VIRGINIA GAME FISH TAGGING PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT 1995

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Jon A. Lucy

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Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program
College of William and Mary

Virginia Marine Resource Report Number 96-2

Thanks to:

Those anglers who took the time and effort to attend tag training workshops, then put their fishing skills to work to tag, release and record tagging data on more than 1300 fish

Those individuals out on the water in the recreational and commercial fisheries, and those working onshore in seafood businesses, who took enough interest and effort to report tags in recaptured fish from Virginia and North Carolina waters during 1995

The Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program, on behalf of the co-directors and the Virginia Recreational Fishing Advisory Board, greatly appreciates the dedication of those contributing to this effort to expand understanding of the fish stocks on which we all depend.

Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program Annual Report 1995

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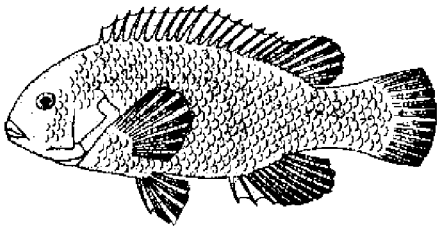
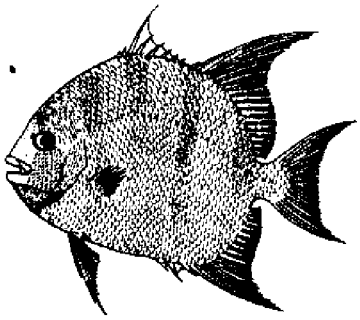
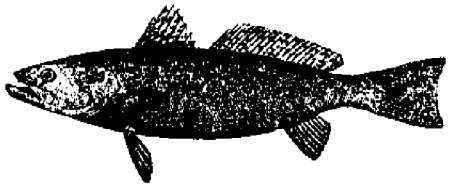
Cobia



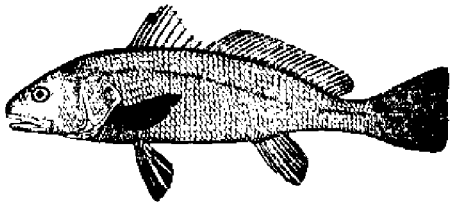
Tautog



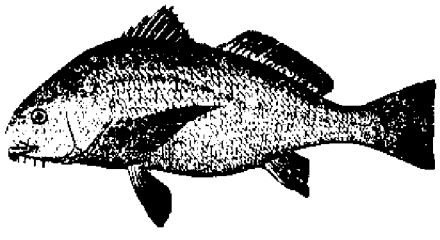
Spadefish



Speckled Trout



Red Drum



Black Drum

Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program

The Initial Year

The Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program (VGFTP) was established in 1995 as an ongoing, cooperative project of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science of the College of William and Mary. The project is funded with revenues generated by Virginia's marine recreational fishing license.

The VGFTP is designed to provide recreational anglers having a sincere interest in conservation and management with a mechanism to assist in collecting information about the movements and biology of marine finfish. The specific goals of the program are:

1. To develop a quality-oriented tagging program targeting specific species of fish to enhance data collection efforts;

2. To reinforce and continue efforts to educate recreational anglers about the benefits and proper techniques for catching and releasing fish; and,

3. To educate recreational anglers to the need, benefits, operation, and limitations of tagging programs and other information gathering efforts directed toward marine finfish.

How It Works

The first goal of the VGFTP is to develop a quality-oriented tagging program involving recreational fishermen. This is accomplished by accepting a limited number of participants into the program and requiring all participants attend at least one training session.

In 1995 recreational anglers were allowed to register with the VGFTP during the month of March, with the number of participants limited to the first 100 to register. On March 31st the registration period ended with 92 anglers enrolled with the program. Training workshops, which featured instruction on fish tagging, proper fish handling techniques and the methodology and philosophy of the VGFTP, were held in April. Tagging equipment was issued at the workshops, and by mid-April anglers were tagging fish for the program. A total of 64 anglers attended training workshops and participated in the VGFTP in 1995.

