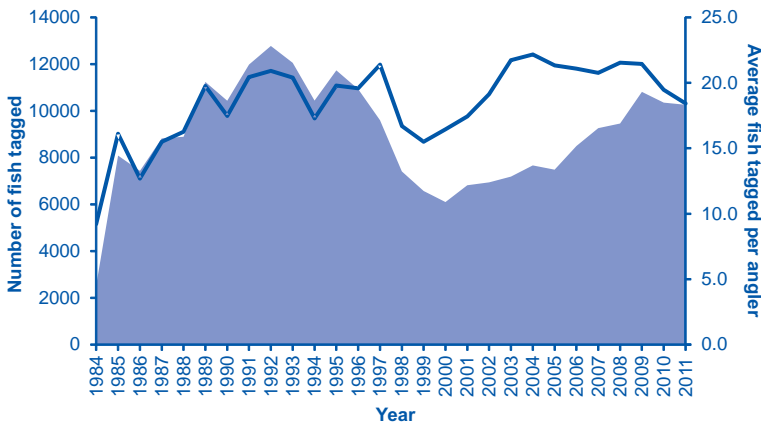
We sincerely hope that you enjoy this exciting issue of the Tagging News. We would like to say a big thank you to all of our tagging members for their ongoing support as well as the numerous anglers who have assisted us in obtaining tag recaptures. The long-term success of this project is entirely thanks to your on-going contributions towards the wise use and conservation of our marine linefish species. We wish you tight lines and happy tagging – let's make 2012 another record year!



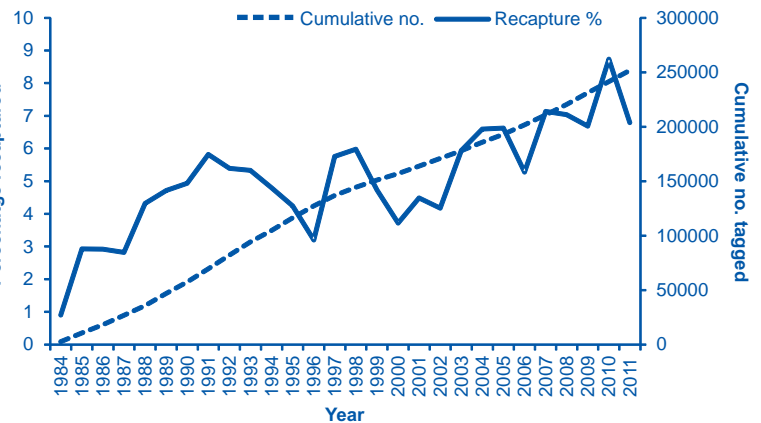
Measuring the fork length of a recaptured speckled snapper. Photo by Bruce Mann

Year	New Members	Active members	Total no. tagged	Average no. tagged per angler	Cumulative no. members	Cumulative no. tagged	Species tagged	Recapture no.	Recapture %	Max years free	Max Km moved
1984	283	277	2553	9.2	283	2553	103	23	0.9	0.6	723
1985	441	502	8088	16.1	724	10641	153	237	2.9	1.1	804
1986	304	586	7434	12.7	1028	18075	170	217	2.9	2.8	1227
1987	271	569	8823	15.5	1299	26898	180	249	2.8	2.8	1374
1988	218	547	8894	16.3	1517	35792	176	384	4.3	4.1	1443
1989	232	569	11237	19.7	1749	47029	192	530	4.7	4.1	1016
1990	289	597	10435	17.5	2038	57464	162	515	4.9	4.0	1892
1991	208	586	11982	20.4	2246	69446	185	697	5.8	6.3	1625
1992	213	611	12777	20.9	2459	82223	188	689	5.4	7.2	1408
1993	299	591	12056	20.4	2758	94279	175	643	5.3	7.5	1606
1994	242	604	10442	17.3	3000	104721	181	501	4.8	8.1	1670
1995	249	593	11733	19.8	3249	116454	171	498	4.2	8.6	1676
1996	229	558	10930	19.6	3478	127384	175	350	3.2	7.8	1554
1997	141	449	9601	21.4	3619	136985	174	553	5.8	11.0	1897
1998	127	444	7412	16.7	3746	144397	152	443	6.0	8.4	1820
1999	123	424	6575	15.5	3869	150972	158	311	4.7	12.0	1186
2000	68	371	6101	16.4	3937	157073	148	227	3.7	10.6	1679
2001	65	391	6820	17.4	4002	163893	144	306	4.5	10.9	1273
2002	54	363	6944	19.1	4056	170837	160	290	4.2	12.8	1426
2003	55	331	7190	21.7	4111	178027	150	427	5.9	8.1	1751
2004	63	346	7668	22.2	4174	185695	154	506	6.6	9.8	1319
2005	60	351	7487	21.3	4234	193182	166	496	6.6	10.8	1577
2006	146	403	8500	21.1	4380	201682	170	449	5.3	10.9	1552
2007	164	446	9262	20.8	4544	210944	177	661	7.1	9.0	1405
2008	117	439	9460	21.5	4661	220404	166	666	7.0	15.0	1495
2009	162	504	10813	21.5	4823	231217	180	723	6.7	14.0	2966
2010	152	532	10354	19.5	4975	241571	171	904	8.7	20.7	1843
2011	155	557	10262	18.4	5130	251833	167	697	6.8	22.6	1438
Total	5130	3457	251833	18.6	5130	251833	368	13192	5.2	22.6	2966

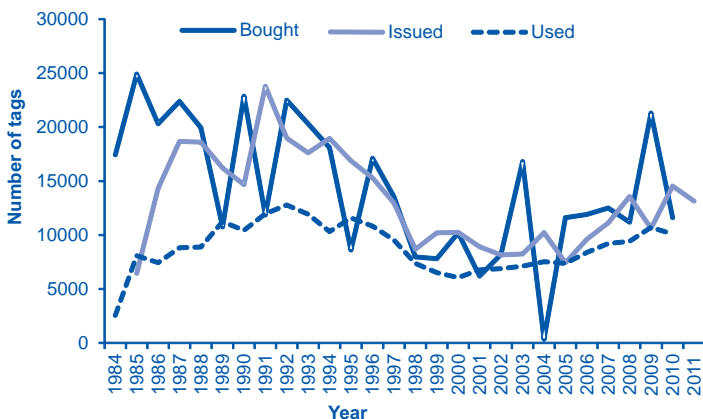
FISH TAGGED PER YEAR AND PER ANGLER



% FISH RECAPTURE PER YEAR AND CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF FISH TAGGED



