



**Atlantic States  
Marine Fisheries**  
COMMISSION

# Tautog Tagging Program Update: Technical Committee Report



Tautog Management Board

May 7, 2025

# 2024 Commercial Tautog Tag Feasibility Study

- In response to reported issues with the commercial tautog tagging program, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) conducted a feasibility study to find a better tag for the live market.
- Facts-
  - Implemented in 2020 to reduce poaching; considered successful by Law Enforcement.
  - The TAG selected must be used by the entire coastwide commercial tautog fishery.
  - Live market industry not satisfied with the tag performance, survey results and active complaints about fish condition after being tagged alive, transported, and held in captivity.

# Testing Live Fish for a Better Tag

- Floy T-Bar Tag



- NBT Small Strap Tag (1005-4)



- Petersen Disk Tag



# Petersen Disk Tag – Zero fish

- Tested on carcass
- Difficult to apply without separate tools or assistance
- **Removed from consideration**



# 30-days on Mattituck Creek





# Holding Cage



Rectangle- 64 cubic feet  
8ft X 4ft X 2ft  
1.5 in PVC frame  
1 x 1 inch 16 gauge coated  
wire mesh



# Study Water Temperature

Day 0 – Transport Tank: 15°C; 59°F

*20-minute acclimation*

Mattituck Creek: 21.5°C; 70.7°F

Day 2 – Mattituck Creek: 21.5°C; 70.7°F

Day 13 – Mattituck Creek: 22.8°C; 73°F

Day 20 – Mattituck Creek: 25.6°C; 78°F

# Floy T-Bar Tag- 10 fish

Tag was applied below the posterior portion of the dorsal fin





# Floy T-Bar Tag Results

Tag Type	TL (Inches)	Tagger Comment Day-0	Results Day-30
Floy T- Bar	16.1	None	Died June 26-27- Tag placed correctly
Floy T- Bar	16.9	None	Died June 26-27 - Tag missed but retained until death
Floy T- Bar	17.7	None	Died July 7-8 - Tag missed but retained until death
Floy T- Bar	16.7	None	Lost Tag
Floy T- Bar	16.1	None	Lost Tag
Floy T- Bar	18.1	None	Lost Tag
Floy T- Bar	17.6	None	Lost Tag
Floy T- Bar	18.7	None	Some red around where tag inserted
Floy T- Bar	16.2	None	Minor hole from tag
Floy T- Bar	16.7	None	Very minor hole from T-Bar

# Floy T-Bar Pros and Cons

## **Advantage-**

- T-Bar tag is that the applicator holds 25 tags and do not fall out of the applicator if it is put down. The tags can be applied with one hand holding the fish and the other holding the applicator which would be easier for fishermen working solo.

## **Disadvantage-**

- Despite all of the fish passing the “tug test” when the tags were applied some of the tags clearly were not correctly inserted between the interstitial rays.
- The T-Bar tags cost 4 times as much as the current commercial tags and the applicators are double the price of the current applicator.

# NBT-Small Strap Tag - 10 fish

Tag was applied into the gill plate





# NBT-Small Strap Tag Results

Tag Type	TL (Inches)	Tagger Comment Day-0	Results Day-30
Strap Tag	19.3	Tag Missfire	Lost Tag
Strap Tag	21.9	Tag Missfire	Lost Tag
Strap Tag	15.9	Tag Missfire	Minor gill damage; Tag hole
Strap Tag	18.0	None	Minor gill damage; Tag hole
Strap Tag	18.6	None	Minor gill damage; Tag hole
Strap Tag	15.8	None	Typical Gill damage; Tag hole
Strap Tag	16.7	None	Some gill damage; Tag hole
Strap Tag	17.1	None	Redness from Tag, Gill damage; Tag hole
Strap Tag	15.1	None	Wound from Tag; Tag hole
Strap Tag	19.9	None	Tag hole

# Typical Gill Damage



# NBT-Strap Tag Pros and Cons

## **Advantage-**

- Easy to tell if the tag misfired or didn't lock when applied.
- The 1005-4 tags are slightly less than half the price of the current tags and the applicator is about 40% less expensive.
- Smaller tag hole.

## **Disadvantage-**

- Different applicator to purchase.
- There is no locking mechanism to lock the tag into the applicator so once placed in the applicator, it can not be put down or the tag will fall out of it make it difficult to handle the fish and properly apply the tags.
- Creates a hole in the fish.



# Recommendations

- Given the problems encountered with both the smaller strap tag and the T-Bar tag, this study did not find a viable alternative to the current tag.
- In consultation with NY industry members, many stated that the cost of the T-Bar tags at four times the cost of the current tag was not feasible, and they were not willing to absorb the greater expense of those tags and applicator.
- NY DEC will pause efforts to find an alternative tag until such time that new technology or viable suggestions arise.



Questions?