In addition, program directors, Claude Bain and Jon Lucy, were directly involved in tagging fish during 1995. Their efforts started in January with the tagging of tautog to test the tags and other equipment to be used by the program. Small scale tests were begun to document the effectiveness of various tag designs. Tautog were "double" tagged and released to look at tag shedding, and tag retention experiments were completed in tanks at the Wachapreague Laboratory of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). Tagging continued throughout the year, and results of the directors' efforts are included in the data tables.

Many people contributed to the success of the program in 1995, but special efforts were made by Dr. James C. Wright of Virginia Beach and Harry Martin of Onancock. Dr. Wright worked with the program directors early in the year as the program was being developed and equipment tested. His efforts allowed for a substantial amount of field work during the cold months of the winter. Mr. Martin worked with the program directors in the tagging and recapture of small black drum. His assistance enabled the program to conduct a tag retention experiment on small black drum.

Targeted Species for Tagging

speckled trout	(*Cynoscion nebulosus*)
tautog	(*Tautoga onitis*)
red drum	(*Sciaenops ocellatus*)
black drum	(*Pogonias cromis*)
cobia	(*Rachycentron canadum*)
spadefish	(*Chaetodipterus faber*)

Six species of fish were selected for initial tagging efforts. They were targeted for three main reasons: 1) they contribute significantly to Virginia's recreational fishery; 2) serious voids exist in the scientific knowledge about how "Virginia's" populations of these species interact with and impact upon the overall fish populations of which they are a component; and 3) tagging studies are likely to provide at least some of the missing information.

For example, most research on speckled trout has occurred in Florida and in states along the Gulf Coast, where there is very little indication of migratory movements. Anecdotal information from Virginia and northern North Carolina, which is the northern edge of the range of abundance for the species, suggests a substantial migration of speckled trout south in the fall and north in the spring. At the same time, there is a growing body of evidence that suggests some fish over-winter in Virginia waters. It is not well known if, or how, the fish in Virginia waters interact with and contribute to speckled trout stock dynamics along the southern Atlantic Coast. Do these "Virginia" fish in fact migrate, how far south do they go, do they mix with fish in southern waters, and do they substantially contribute to stock dynamics? Or might the "northern group" of fish behave somewhat as a "discreet" population.

Similarly, tautog are at the southern edge of their range in Virginia waters and almost all research on tautog has occurred in states from Delaware north. It is not documented to what extent, if any, "Virginia" fish undertake migrations, either north-south or even inshore-offshore, and to what extent there may be significant localized movement of fish. Do these "southern fish" interact with fish further north, do stocks of tautog in one area affect stock dynamics in other areas, or do fish in the southern area (or any area) form a relatively separate and "discreet" population of fish.

Tagging programs can help answer questions about hooking mortality in fish which are captured recreationally and released. This is an important component in understanding overall mortality estimates for species of fish, since catch and release fishing is becoming an important component of most marine recreational fisheries.

These are the types of questions tagging programs can help to resolve, and the VGFTP hopes to help answer these questions for speckled trout and tautog, and to answer similar types of questions for all of its targeted species.

Awards and Rewards

Anglers participating in the VGFTP have the opportunity to earn recognition for their conservation efforts. Participants tagging a minimum of 25 fish are awarded conservation certificates (Table 1). In addition, special recognition is given to the anglers tagging the most fish of each species targeted by the VGFTP. (See pg. 4)

The VGFTP also has a special award for the participant, from the current year or a prior year, who has the most tag returns during the year from fish that he/she has tagged. In 1995 two anglers tied for this recognition with 10 tag returns each. Anglers returning tags from fish they have captured are awarded caps and decals sporting the VGFTP logo.

1995 Highest Tag Returns

Danny Noland (Hopewell)	10 Returns
Buddy Noland (Chester)	10 Returns

Table 1. Anglers who have made outstanding contributions to the Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program by tagging 25 or more speckled trout, tautog, red drum, black drum, cobia, and spadefish in 1995.