NUMBER OF TAGS BOUGHT FROM SUPPLIER, ISSUED TO MEMBERS AND USED BY MEMBERS

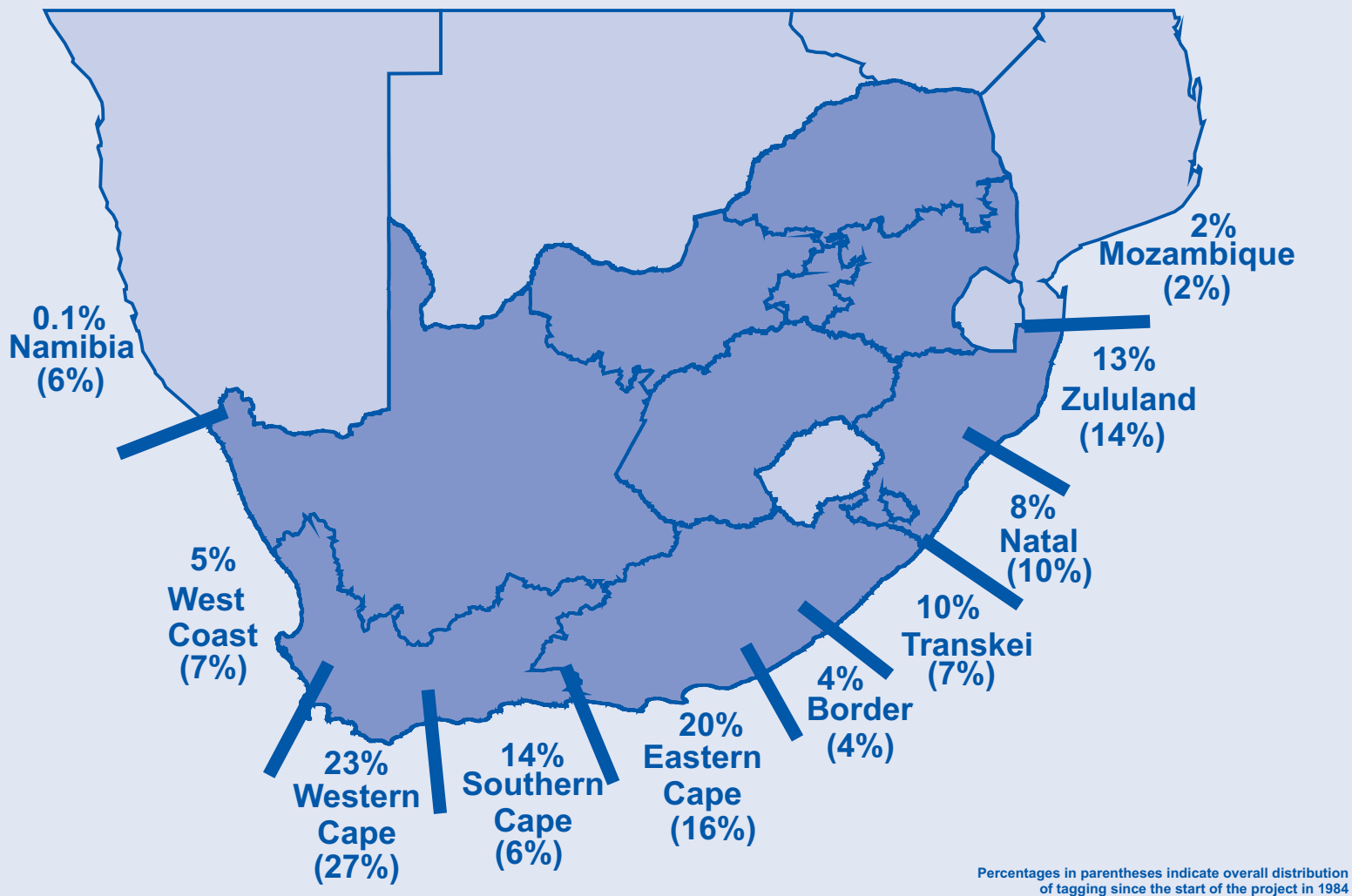


CAPE YELLOWTAIL
Seriola lalandi

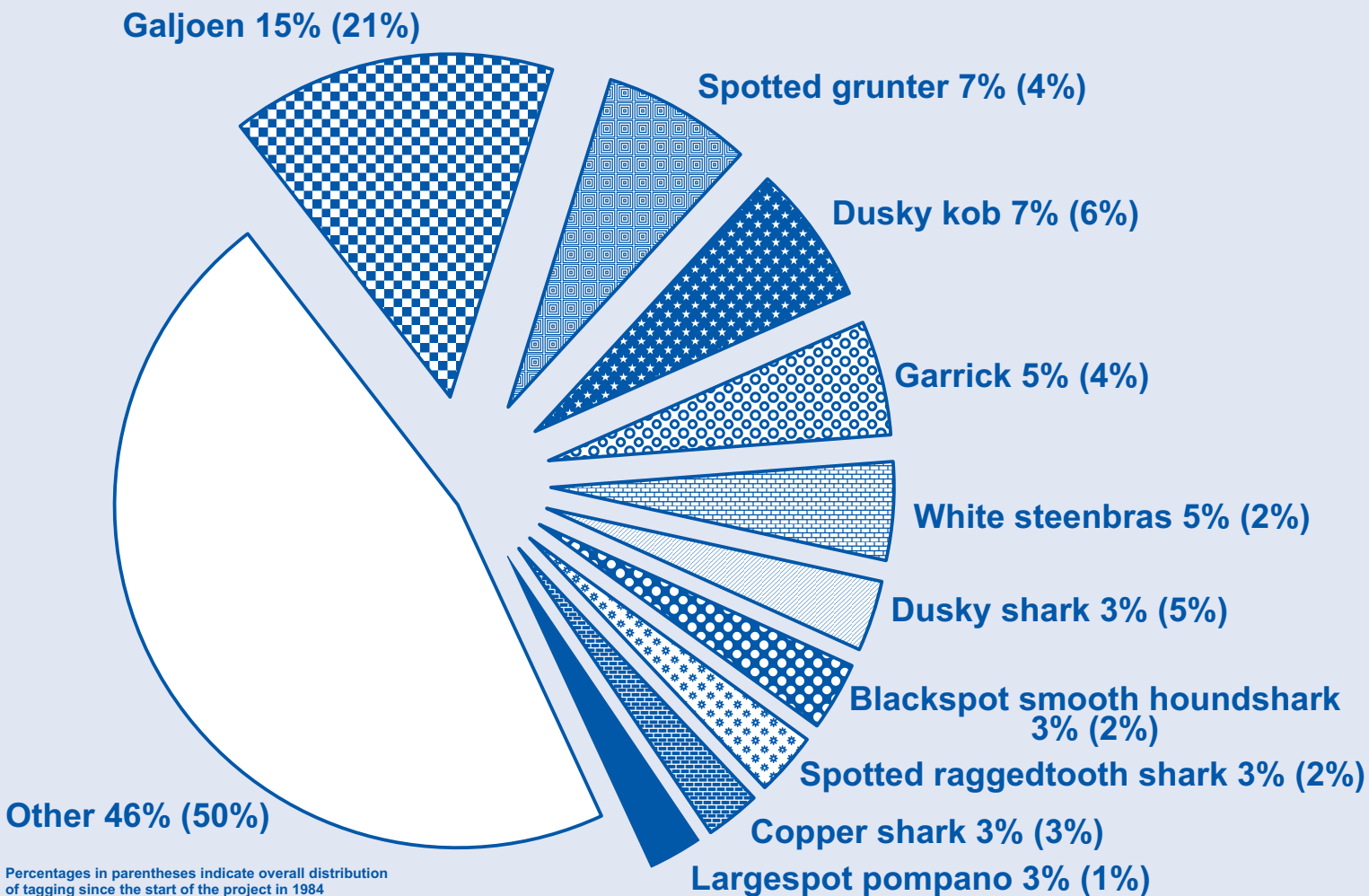
521 TAGGED
16 RECAPTURED = 3.07% RECAPTURE RATE
LONGEST DISTANCE TRAVELLED 1 746 KM
MAXIMUM DAYS FREE 1 287 (3.5 YEARS)

2011 was certainly a year of amazing recaptures! On the 20/08/2011 a small (775 mm FL) Cape yellowtail was tagged and released by Warwick Leslie off Dassen Island on the West Coast. Just 30 days later on the 19/11/2011, this fish was recaptured by Greg Defilippi offshore of Stiebel Rocks just south of Hibberdene on the KZN south coast (yes you read right!). In this short period this fish had swum an amazing 1 746 km, which amounts to a whopping 58 km per day. This was really quite remarkable for a small fish that only weighed in at 6.7kg.

