

# Atlantic Tropical tuna Tagging Programme ICCAT/AOTTP NEWSLETTER

A quarterly newsletter published by the ICCAT Secretariat

No. 1



*Tagging tuna off West Africa in 2016*

**Overview:** The AOTTP Programme (<http://www.iccat.int/AOTTP/en/>) will collect tag-recapture data from Atlantic Ocean tropical tuna fisheries, which will be used to improve their management and enhance food security among developing regional coastal states.

**Tagging at sea:** The target is to tag 120,000 tuna (bigeye, skipjack, yellowfin, and coastal species) using a range of conventional and electronic tags.

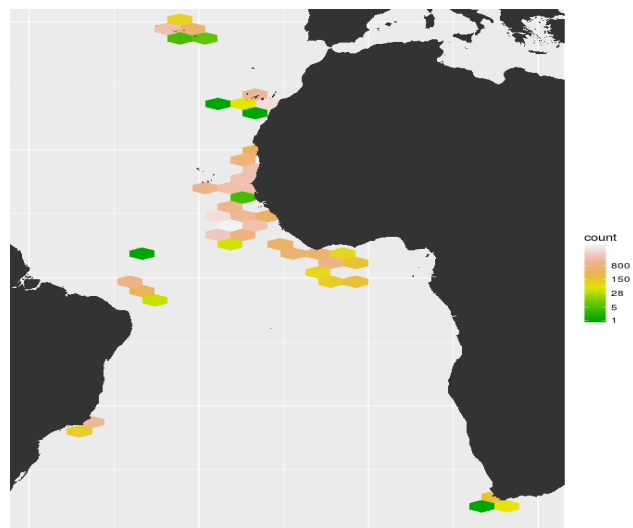
More than 50,000 tuna have now been tagged off the Azores, the Canary Islands, West and South Africa and Brazil.



*AOTTP conventional fish tags.*



*Skipjack tuna.*



*Release locations of tagged fish*



This project is funded by the European Union, ICCAT Contracting Parties and Collaborators

This project is implemented by ICCAT

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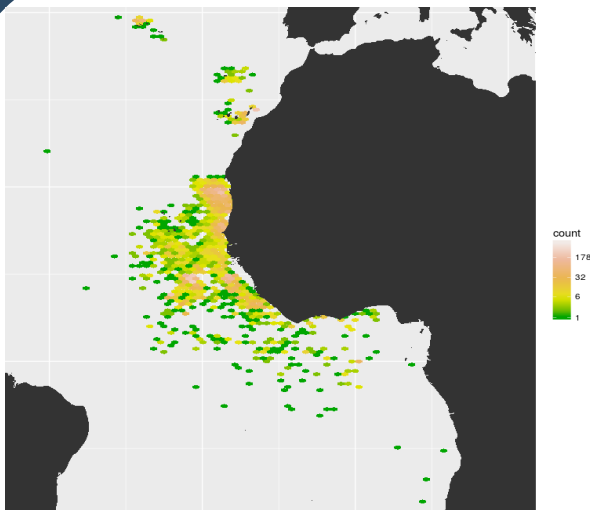


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**Recovery locations of tagged tuna.**

**Tag recovery:** To get the tags back and the vital information associated with them, AOTTP has set up tag recovery teams in the most important fishing ports around the Atlantic (Azores, Canary Islands, Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Brazil).

Each team collaborates extensively with all relevant stakeholders (e.g. professional and recreational fishermen, the canning industries, local trade services, scientific, and fisheries management institutions) forming a comprehensive network of awareness raising and tag recovery activities.

Reporting of tags is incentivised by offering rewards to stakeholders such as t-shirts, cash payments, entry to lotteries and mobile phone top ups.

To date, more than 8,000 tags have been reported, corresponding to an overall tag recovery rate of 16%. Most of the tags have so far been found off West Africa.

**Data transmission to ICCAT:** Smart phone based software has been developed by AOTTP which facilitates rapid data collection and upload to ICCAT databases.

A reward poster for South Africa. At the top, it says 'ICCAT - Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna Tagging Programme (AOTTP)'. Below that, the word 'REWARD' is written in large red letters. Underneath, it says 'If you FIND a tuna with a TAG like this'. There is an illustration of a tuna with a red tag on its dorsal fin, and a red arrow pointing to the tag. Below the tuna is a ruler showing the fish's length. To the right of the ruler is a red tag with the text 'Red Tag KEEP WHOLE FISH'. Below the ruler and tag, it says 'PLEASE SMS (+27 636342503) WITH THE TAG CODE AND FISH LENGTH WE WILL CALL YOU BACK IMMEDIATELY'. Below that, it says 'For each tag code and fish length the crew will get: 140 Rands in cash, Program t-shirt or cap'. At the bottom, there are logos for the European Union, ICCAT, and the project implementer.

**Reward poster designed for South Africa .**

**Capacity building:** Fisheries scientists and technicians, including many women, from developing Atlantic coastal states have been trained by AOTTP in all aspects of tagging at sea, tag-recovery and the upload of data to ICCAT.



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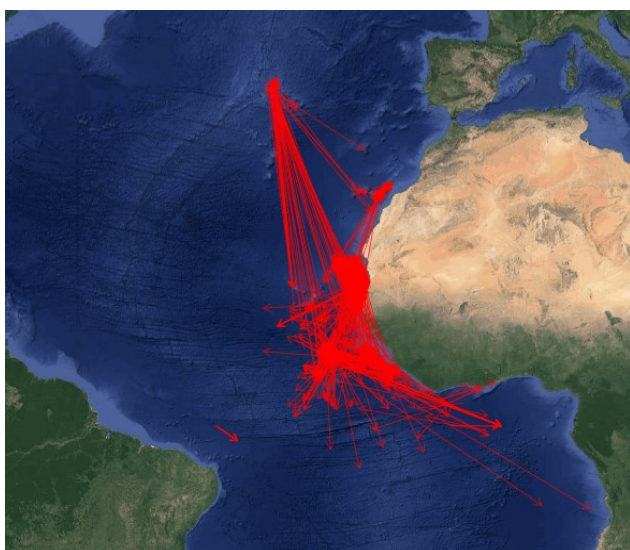
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**Tagger training with dead fish in Brazil.**

**Scientific data:** Release and recovery locations of the tagged fish are already providing important scientific information. Migration distances can be plotted and calculated. As an example, we can see that skipjack are traveling long distances between The Azores and West Africa.



**Skipjack migrations.**



**Tag-finder receiving reward in Senegal.**

### **Other activities:**

An expert group meeting to improve age-determination of tropical tunas was organised in Abidjan between 1-2 March 2017.

AOTTP Coordination visited Brazil in April 2017 to present the AOTTP project and provide training.

AOTTP will begin tagging in the Caribbean Sea at the end of 2017.

Calls for Tender for next phase tagging are being prepared.

AOTTP data will be presented to the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) in autumn 2017 when future data-analyses and capacity-building activities will be discussed and planned.

Email AOTTP: [aottp@iccat.int](mailto:aottp@iccat.int)

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