	Species						
Captain	Spec. Trout	Tautog	Red Drum	Black Drum	Cobia	Spadefish	Total
Bruce H. Booth	26	0	0	0	0	0	26
Bill Hall, Jr.	1	2	10	27	8	0	48
Tommy Heinz	62	0	0	0	0	0	62
Thomas J. House	124	11	6	0	2	0	143
Jimmy Kolb	0	0	14	27	6	0	47
Mark E. Lewis	39	1	0	0	2	5	47
John L. Miller	3	0	4	16	2	5	30
Ken Neill, III	41	64	0	5	0	38	148
Buddy L. Noland	0	0	0	0	0	54	54
Danny N. Noland	0	0	0	0	0	50	50
Keith Nuttall	27	14	0	0	4	4	49
Craig R. Paige	10	5	3	12	3	0	33
Al Paschall	71	0	14	2	0	0	87
Larry Snider	28	2	0	0	0	0	30
Andy Thompson	59	0	3	1	0	0	63
James C. Wright	0	29	0	1	1	0	31

Top Taggers by Species

Speckled Trout	Thomas J. House (Windsor) - 124
Tautog	Ken Neill, III (Grafton) - 64
Red Drum	Jimmy Kolb (Va. Beach) - 14 Al Paschall (Va. Beach) - 14
Black Drum	Bill Hall (Bloxom) - 27 Jimmy Kolb (Va. Beach) - 27
Cobia	Bill Hall, Jr. (Bloxom) - 8 Craig Revere (Hartfield) - 8
Spadefish	Buddy Noland (Chester) - 54

Tag and Return Statistics

A total of 1357 fish were tagged and released in 1995. Speckled trout was the top species (590 tagged fish). Only about one third as many tautog (238 fish), black drum (220 fish) and spadefish (186 fish) were tagged along with smaller numbers of red drum (69 fish) and cobia (44 fish) [Figure 1].

Tag returns totaled 105 in 1995, topped by 37 black drum returns and 25 returns for both tautog and spadefish [Figure 2]. Black drum returns were largely the result of recapture of small drum in crab peeler pounds on the bayside of Eastern Shore. Such recaptures occurred over a period of several weeks in late summer when program directors had the opportunity to tag small drum frequenting the pounds. Each tagging trip produced new juvenile drum to tag as well as recaptures of drum tagged 2-20 days earlier. This unique situation also provided valuable insight into tag retention and impacts of tags on fish at large in their natural environment. Documented growth in most recaptured small drum provided encouraging evidence that tagged fish were feeding after release. Of the recaptured drum in peeler pounds, 24 percent were multiple recaptures, i.e. 7 of 29 drum were recaptured 6-12 days after their initial tag-release date, then recaptured again in the same area 2-6 days later (Table 3).

Tag returns for tautog and spadefish were relatively high. Once released, these fish essentially stay around release sites, making them accessible for recapture. Detailed tag return data appears in Tables 2-5.