PERCENTAGE FISH TAGGED ALONG THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN COAST IN 2011

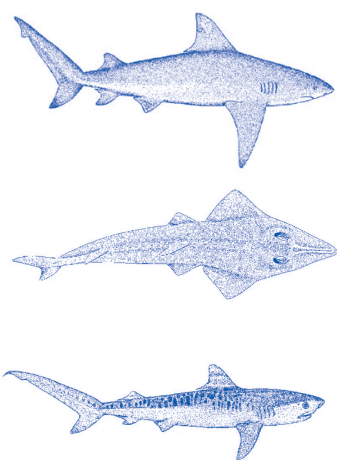


TOP 10 SPECIES TAGGED IN 2011

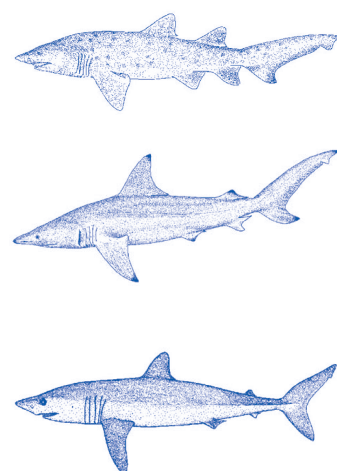


Institute / Organisation	Area	2011		Overall	
		Total	% Recapt.	Total	% Recapt.
Oceans and Coasts (DEA)	De Hoop Marine Reserve	1448	7.5	47336	6.6
Oceanographic Research Institute	Pondoland Marine Reserve	527	15.7	2704	25.3
	St Lucia Marine Reserve	467	9.2	5593	13.7
Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife	Kosi Bay Estuary Reserve	241	8.6	2707	8.3
Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency	Dwesa Marine Reserve	180	2.2	917	2.4
Port Elizabeth Museum	Coega/Nggura Harbour	79	1.3	1422	5.4
Oceans Research and Shark Lab	Mosselbaai	70	7.1	94	5.3
KwaZulu-Natal Sharks Board	KwaZulu-Natal Coast	58	13.8	4067	6.4
White Shark Africa - Shark Warriors	Mosselbaai	42	0.0	142	0.7
uShaka Marine World Aquarium (Released Fish)	Durban	30	0.0	84	3.6
Rhodes University	Bird Island Marine Reserve	16	18.8	150	4.6
Two Oceans Aquarium (Released Fish)	Western Cape	13	0.0	57	5.3

SHARKS TAGGED & RELEASED FROM NETS/DRUMLINES IN 2011 BY KWAZULU-NATAL SHARKS BOARD



Species	Scientific Name	Total (Numbers)		
		Tagged	Injected	Recaptured
Blacktip	<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>	2	0	0
Copper	<i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i>	1	0	0
Dusky	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>	6	4	1
Giant guitarfish/sandshark	<i>Rhynchobatus djiddensis</i>	6	0	1
Great white	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>	5	5	0
Raggedtooth	<i>Carcharias taurus</i>	5	2	6
Smooth houndshark	<i>Mustelus mustelus</i>	1	0	0
Spinner	<i>Carcharhinus brevipinna</i>	2	0	0
Tiger	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>	20	6	0
Zambezi	<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>	2	2	0
TOTAL		44	19	7



COMMERCIAL CHARTER GROUPS

Name	Group	Area	Facet	2011		Overall	
				Total	% Recapt.	Total	% Recapt.
Adrian Westraadt	Linene Island Resort	Linene Island, Mozambique	DS RS FLY	51	0	442	1.13
Duarte M. Rato	Rani Resorts- Indigo Bay	Bazaruto Island, Mozambique	DS BF	57	1.8	739	0.54
Guy Ferguson	Azura Lodge	Benguerua Island, Mozambique	DS BF FLY	46	2.2	548	1.46
Graham Pollard	Benguera Lodge	Benguerua Island, Mozambique	DS BF	27	3.7	127	0.79
Ryan Williamson	Citation Gamefish Boat Charters	Richards Bay	DS BF	6	0	13	0
Sean Amor	Hooked on Africa	Cape Town, Western Cape	DS	3	0	48	8.33

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the financial support received from the South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR) and the KZN Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs, without which we would have been unable to continue this important project.

Most of all, we would like to thank all of our active tagging members for their on-going contributions towards linefish research and conservation.

In particular we would like to acknowledge the following taggers for monetary donations in 2011: Dawid van der Merwe, Garth McGee, John Dale and Walter Smith.

A special word of thanks must also go to the previous Tagging Officer, Elinor Bullen. Elinor put a great deal of her working life into the Tagging Project and made a huge contribution to its long-term success.

David Hall (Hallprint© Australia) is thanked for his excellent service and on-going supply of high quality tags and applicators.

Roelf Venter is thanked for his assistance in fitting handles to the tag applicators.

Lastly, we thank all of the other sponsors who have contributed in some way over the past 27 years, there are simply too many to mention.

SPECIAL THANKS

ANGLERS WHO HAVE TAGGED 10 OR MORE FISH DURING 2011

Member Name	2011 Total	Recapt.	% Recapture
MR. P. GERRAIS	15	54	1
MR. R. BILLMORE	15	79	2
MR. M. DOHLHOFF	15	47	1
MR. D. VAN VUUREN	15	61	2
MR. ANDREW PARSONS	14	1631	67
MR. BM. GILBERT	14	151	3
MR. A. DU PLESSIS	14	149	2
MR. DM. IRVINE	14	100	6
MR. J. LE ROUX	14	175	7
MR. G. ORING	14	58	0
MR. J. ACKHURST	14	111	1
MR. AT. CANESTRA	14	68	9
MR. M. MAWBY	14	23	0
MR. MJ. PAUTZ	13	2642	81
MR. T. BEUKES	13	57	3
MR. K. SPENGER	13	79	1
MR. J. OOSTHUIZEN	13	151	30
MR. A. FOWLS	13	153	2
MR. L. DAVIDOWITZ	13	95	2
MR. M. DOUGLAS	13	44	0
MR. C. VAN TONDER	13	39	1
MR. D. VAN DER MERWE	13	36	0
MR. J. BRINK	13	47	1
MR. C. BUITENDACH	13	29	0
MR. T. BEUKES	13	32	0
MR. J. VAN ZYL	13	30	0
MR. E. DIEN	13	22	1
MR. JC. RANCE SNR.	12	229	13
MR. J. STRAUSS	12	173	4
MR. A. MANNING	12	170	4
MR. R. SCHIETEKAT	12	48	1
MR. J. CARSTENS	12	41	0
MR. K. HANDLEY	12	12	0
MR. G. LE RICHE	12	19	0
MR. A. FIRMANI	12	13	0
MR. GC. MIDDLETON	11	136	1
MR. R. THOMPSON	11	553	21
MNR. G. BREEDT	11	48	0
MR. L. LORENZEN	11	123	5
MR. W. COLEMAN	11	85	1
MR. P. WEINGARTZ	11	58	0
MR. P. NORTJE	11	57	3
MR. S. LUBBE	11	17	0
MR. S. SMITH	11	207	9
MR. J. LODEWYK	11	44	1
MR. A. MANN	11	51	7
MR. M. DE LA HEY	11	94	2
MR. F. BOTHA	11	41	3
MR. C. VEUGELERS	11	60	3
MR. J. NEL	11	16	0
MR. J. ABRAHAM	11	11	0
MR. J. TIMM	10	24	1
MR. S. NAICKER	10	88	3
MR. C. STIPP	10	139	14
MR. D. SWART	10	83	1
MR. C. NIEUWOUDT	10	42	1
MR. B. DAVIDS	10	70	0
MR. C. BEZUIDENHOUT	10	40	4
MR. R. PERUMAL	10	14	1
MR. D. DUNCAN	10	25	0
MR. D. BICKELL	10	20	0
MR. J. DU TOIT	10	38	1
MR. R. MAGGS	10	23	2
MR. N. MAITLAND	10	14	1
MR. R. STRYDOM	10	18	1
MR. S. ATKINSON	10	16	0

Member Name	2011 Total	Recapt.	% Recapture
MR. S. HUMPHREYS	30	152	0
MR. S. OOSTHUIZEN	30	65	3
MR. DC. MACE	30	36	0
MR. A. WOOD	30	30	0
MR. S. MEY	30	35	2
MR. M. TYLDESLEY	29	412	36
MR. M. MOLENAAR	29	343	18
MR. A. KRUGER	29	540	38
MR. G. GROBLER	29	279	22
MR. S. BURTON	28	373	17
MR. J. BREETZKE	28	116	6
MR. J. BISHOP	28	64	7
MR. PC. OOSTHUIZEN	27	232	42
MR. S. SAGRILLO	27	262	10
MR. G. POLLARD	27	127	1
MR. PH. VAN NIMWEGEN	27	111	3
MR. CA. HAMLLET	26	186	13
MR. J. HILL	26	42	2
MR. B. O'CONNELL	26	40	0
MR. BD. CARR	25	667	37
MR. W. LESLIE	25	70	1
MR. A. KANTHAPERSAD	25	29	0
MR. HP. VOSLOO	24	69	2
MR. R. KRUGER	24	84	3
MR. B. STEYN	24	36	2
MR. H. CROUS	23	610	28
MR. C. CAINE	23	83	4
MR. CH. DE LA HARPE	23	228	34
MR. RF. BURGER	23	44	0
MR. PC. VAN ROOYEN	22	115	2
MR. J. COATES	22	212	9
MR. R. PRINSLOO	22	132	7
MR. R. VAN DER SANDT	22	179	7
MR. M. HYMAN	22	73	1
MR. J. FROST	22	59	5
MR. MJ. RADEMEYER	22	68	0
MR. K. HANSEN	22	53	2
MR. RM. HAND	21	643	80
MR. GB. MC GEE	21	64	0
MR. P. VAN DER WESTHUIZEN	21	62	3
MR. R. HOLMES	21	32	0
MR. C. RANGE	20	201	9
MR. Q. CATHERINE	20	181	5
MR. J. ORMSHAW	20	166	1
MR. B. KOCKOTT	20	331	8
MR. D. CARR	20	107	8
MR. H. ROELOFFZE	20	144	3
MR. G. BOUCHER	20	70	1
MR. F. FRONEMAN	20	32	1
MR. J. LORD	20	24	0
MR. DM. SCHENCK	19	274	17
MR. K. WEBBER	19	119	3
MR. G. AUSTIN	19	28	1
MR. W. VON DER MARWITZ	18	220	7
MR. G. POPE	18	928	76
MR. B. BROWN	18	90	2
MR. J. SMITH	17	37	0
MR. RK. VON DER MARWITZ	17	83	4
MR. R. MARSHALL	17	162	2
MR. M. DAMES	17	25	1
MR. JD. LENTZ	16	272	13
MR. F. ZONDAGH	16	63	2
MR. M. OOSTHUIZEN	16	24	0
MR. D. SOLOMON	16	24	0
MR. P. LOURENS	16	16	0
MR. JP. RHEEDER	16	20	0

Member Name	2011 Total	Recapt.	% Recapture
MR. F. VAN ZYL	260	266	12
MR. B. FERREIRA	157	238	2
MR. R. POTGIETER	109	368	10
MR. CD. LILFORD	103	2153	105
MR. R. KYLE	103	1069	136
MR. C. COETZEE	100	110	6
MR. E. KYLE	99	1248	236
DR. JJ. DE LA HARPE	99	699	57
MR. P. MC DONALD	99	153	3
MR. S. WALKER	91	4607	328
MR. B. SPARG	88	1574	74
MR. M. WHITE	77	476	24
MR. C. HART	75	2086	141
MR. RF. RAUBENHEIMER	74	218	4
MR. F. ELS	71	81	1
MR. D. DRENNAN	70	1104	94
MR. CK. DE CLERCQ	67	346	12
MR. O. RICHTER	66	235	6
MR. D. COLE	64	196	3
MR. GP. BEAUMONT	62	150	4
MR. D. HUMPHREY	60	159	4
MR. A. BOTHA	59	729	54
MR. N. DE KOCK	58	733	31
MR. O. VON HASSELN	58	95	2
MR. S. DUNLOP	53	108	8
Mr. A. WESTRAADT	51	442	5
MR. H. F. PETERS	50	84	4
MR. H. LOUW	49	106	3
MR. AG. LOURENS	48	329	11
MR. G. SAVILLE	47	731	31
MR. G. MARCHAND	47	159	14
MR. C. NELSON	47	91	1
MR. G. FERGUSON	46	548	8
MR. G. MARSHBANK	46	488	41
MR. C. QUAYLE	46	91	1
MR. R. SWART	45	121	7
MR. RA. KOEKEMOER	44	115	3
MR. RA. SHEPHERD	43	365	12
MR. BF. VAN WYK	43	389	16
MR. D. BEZUIDENHOUT	43	59	2
MR. T. EGGERSDORFER	41	565	62
MR. CP. OLIVIER	41	442	10
MR. P. MORRIS	40	628	40
MR. DJ. PRETORIUS	40	45	2
MR. CS. MULLER	39	217	7
MR. B. HYMAN	39	97	3
MR. H. LEWIS	39	134	2
MR. PD. MULLER JNR	38	464	11
MISS. K. KYLE	38	107	4
MR. D. TEN VELDEN	38	60	1
MR. A. JOHNSTONE	37	61	5
MR. N. WILLEMSE	36	149	5
MR. J. LUEF	36	83	3
MR. BKA. LANGE	35	316	33
MR. S. PIYARALL	35	90	6
MR. K. HUMPHREYS	34	795	42
MR. A. CAMPHER	34	81	1
MR. C. WILKINSON	34	60	1
MR. G. GRAY	33	219	4
MR. WS. VAN DER MERWE	33	96	0
MR. G. GIMINGHAM	33	67	3
MR. D. DELANEY	33	33	0
MR. A. VAN DER POEL	32	93	4
MR. CF. MARAIS	31	639	26
MR. D. STONE	31	102	3
MR. T. ELVIN-JENSEN	31	98	4





MAIN FISH SPECIES TAGGED UP TO 31 DECEMBER 2011

Species	Number tagged	Recaptured		Km Travelled		Days Free	
		No.	%	Mean	Max	Mean	Max
Galjoen	53708	3750	6.98	44	1892	402	5118
Dusky kob	13979	839	6	30	1625	329	4370
Dusky shark	11394	737	6.47	75	1374	93	2772
Garrick	10265	693	6.75	252	1670	333	3208
Spotted grunter	8965	257	2.87	13	823	264	2950
Copper/bronze shark	8605	267	3.1	161	1790	428	3981
Blacktail	8367	208	2.49	6	358	268	2715
Spotted gulleyshark	7771	419	5.39	32	911	512	6332
Shad	7253	272	3.75	235	1676	129	1106
Lesser guitarfish/sandshark	6370	70	1.1	42	726	335	2572
White steenbras	5880	304	5.17	48	2711	288	2369
Blackspot smooth hound shark	5456	151	2.77	45	582	574	2561
Slinger	4613	157	3.4	8	1059	131	899
Spotted ragged-tooth shark	4442	429	9.66	232	2966	754	8256
Giant guitarfish/sandshark	3993	194	4.86	33	360	317	1945
Roman	3997	268	6.71	4	294	256	3549
Sailfish	3429	28	0.82	63	1060	154	727
Sevengill cow shark	3144	159	5.06	75	597	443	4332
Giant kingfish	2924	102	3.49	14	272	354	2226
Diamond ray	2799	17	0.61	244	1577	416	1890
Largespot pompano	2765	47	1.7	7	114	209	1236
Black musselcracker/poenskop	2790	205	7.35	9	483	399	3295
Zebrafish/wildeperd	2600	61	2.35	3	52	217	1399
Carpenter	2467	22	0.89	47	290	772	3885
Blue/marbled stingray	2502	6	0.24	61	234	492	1085
Bronze bream	2434	96	3.94	18	799	189	1465
White musselcracker	2164	67	3.1	60	843	559	2313
Catface rockcod	1946	412	21.17	6	411	189	2867
Slender baardman/tasselfish	1742	20	1.15	2	17	269	679
Yellowbelly rockcod	1698	300	17.67	5	355	285	2220
Ladyfish/springer	1570	30	1.91	25	412	369	1426
Longfin tuna/albacore	1449	36	2.48	303	1008	412	2585
Hammerhead sharks	1464	10	0.68	74	218	219	955
Speckled snapper	1490	564	37.85	1	146	231	2276
Perch/riverbream	1409	202	14.34	1	42	376	1583
Smooth hammerhead shark	1375	20	1.45	142	384	603	3075
Sharpnose stingray	1395	3	0.22	8	24	221	465
King mackerel/couta	1319	52	3.94	416	1552	559	2604
Westcoast steenbras	1283	78	6.08	61	280	253	1449
Natal stumpnose	1264	35	2.77	10	230	192	653
Santer/soldier	1203	57	4.74	29	490	341	1683
Red steenbras	1071	77	7.19	220	923	1290	8080
Skipjack tuna	1017	1	0.1	1061	1061	464	464
Cape stumpnose	1031	5	0.48	13	56	231	732
River snapper	1017	213	20.94	2	391	308	2403
Brassy/greenspot kingfish	1004	63	6.27	1	13	241	772
Duckbill	956	8	0.84	21	123	580	1427
Striped catshark	905	43	4.75	12	381	366	2096
Milkshark	896	25	2.79	91	363	187	772
Souffin shark	879	23	2.62	140	1034	804	3586
Blacktip shark	882	35	3.97	78	1288	217	1148
Yellowfin tuna	894	11	1.23	271	2701	215	548
Grey grunter	813	53	6.52	1	15	226	1099
Dageraad	788	30	3.81	28	592	415	1568
Geelbek	752	2	0.27	109	218	78	138
Scalloped hammerhead shark	717	13	1.81	157	629	213	832
Squaretail kob	661	35	5.3	2	27	98	274
Cavebass	681	97	14.24	6	328	264	933
Black marlin	707	2	0.28	256	504	124	159
Blacktip kingfish	648	26	4.01	4	54	146	545
Stonebream/stinker bream	648	5	0.77	30	149	221	563
Scotsman	702	193	27.49	14	378	350	1586
Longnose blackfin /spinner shark	583	20	3.43	69	1055	165	830
Honeycomb stingray	579	8	1.38	1	8	502	2543
Hardnose smooth houndshark	558	9	1.61	83	340	362	870
Great white shark	483	14	2.9	345	1548	370	959
Giant yellowtail	521	16	3.07	257	1746	218	1287
Bigeye kingfish	482	27	5.6	14	163	137	765
Seventyfour	482	11	2.28	114	521	595	2845
Eagleray	480	3	0.63	18	49	261	635
Queen mackerel/Natal snoek	441	3	0.68	4	12	376	1044
Tiger shark	454	23	5.07	201	1751	408	1823
Janbruin	436	14	3.21	1	12	110	279
Zambezi shark	415	26	6.27	63	539	321	2599
Leopard catshark	409	24	5.87	39	722	645	4431
Striped marlin	461	1	0.22	762	762	25	25
White seacatfish	355	31	8.73	2	21	334	1895
Talang queenfish	340	15	4.41	1	10	170	630
Southern pompano	328	23	7.01	61	464	132	848
Sandbar shark	323	6	1.86	166	345	250	536
Potato bass	325	15	4.62	1	14	176	518
Bonefish	319	1	0.31	6	6	17	17
Eastern little tuna	310	0	0				0
Hottentot	310	12	3.87	2	10	199	792
Halfmoon rockcod	303	55	18.15	1	45	378	2511