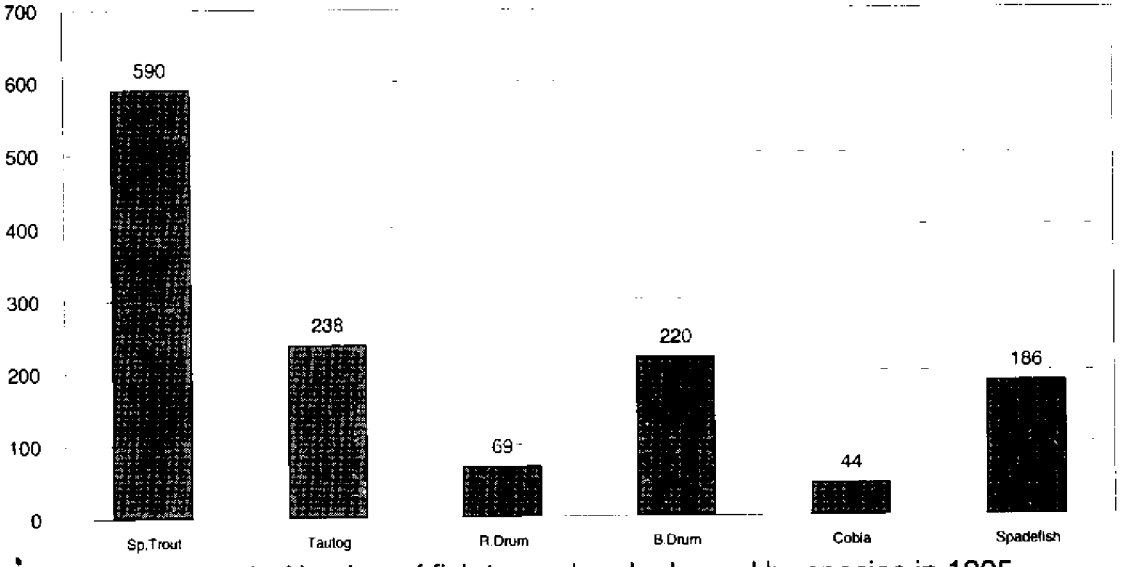


Figure 1. Number of fish tagged and released by species in 1995.

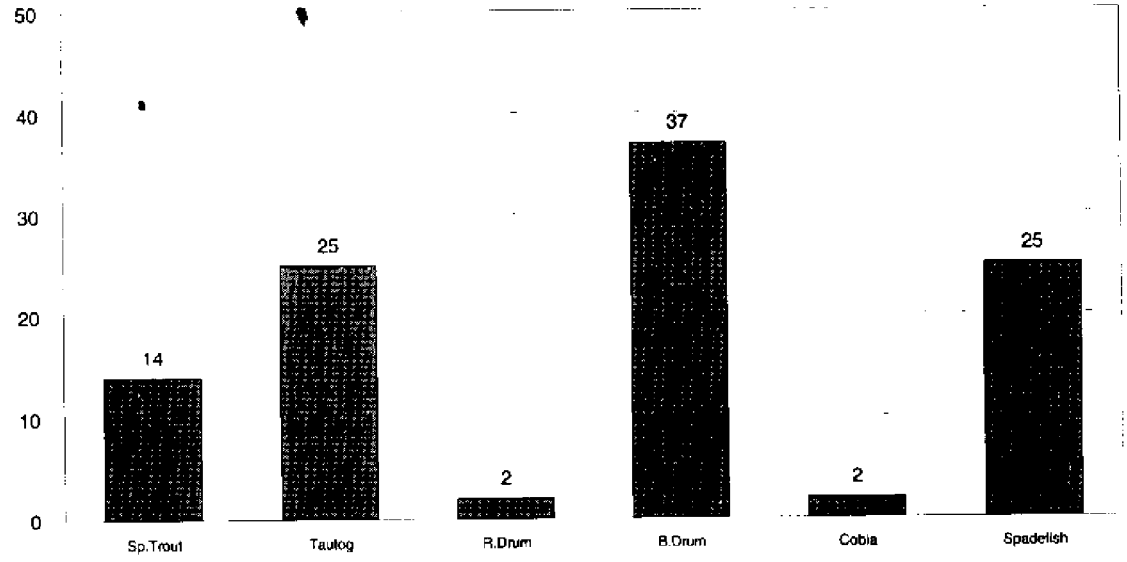


Figure 2. Tag returns by species for 1995.

Tag Retention Studies

An important aspect of interpreting tag return data is accounting for loss or rejection of some portion of tags from the fish. To determine how well specific tag designs work in different fish species, it is necessary to conduct tag retention studies. The VGFTP has conducted limited tank experiments using tagged and non-tagged tautog. Small numbers of "double" tagged tautog have also been released offshore in an effort to better determine how different tags fare in the natural environment.

The tank experiments yielded mixed and inconclusive results during 1995. As has also been documented in Rhode Island tagging studies on tautog, the T-bar tag (inserted with a "tagging gun") and nylon dart tag (primary tag currently used by program participants) both exhibited significant loss rates (40 tautog held up to 67 days). More detailed and larger scale experiments will be carried out in 1996.