Species	Number tagged	Recaptured		Km Travelled		Days Free	
		No.	%	Mean	Max	Mean	Max
Blue marlin	318	0	0				0
White stumpnose	279	4	1.43	2		3	298
Bluntnose spiny dogfish	266	4	1.5	188	669	615	1476
Banded galjoen	246	6	2.44	94	562	254	507
Elephantfish/St Joseph	242	1	0.41	1342	1342	218	218
Blackspot shark	239	6	2.51	35	192	281	708
Red stumpnose	255	6	2.35	20	107	561	1233
Bartail flathead	234	5	2.14	4	18	273	796
Pickhandle barracuda	235	48	20.43	1	44	229	1398
Flapnose shark	246	28	11.38	2	43	503	1367
Brown shyshark	216	7	3.24	1	10	487	933
Snapper kob/salmon	204	10	4.9	20	132	170	378
Silver kob	247	8	3.24	32	134	256	839
Black seacatfish	200	91	45.5	0	1	213	564
Spearnose skate	183	4	2.19	1	3	193	284
Cape snoek	180	1	0.56	136	136	491	491
Malabar rockcod	180	26	14.44	0	7	178	762
Whitespotted smooth houndshark	172	4	2.33	5	15	478	1627
Bluefin kingfish	176	6	3.41	5	15	157	260
Lemonfish	172	10	5.81	1	2	219	749
Blue hottentot	171	4	2.34	0	0	96	199
Greyspot guitarfish/sandshark	158	1	0.63	6	6	51	51
Javelin grunter	153	16	10.46	9	65	378	2940
Puffadder shyshark	154	12	7.79	2	20	132	483
Dolphinfinshorado	150	1	0.67	64	64	66	66
Smallspotted pompano	133	7	5.26	40	270	281	1218
Spotted eagleray	125	2	1.6	8	15	460	850
Cock grunter	103	5	4.85	14	65	144	490
Flathead mullet	101	1	0.99	738	738	738	738
Blue emperor	112	6	5.36	0	0	253	341
Englishman	98	3	3.06	2	6	245	554
Maasbanker	88	0	0				0
Cape gurnard	86	2	2.33	0	0	207	377
Sliteye/tope shark	86	2	2.33	290	565	1334	2652
Russell's snapper	88	2	2.27	0	1	44	77
Thorntail stingray	78	2	2.56	0	0	295	357
Eeltail catfish	82	1	1.22	1	1	47	47
Great barracuda	77	21	27.27	0	1	167	467
Spotted spiny dogfish	74	1	1.35	36	36	120	120
Blackfin reef shark	73	2	2.74	59	118	360	697
Oxeye tarpon	69	0	0				0
Banded catshark	65	8	12.31	16	55	423	1155
Striped mullet	65	1	1.54	1	1	230	230
Sailfin rubberlip	56	0	0				0
Java shark	57	2	3.51	14	18	67	76
Short-tail stingray	62	2	3.23	0	0	39	77
Sand steenbras	51	1	1.96	0	0	79	79
Yellowtail scad	51	0	0				0
Cape moony/moonfish	51	0	0				0
Doublespotted queenfish	51	1	1.96	0	0	537	537
Green jobfish	50	1	2	0	0	31	31
Blue/ferdy kingfish	48	0	0				0
Yellowspotted kingfish	49	0	0				0
Bigeye stumpnose	45	2	4.44	2	3	33	38
Longfin yellowtail	47	0	0				0
Brown catshark	44	1	2.27	0	0	34	34
Panga	44	0	0				0
Longfin kingfish	44	1	2.27	12	12	453	453
Greater yellowtail	46	0	0				0
Whitebarred rubberlip	44	1	2.27	1	1	176	176
Moustache rockcod	45	7	15.56	175	1200	1024	2990
Shortfin mako shark	42	4	9.52	19	69	294	786
Thintail thresher shark	44	0	0				0
Marbled electric ray	42	0	0				0
Needlescaled queenfish	42	1	2.38	0	0	227	227
Concertina-fish	42	0	0				0
Wreckfish	39	2	5.13	4	7	231	388
Yellow-edge lyretail	37	0	0				0
Atlantic bonito/sada-sada	36	0	0				0
Stentjie	34	0	0				0
Yellowfin emperor	33	4	12.12	0	0	441	1187
Manta ray	32	0	0				0
Milkfish	31	0	0				0
Tomato rockcod	37	4	10.81	2	6	327	537
Chub mackerel	29	0	0				0
Shortbill spearfish	32	0	0				0
Tripletail/flasher	28	0	0				0
Blue shark	28	0	0				0
Koester	28	1	3.57	0	0	1176	1176
Dusky rubberlip	28	1	3.57	0	0	645	645
Thornfish	26	0	0				0
Bludger	26	0	0				0
Brindlebass	25	2	8	0	0	80	149
Round ribbontail ray	25	2	8	4	8	45	74
German	25	0	0				0

Priority species for tagging are highlighted with colour.

The Dwesa-Cwebe Marine Protected Area (MPA) is located on the Wild Coast, approximately 120 km northeast of East London on the east coast of South Africa. The MPA incorporates approximately 16 km of mainly rocky shore coastline and extends six nautical miles out to sea. The MPA is located in a biogeographic transition zone between the Agulhas and Natal Bioregions. Because of its location within this region of transition, the MPA is considered to be in a sensitive area that is not replicated elsewhere on the coast of South Africa. The Mbashe Estuary, situated centrally within the MPA, ranks 28th in terms of the conservation importance of estuaries in South Africa. The surf-zone adjacent to the Mbashe mouth is also considered to be a key spawning aggregation site for white steenbras, the stock of which is considered to have collapsed. The Dwesa-Cwebe MPA was formally declared as a marine reserve in 1991 (Transkei Environmental Conservation Decree No. 9 of 1992), and re-proclaimed in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act (Act No. 18 of 1998) in 2000. The entire reserve is currently zoned as a no-take MPA, where no consumptive marine resource use (i.e. fishing) is permitted.

Little data existed on the surf-zone and estuarine line-fish stocks within the MPA, and thus a fish monitoring project was initiated by the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency at the beginning of 2009. The project was expanded in 2011 in order to facilitate a comparison between a nearby exploited area (Mazeppa Bay) and the MPA. Preliminary results revealed that the Dwesa-Cwebe MPA had a much higher catch rate (fish per angler per hour) compared to the un-protected Mazeppa Bay. This will however have to be verified with a larger sample size in future.

A total of 31 species was recorded during the study period. Five were cartilaginous fish and 26 were bony fish species. The most abundant fish species were blacktail, bronze bream, dusky kob and lesser sandshark. The 31 line-fish species recorded in this study include a significant number of nationally and even globally important species from a conservation perspective.

Over 1500 fish have been caught up to May 2012 of which 1004 were tagged. The initial recapture rate was low (2.5%) but is expected to increase in future. The dominant species recaptured included catface rockcod (52%), followed by dusky kob (28%) and bronze bream (8%). The majority of recaptured fish showed highly resident behaviour with most fish being recaptured within 50 m of where they were originally tagged (i.e. mainly catface and yellowbelly rockcod and bronze bream). Other species, particularly dusky kob, did show greater mobility with some fish moving more than 8 km and being recaptured outside the MPA.

Within the MPA, localized differences were detected in species diversity, size frequency and catch rate between unexploited and illegally exploited areas. These differences were more prominent in slow growing, long-lived species. It thus appears that illegal exploitation is negatively affecting fish populations within the MPA, which counteract and potentially could eliminate the benefits of fish protection typically associated with no-take MPAs.

The study revealed that Dwesa-Cwebe MPA is an important MPA for linefish conservation at a regional as well as a national scale. It further showed that illegal exploitation as well as pressure for local community access to marine resources poses a significant biodiversity risk to the MPA.

For further reading please consult:

VENTER, J. A. & MANN, B. Q. In press. A preliminary assessment of the surf-zone and estuarine line-fish species of the Dwesa-Cwebe Marine Protected Area, Eastern Cape, South Africa. *Koedoe*.

**Article by Mr Jan Venter
(Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency)**



Jan Venter tagging a small dusky kob in the Dwesa-Cwebe MPA

DUSKY SHARK
Carcharhinus obscurus

11 394 TAGGED
737 RECAPTURED = 6.5% RECAPTURE RATE
LONGEST DISTANCE TRAVELLED 1 374 KM
MAXIMUM DAYS FREE 2 773 (7.6 YEARS)

Over the years we have reported on numerous outstanding tag recaptures for juvenile dusky sharks, and 2011 was no different with four notable recaptures to report on. On the 16/01/2011 Alan Botha tagged a dusky shark with a precaudal length of 790 mm at Scottburgh Point. This fish was recaptured only six days later off Splash Rocks (Port Edward) an astonishing 104 km (17.8 km per day) away. Similarly, Alan tagged another dusky off Scottburgh Point on the 20/05/2011. It was recaptured 217 days later off Port Elizabeth by a commercial shark longliner some 697 km away (3.2km per day). Whilst fishing at New Brighton beach just north of Port Elizabeth in September 2011, Francois van Zyl tagged and released a juvenile dusky shark with a precaudal length of 710 mm. Only 102 days later this fish was recaptured 510 km away off Jongensfontein just north of the Breede River. Lastly, a dusky tagged by John Frost at Sunrise on Sea of 1130 mm PCL was recaptured 149 km north at Hole-in-the-wall some 31 days later (4.8 km per day) by Wayne Adendorff. This was a larger shark compared to those mentioned above and was the only notable recapture to have moved in a north-easterly direction in 2011. These recaptures confirm the known southerly migration of juvenile dusky sharks into the Eastern and Western Cape during winter-spring and provide further evidence for the possibility of a return migration of larger individuals during late summer/autumn.

RED STEENBRAS
Petrus rupestris

1 071 TAGGED
77 RECAPTURED = 7.2% RECAPTURE RATE
LONGEST DISTANCE TRAVELLED 923 KM
MAXIMUM DAYS FREE 8 080 (22.14 YEARS)

After we thought it couldn't get any better with regards to the quality of the recaptures received in 2011, there was one more still to come, and what a record it turned out to be! On the 28 December 2011 Andrew Gericke was fishing approximately 6 miles off Kei Mouth when he hooked a red steenbras or 'copper' as they are commonly known in the Eastern Cape. After successfully landing the fish he noticed there was a tag with a lot of algae growth sticking out the fish. After taking down the relevant recapture information, he reported the tag recapture to the Border Deep Sea Angling Association who contacted ORI with the information. To our surprise, this individual fish had been tagged by Bruce Mann (ORI Senior Scientist) from the shore in the Tsitsikamma National Park in 1989. This meant it had been at liberty for 22.1 years! In all that time free it had not only escaped capture from commercial and recreational fishermen, but had also moved 532 km north and grown 17.9 kgs (370 mm). This recapture is not only the longest time at liberty for a red steenbras in South Africa, but is also a new record for any teleost (bony fish) tagged in South Africa and possibly the world! Yet again this recapture proves the exceptional longevity of red steenbras and the durability of the tags we are using supplied by Hallprint©Australia.

The poenskop or black musselcracker is one of South Africa's most sought-after recreational angling species. It is endemic to our coastline, being distributed from south of Saldanha to Cape Vidal. This dogged fighter is predominantly caught by members of the recreational shore angling and skiboat fishing sectors and is also targeted by spearfishers, but is of relatively low commercial importance due to its low abundance. Although aspects of the biology of this species have been documented, little is known about the movement behaviour of poenskop.

Data for the assessment of poenskop movement patterns were obtained from three ongoing, long-term coastal fish-monitoring projects, conducted at different spatial scales. The first, providing large-scale, low resolution data, covered the entire South African coastline (i.e. the ORI Tagging Project), and two, providing small-scale, high resolution data, were research-based projects conducted in marine protected areas (i.e. the Tsitsikamma National Park (TNP) and Pondoland MPA (PLD) linefish tagging projects). Together, these data sets provided a good platform on which to base an analysis of poenskop movement patterns.

The ORI tagging data

By the end of 2010, 2 704 poenskop had been tagged through the ORI Tagging Project, of which 189 were recaptured (6.9% recapture rate). Of the 52 juvenile fish (< 300 mm FL) recaptured, the average distance moved was only 0.7 km, with the majority (69.2%) of recaptures being made at the tagging locality. Of the 109 sub-adult fish (300 – 530 mm FL) recaptured, the average distance moved was 1.8 km, with 42.2% recaptured at their tagging locality. Interestingly, the average distance moved by the 28 adult fish (> 530 mm FL) was 54.7 km, but with 53.6% still being recaptured at their initial tagging site. These results show a high level of juvenile and sub-adult residency, and provide evidence that larger individuals (predominantly adult fish) have the capability of undertaking larger-scale movements (Figure 1). One of the most interesting poenskop recaptures reported to ORI was in 2010. An adult fish (578 mm FL) was tagged off Alexander Bay/Cape Padrone in the Eastern Cape and was recaptured 1 034 days (2.8 years) later off Mnyameni River, having travelled a remarkable distance of 483 km! The maximum days at liberty for an individual poenskop in the ORI dataset, was a fish tagged at Port Alfred on 27 December 1997. It was finally recaptured on 04 January 2007 after having been at liberty for 3 295 days (9 years), during this time it grew only 190 mm and was recaptured at exactly the same locality where it was originally tagged.