A single tank trial was completed with black drum obtained from peeler pounds. Fifteen drum tagged with T-bar tags were held in a flow-through, 12 ft. diameter tank along with 6 non-tagged drum for a period of 49 days. No tags were lost or rejected during the experiment, in contrast to the results with tautog. During trials with both species, the fish were regularly fed fresh or frozen fish, squid, oyster or clam.

A significant result of the tank experiments was that the survival rate of the fish was 100 percent. No instances of serious injury or death were observed associated with the tagging process. In the case of tautog, all fish were captured on hook and line then transported live to the lab tanks. This situation provided important insight into potential hook-release mortality for small tautog (9-15" long) caught at water temperatures of 42-52°F. No hooking mortality was observed in three separate trials (11-13 fish per trial). One small tautog (1 of 13 fish) died after transport in aerated coolers to the lab. This incident was not from "hooking injury" but was attributed to accidental rupture of organ tissue forced out of the fish's vent by its swimbladder.

A total of 24 tautog (7-15" long) were "double" tagged and released at several sites off the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. Some tautog were tagged with dart tags and internal anchor tags while others had T-bar tags and internal anchor tags. Four of these fish were recaptured by anglers. Two fish had both a dart tag and an internal anchor tag still in place (at large 10 days and 82 days, respectively). One fish (at large for 82 days) retained the internal anchor tag but lost the dart tag. The fourth recaptured fish (at large for 7 days) retained the T-bar tag but lost the internal anchor tag. Larger scale "double" tagged releases will be made in 1996 to continue tag evaluations.

Table 2. Tautog 1995 Tag Returns - Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program

Species	Date Tagged	Location	Length	Date Recaptured	Location	Length	At Large
Tautog	02/02/95	Cape Henry Wr.	15"	04/08/95	Cape Henry Wr.	16"	65 days
Tautog	03/23/95	Winthrop Wr.	12.625"	03/30/95	Winthrop Wr.	12.625"	7 days
Tautog	03/23/95	Doxie Girl Wr.	11.5"	04/22/95	Doxie Girl Wr.	N/A	30 days
Tautog	03/23/95	Winthrop Wr.	13"	05/05/95	Winthrop Wr.	13.25"	43 days
Tautog	03/23/95	Doxie Girl Wr.	10.5"	08/13/95	Doxie Girl Wr.	11"	143 days
Tautog	03/30/95	Santore Wr.	12"	04/09/95	Santore Wr.	12"	10 days
Tautog	03/30/95	Winthrop Wr.	10"	06/20/95	Winthrop Wr.	10.25"	82 days
Tautog	03/30/95	Winthrop Wr.	10.75"	06/20/95	Winthrop Wr.	N/A	82 days
Tautog	04/16/95	CBBT, 2nd Isl.	13.625"	05/07/95	CBBT, 2nd Isl.	14.25"	21 days
Tautog	04/18/95	CBBT, 1st Isl.	12"	11/18/95	CBBT, 1st Isl.	14.5"	214 days
Tautog	04/19/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	12.75"	05/23/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	N/A	34 days
Tautog	04/26/95	Kingston Wr.	10.5"	05/07/95	Kingston Wr.	N/A	11 days
Tautog	04/28/95	CBBT, Yancey	14"	11/13/95	CBBT, 1st Isl.	16"	199 days
Tautog	04/29/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	12"	05/13/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	app. 12"	14 days
Tautog	04/29/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	14.25"	11/02/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	16"	190 days
Tautog	04/30/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	12.5"	11/26/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	19"	210 days
Tautog	05/04/95	CBBT Pier	10.25"	10/01/95	CBBT Pier	N/A	150 days
Tautog	05/04/95	CBBT Pier	12.5"	10/04/95	CBBT Pier	14.25"	153 days
Tautog	05/07/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	12"	10/12/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	N/A	158 days
Tautog	05/07/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	12"	11/18/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	app. 11"	195 days
Tautog	05/09/95	CBBT Pier	8.75"	10/04/95	CBBT Pier	app. 9.5-10"	148 days
Tautog	05/09/95*	CBBT Pier	7.25"	10/04/95	CBBT Pier	app. 7"	148 days
Tautog	10/04/94*	CBBT Pier	app. 7"	10/16/95	CBBT Pier	7"	12 days
Tautog	10/14/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	10.75"	10/23/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	N/A	9 days
Tautog	11/20/95**	Off York River	17"	12/04/95	CBBT, 4th Isl.	app. 13"	14 days

* Fish tagged 5/9/95 was recaptured 10/4/95, released with tag in place, and recaptured again 10/16/95.

** Fish was taken in abandoned crab trap near the Cell, transported to York River, and released away from any structure.

Table 3. Black Drum 1995 Tag Returns - Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program

Species	Date Tagged	Location	Length	Date Recaptured	Location	Length	At Large
Black Drum	08/25/95	Onancock Creek	6.75"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.125"	12 days
Black Drum	08/25/95	Onancock Creek	7"	09/06/95	Onancoock Creek	7.375"	12 days
Black Drum	08/25/95	Onancock Creek	7"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7"	12 days
Black Drum	08/25/95*	Onancock Creek	6.5"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7"	12 days
Black Drum	09/06/95*	Onancock Creek	7"	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7.125"	6 days
Black Drum	08/25/95**	Onancock Creek	6.125"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	6.625"	12 days
Black Drum	09/06/95**	Onancock Creek	6.625"	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7"	6 days
Black Drum	09/12/95**	Onancock Creek	7"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	6.9375"	2 days
Black Drum	08/25/95***	Onancock Creek	6"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	6.375"	12 days
Black Drum	09/06/95***	Onancock Creek	6.375"	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	6.5"	6 days
Black Drum	09/12/95***	Onancock Creek	6.5"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	6.375"	2 days
Black Drum	08/25/95	Onancock Creek	5.75"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	6.625"	20 days
Black Drum	08/29/95	Onancock Creek	7.5"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.75"	8 days
Black Drum	08/29/95	Onancock Creek	6.875"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	6.875"	8 days
Black Drum	08/29/95	Onancock Creek	7.375"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.5"	8 days
Black Drum	08/29/95	Onancock Creek	7.125"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.125"	16 days
Black Drum	08/29/95****	Onancock Creek	7"	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.25"	8 days
Black Drum	09/06/95****	Onancock Creek	7.25"	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7.25"	6 days
Black Drum	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.75"	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	8"	6 days
Black Drum	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.25"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.375"	8 days
Black Drum	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.625"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.875"	8 days
Black Drum	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.25"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.375"	8 days
Black Drum	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	7.5"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.75"	8 days
Black Drum	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	6.75"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7"	8 days
Black Drum	09/06/95*****	Onancock Creek	6.75"	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7"	6 days
Black Drum	09/12/95*****	Onancock Creek	7"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7"	2 days
Black Drum	09/06/95$	Onancock Creek	7.625"	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7.75"	6 days
Black Drum	09/12/95$	Onancock Creek	7.75"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.75"	2 days
Black Drum	09/6/95$$	Onancock Creek	7.25"	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7.5"	6 days
Black Drum	09/12/95$$	Onancock Creek	7.5"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.375"	2 days
Black Drum	09/06/95	Onancock Creek	6.75"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7"	8 days
Black Drum	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7.125"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7"	2 days
Black Drum	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7.625"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.625"	2 days
Black Drum	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7.625"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	7.5"	2 days
Black Drum	09/12/95	Onancock Creek	7"	09/14/95	Onancock Creek	6.875"	2 days
Black Drum	10/07/95	Rudee Inlet	11.5"	11/01/95	Nags Head, NC	N/A	25 days
Black Drum	10/19/95	N. of York River	9.5"	10/20/95	N. of York River	app. 8"	1 day
Black Drum	10/23/95	Rudee Inlet	10"	11/03/95	Nags Head, NC	N/A	11 days