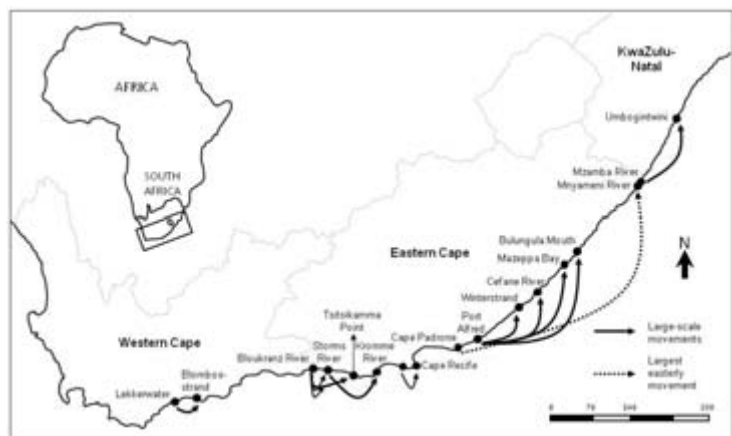


Figure 1: Long-distance movements (> 15 km) of recaptured poenskop along the South African coastline recorded by the ORI Tagging Project. Arrows connect tagging and recapture locations.

High resolution tagging data

High resolution movement data for poenskop have been collected by researchers and trained shore anglers in the Tsitsikamma MPA (inshore) and by researchers and trained skiboat anglers in the Pondoland MPA (offshore). A total of 73 and 42 recaptures have been made from the TNP and PLD, respectively. The recapture rate in both MPAs was extremely high with the TNP having a 13.1% recapture rate and the PLD having a 19.7% recapture rate. One hundred percent of recaptures in the TNP and 88% of recaptures in PLD were made within 250 m of the tagging site, confirming high levels of residency, both inshore and offshore for extended periods. The maximum days at liberty were 2 407 and 1 390 for the TNP and PLD, respectively, with each fish having only moved 200 m and 70 m from their original tagging localities respectively.



Figure 2: A poenskop being released after being tagged in the Pondoland MPA.

For larger poenskop that did move away from where they were originally tagged, more moved in a north-easterly direction, with the rate of movement being very slow (i.e. 0.17 km/day – even slower than that recorded for red steenbras i.e. 0.28 km/day). This suggests that on reaching maturity, adults begin moving in a north-easterly direction towards Transkei and KwaZulu-Natal waters. This appears to be a unidirectional movement with the large adult poenskop staying in these waters for the remainder of their lives.

The poenskop's life-history characteristics (slow-growing, long-lived, sex-changing, late-maturing) combined with their extreme residency as juveniles and sub-adults, makes them vulnerable to overfishing. In order to ensure that this iconic angling species will still be swimming in our waters in the future, good fisheries management is required. Although conventional fisheries regulations such as size and bag limits are essential, MPAs are undoubtedly one of the most useful and important management tools available for the conservation of this species. The mean annual CPUE for poenskop has increased between 1998 and 2009 within the TNP, similarly the average size of poenskop in the no-take restricted area of the PLD MPA are significantly bigger than those in the adjacent exploited area. This evidence shows that our MPAs are working in terms of increasing poenskop numbers and mean size. Fortunately South Africa already has a fairly well-established network of MPAs and it is essential that these areas are well managed to ensure the future of poenskop and many of our other endemic linefish species.

Article by Ms Taryn Murray (Rhodes University)

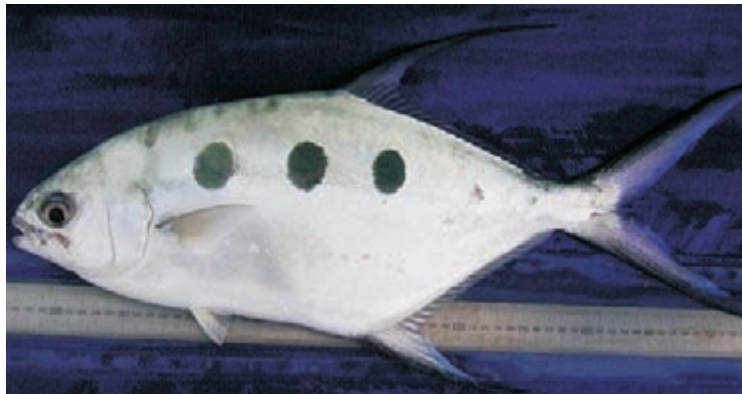
SPOTTED GULLYSHARK
Triakis megalopterus

7 771 TAGGED
419 RECAPTURED = 5.4% RECAPTURE RATE
LONGEST DISTANCE TRAVELLED 911 KM
MAXIMUM DAYS FREE 6 632 (18.2 YEARS)

During 2011 the record for the longest time at liberty by a spotted gullyshark was broken. On the 30/10/1993 Mr JJ Crous tagged and released a spotted gullyshark of 1 020 mm total length from the shore at Cape Agulhas Light House. On the 02/03/2011 this individual was recaptured at Stuisbaai having been at liberty for 6 332 days (i.e. 18.2 years). This smashes the old record by 844 days! This fish had grown 580 mm in its 18 years at liberty and had only moved 7 km. This recapture again proves the importance of long-term tagging projects. It is only after many years that vital information on the growth rate and movement patterns of these long-lived species can be obtained.

The largespot pompano or wave garrick, is one of the four pompano species found along the coast of South Africa. It is an important recreational shore angling species that has been shown to account for up to 30% of the catch composition in northern KwaZulu-Natal, where they are most abundant. This aggressive predator has become renowned for “punching above its weight class”, and in recent years has become a favourite target amongst light-tackle anglers such as fly-fishermen and “dropshot” anglers. The perceived increase in recreational angling pressure and the lack of information on the biology of this species provided an incentive to conduct a detailed study on the largespot pompano. The primary objectives of this study were to provide a holistic overview of its biology, movement patterns and stock status. Tag and recapture data was essential for gaining a greater insight into the movement patterns exhibited by this species and analysis of data from the St Lucia Marine Reserve Tagging Project and the ORI Tagging Project made for some interesting results, some of which are briefly presented here.

A total of 2 391 largespot pompano have been tagged along the South African coastline, of which only 46 (1.9%) have subsequently been recaptured. The low recapture rate indicates two important traits of the largespot pompano. Firstly, their population size is likely to be very large and therefore the chance of recapturing a tagged fish is very small. Secondly, it also suggests that the species may suffer from high tagging mortality and/or tag shedding. Knowing that it is a popular prey fish species for predators such as giant kingfish and blacktip sharks, it is likely that predation on tagged fish is high, especially for fish that have been poorly handled during the tagging process.



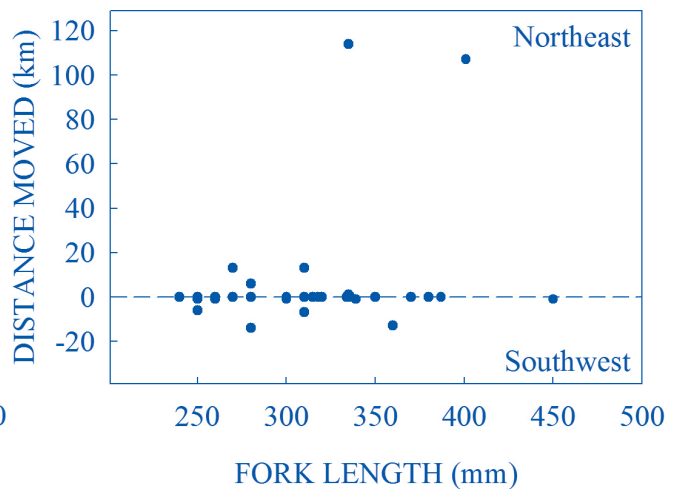
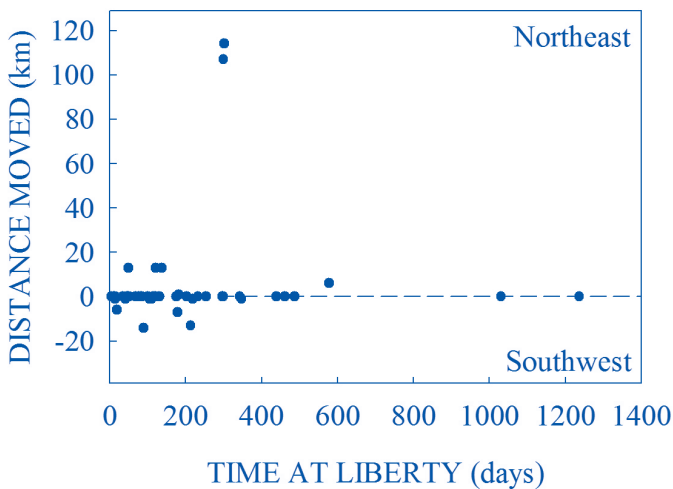
A largespot pompano caught in the St Lucia Marine Reserve about to be measured and tagged.