*	Fish tagged 8/25/95 was recaptured 9/6/95, released with tag in place, and recaptured again 9/12/95
**	Fish tagged 8/25/95 was recaptured 9/6/95, released with tag in place, recaptured again 9/12/95, and 9/14/95
***	Fish tagged 8/25/95 was recaptured 9/6/96, released with tag in place, recaptured again 9/12/95, and 9/14/95
****	Fish tagged 8/25/95 was recaptured 9/6/96, released with tag in place, and recaptured again 9/12/95
*****	Fish tagged 9/6/95 was recaptured 9/12/95, released with tag in place, and recaptured again 9/14/95
$	Fish tagged 9/6/95 was recaptured 9/12/95, released with tag in place, and recaptured again 9/14/95
$$	Fish tagged 9/6/95 was recaptured 9/12/95, released with tag in place, and recaptured again 9/14/95

Table 4. Spadefish 1995 tag Returns - Virginia game Fish Tagging Program

Species	Date Tagged	Location	Length	Date Recaptured	Location	Length	At Large
Spadefish	06/25/95	Ch. Light Tower	15"	06/25/95	Ch. Light Tower	N/A	0 days
Spadefish	06/25/95	Ch. Light Tower	17"	07/03/95	Ch. Light Tower	app. 18-19"	8 days
Spadefish	07/08/95	Occohannock Lgt	11.25"	07/09/95	Occohannock Lgt	11"	1 day
Spadefish	07/08/95	Occohannock Lgt	9.5"	07/09/95	The Cell	10"	1 day
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8.75"	07/17/95	Plantation Light	N/A	2 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8.5"	07/17/95	Plantation Light	N/A	2 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8.5"	07/17/95	Plantation Light	app. 8-10"	2 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8.5"	07/17/95	Plantation Light	app. 8-10"	2 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8"	07/18/95	Plantation Light	app. 8-10"	3 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8.25"	07/18/95	Plantation Light	app. 8-10"	3 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	7.75"	07/18/95	Plantation Light	app. 8-10"	3 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	9"	07/18/95	Plantation Light	app. 8-12"	3 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8.5"	07/18/95	Plantation Light	app. 8-10"	3 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8.25"	07/30/95	Plantation Light	8.75"	15 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	9.5"	07/30/95	Plantation Light	N/A	15 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	8.75"	07/30/95	Plantation Light	N/A	15 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	9.5"	07/30/95	Plantation Light	N/A	15 days
Spadefish	07/15/95	Plantation Light	10"	07/30/95	Plantation Light	N/A	15 days
Spadefish	07/30/95	Plantation Light	10.5"	07/30/95	Plantation Light	N/A	0 days
Spadefish	08/02/95	The Cell	app. 8.5"	08/03/95	The Cell	8.75"	1 day
Spadefish	08/02/95	The Cell	app. 9"	08/25/95	The Cell	app. 10-11"	23 days
Spadefish	08/03/95*	The Cell	8.5"	08/27/95	The Cell	N/A	24 days
Spadefish	08/27/95*	The Cell	N/A	09/04/95	The Cell	app. 12"	8 days
Spadefish	08/27/95**	The Cell	8.5"	08/31/95	The Cell	N/A	4 days
Spadefish	08/31/95**	The Cell	N/A	09/03/95	The Cell	app. 9"	3 days

* Fish tagged 8/3/95 was recaptured 8/27/95, released with a new tag inserted, and recaptured again 9/4/95.
** Fish tagged 8/27/95 was recaptured 8/31/95, released with tag in place, and recaptured again 9/3/95.

Table 5. Speckled Trout, Red Drum, and Cobia 1995 Tag Returns - Virginia Game fish Tagging Program

Species	Date Tagged	Location	Length	Date Recaptured	Location	Length	At Large
Speckled Trout	05/05/95	Ware Point	16"	05/15/95	Ware Point	17"	10 days
Speckled Trout	08/05/95	Fleets Bay	14"	08/12/95	Fleets Bay	14"	7 days
Speckled Trout	09/26/95	Lynnhaven	18"	09/29/95	Lynnhaven	18"	3 days
Speckled Trout	10/02/95	Poquoson Flats	18.5"	10/16/95	Lynnhaven	18.5"	14 days
Speckled Trout	10/03/95	Lynnhaven	18"	10/10/95	Lynnhaven	18.25"	7 days
Speckled Trout	10/03/95	Occohannock Cr.	11.5"	10/08/95	Occohannock Cr.	13 "	5 days
Speckled Trout	10/09/95	Rudee Inlet	12.5"	10/13/95	Rudee Inlet	app. 11"	4 days
Speckled Trout	10/10/95	Lynnhaven	11.5"	10/11/95	Lynnhaven	12"	1 day
Speckled Trout	10/15/95	Lynnhaven	12.25"	10/26/95	Lynnhaven	13.5"	11 days
Speckled Trout	10/17/95	Rudee Inlet	11.5"	10/20/95	Rudee Inlet	11"	3 days
Speckled Trout	10/17/95	Rudee Inlet	12.5"	10/20/95	Rudee Inlet	12"	3 days
Speckled Trout	10/23/95	Rudee Inlet	12"	11/03/95	Rudee Inlet	13"	11 days
Speckled Trout	10/30/95	Rudee Inlet	13.5"	11/03/95	Rudee Inlet	app. 13"	4 days
Speckled Trout	11/02/95	Back River	18"	11/04/95	Back River	N/A	2 days
Red Drum	09/16/95	Gwynn's Island	16.5"	09/24/95	Ocean View	over 16"	8 days
Red Drum	10/01/95	James River	16.5"	11/20/95	Oregon Inlet,NC	14"	50 days
Cobia	06/30/95	CBBT, 12 MP	43.5"	07/09/95	Latimer Shoal	39"	9 days
Cobia	07/09/95	36A Buoy	44.5"	07/31/95	Latimer Shoal	45"	22 days

What to Do When You Catch a Tagged Fish

1. **Cut off the tag and call the telephone number on the tag, reporting the seven digit tag number.** Note: if the tag is covered with algae or other growth, **do not scrape** the growth off the tag, since this could destroy the number on the tag.

2. **Contact the Virginia Gamefish Tagging Program at (804) 491-5160.** After having the tag number verified, you should send the actual tag to the program office so that it can be examined for damage or problems.

3. **Measure and record** both the **total length** and **fork length** of the fish, or **estimate** the **length** if you do not have a measuring device. Provide an estimated weight for the fish.

4. **Record** the **species** of fish, **date of** the **catch**, and **exact location where the fish was caught.**

5. **Record** any information about the fish which could be useful; for example, any **unusual markings or wounds.**

6. When you report the recapture of a tagged fish, you will be provided with information about the fish (when and where it was tagged; size when tagged) and **you will be given a logo award from the Virginia Gamefish Tagging Program.**

Handling and Releasing Fish

1. **Plan ahead.** Minimize stress and exhaustion by using tackle strong enough to land fish quickly. Set hooks quickly to minimize the opportunity for fish to swallow hooks and avoid the use of treble hooks. When practical, bend down the barbs on hooks or use barbless hooks.

2. **Minimize the handling of fish, and do not touch the eyes or gills.** Large fish are best released by leaving them in the water and removing the hooks. Small fish should be brought on board and handled with a damp towel or damp cotton gloves, which will minimize damage to the skin and protective slime of fish. Control the fish, gently but firmly, so it cannot "flop" around and cause itself any further injury. Do not use a gaff.

3. **Use the right tools to remove the hooks.** Needlenose pliers work well for fish hooked in the mouth, while a deep-throat dehooker or disgorger should be used for deeply hooked fish. Cut the leader close to the fish's mouth if hook removal is not possible. Never pull or jerk on the leader to remove a hook.

4. **Release fish gently, and if the fish is stressed or exhausted, revive it** by gently moving it forward through the water until it is able to swim off.

In the interest of good sportsmanship and good conservation. . .keep only what you need. . .release the rest.