The movement of largespot pompano individuals was generally limited to relatively short distances and 78% of all recaptured fish were caught

within 1 km of their original tagging site. This suggests that the species displays a certain degree of resident behaviour, which is quite surprising. Resident behaviour is common amongst reef-associated fish, particularly seabreams and rockcods, yet the largespot pompano is predominantly found in the surf-zone, normally in shallow water off sandy beaches. These environments are dynamic and can be completely altered over a short period of time if there is bad weather and rough sea conditions. Without constant visual cues, such as permanent reef structures, to locate and define their home range, how do these fish know where “home” is? This is still largely unknown, but it is thought that the movement of largespot pompano is primarily determined by food availability. It is likely that the fish roam along relatively small (± 1 km), definitive stretches of coastline and may only move further along the coast when food becomes scarce within this area. This explains their seemingly random, short distance movements and semi-resident behaviour. If we were to explain the “home range” of these fish in human terms it could be said that we would be unable to assign a specific address to a fish, but we could assign it a postal code!

Two tagged fish did make significant movements of 114 km and 107 km respectively. Both of these fish were sexually mature (335 and 401 mm FL) but there was no evidence that these movements were linked to some form of spawning migration. This type of movement behaviour is relatively common in many marine fish, and a number of studies have shown that a small proportion of the population of a largely “resident” species move over large distances; the so-called nomads of the population. This may be nature’s way of preventing inbreeding and perpetuating the spread of genetic diversity amongst populations separated by large distances. Interestingly, the average distance of fish moving up the coast in a north-easterly direction was 44.3 km, whereas the average distance moved by individuals in the opposite direction was only 4.7 km. This displays the largespot pompano’s preference for warm tropical waters, and fish moving up the coast towards Mozambique may have been seeking warmer waters.

This study has provided important information regarding the conservation of the largespot pompano. The movement patterns (semi-resident) of the species make them vulnerable to localised overfishing in areas of high fishing activity. For example, largespot pompano catches have decreased dramatically at Sodwana Bay in recent years as the area has been subjected to increased recreational fishing pressure. In fact, a 5 km walk north or south of Jesser Point produces far better catches as these areas are not adjacent to the beach access point and therefore receive considerably less fishing pressure. A further 20 km south of Sodwana Bay the largespot pompano population is thriving within the sanctuary area of the St Lucia Marine Reserve. Information like this highlights the importance of marine protected areas not only in the localised conservation of fish species, but also in the replenishment of adjacent exploited areas through the “spillover” effect.



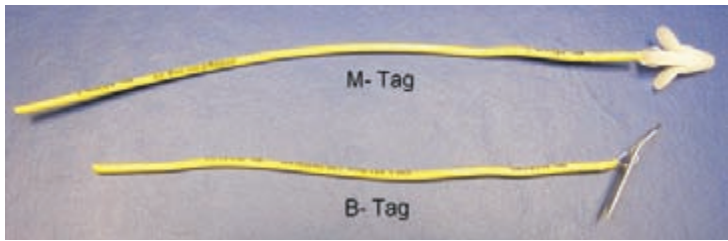
Movement patterns of largespot pompano described as the distance from the tagging site to the recapture site, as either a function of time or fish length. Positive values depict movements in a northeast direction, while negative values depict movements in a southwest direction.

The Oceanographic Research Institute (ORI) initiated tagging of billfish in South Africa in the 1970s. To date, after nearly 30 years of tagging, there have been surprisingly few recaptures.

Species	Number tagged	Number recaptured	% recaptured
Sailfish	3419	28	0.82
Black marlin	684	1	0.15
Striped marlin	436	1	0.23
Blue marlin	299	0	0
Broadbill swordfish	78	1	1.28
Shortbill spearfish	32	0	0

The question is why is the recapture rate so low? Well, these results are not unique to South Africa and conventional billfish tagging programmes around the world have generally reported extremely low recapture results. There are a number of possible reasons for this including tagging mortality (fish die after being caught and tagged), tag shedding (tags fall out), non-reporting of recaptured fish (accidental or deliberate), highly nomadic/migratory movement behaviour, large population size dispersed over a huge area, etc. It is likely that all of these reasons are playing a role to some extent. As a consequence, there is relatively little new information/knowledge being generated about billfish movement and growth from tag and release studies using conventional tags. In some countries this has resulted in the stopping of conventional billfish tagging programmes and instead recreational billfish anglers are simply encouraged to “tip and release” hooked billfish in order to improve their chances of survival.

In order to address this issue here in South Africa, ORI undertook a review of our billfish tagging efforts and decided to implement a few changes. The first of these was to change our billfish tag from the old steel head B-tag, to a new double-barbed nylon M-tag.



This decision was based on communication with our tag supplier in Australia (Hallprint©) and because of better reported retention rates for this type of tag, both in Australia and the USA. Additionally, to further increase the reporting of recaptures, a dedicated cellphone number (079 529 0711) and email address (oritag@ori.org.za) have been

printed directly onto the new M-tags. Our tagging members who have not already done so and who would like to change their old marlin tags for new ones (which includes a new applicator) are welcome to contact the ORI Tagging Officer. The second change was to request the South African Deep Sea Angling Association (SADSAA) not to promote tagging of billfish in their competitions by not offering extra points for tagging. While this may seem strange or even counterintuitive, experience has taught us that when anglers are fishing for points, they need to comply with the IGFA rules for line class strength and as a consequence the fight is often of extended duration, especially on lighter tackle. In such competitive situations we believe that it is far better to adopt the “tip and release” approach as this will ultimately maximise the fish's chance of survival and minimize the tagging of 'dead/weak fish'. We also advocate using this approach in bonanza type competitions where anglers are fishing for prizes. For those anglers with a genuine interest in tagging billfish, we suggest that they approach ORI and become individual members of the Tagging Project. In this manner we can supply them with detailed instructions, tags, applicators and certificates in recognition of their achievements and more importantly they can focus their efforts on the effective tag and release of billfish. In this way they are tagging the fish in the interests of research and conservation and not merely as a way to get points or win prizes.

It is certainly not our intention to discourage the tagging of billfish, however, we do believe that we should be taking a more responsible approach. By using better tags and better methods of tagging billfish, it is hoped that we will get better survival rates and ultimately more recaptures, which will help us learn more about these remarkable gamefish species. We would like to make a special request to all billfish anglers to be on the lookout for tagged fish. If you do happen to catch or see a tagged billfish (yellow spaghetti tag in the left or right “shoulder” of the fish under the dorsal fin), please make a concerted effort to try and get the number of the tag, even if it means pulling it out of the fish. The tag number, species, approximate length or weight of the fish, date, locality, angler, skipper and boat name should be reported to the ORI Tagging Officer.

ORI has been in touch with the Billfish Foundation (TBF) and we are aware of their billfish tagging programme worldwide. It is the prerogative of South African billfish anglers to use TBF tags if they wish and ORI will collaborate with TBF in the reporting of recaptured billfish. However, we do encourage South African anglers to stick to using ORI tags when tagging billfish in South African waters purely to avoid confusion (and perhaps for a touch of patriotism).

The proposed IGFA/SADSAA billfish telemetry tagging programme being conducted in association with Stanford University, USA, is supported by ORI and we believe that this new, innovative approach holds great promise in enabling us to learn more about our billfish.

BILLFISH TAGGED OVER THE PERIOD 1978 TO 2011

