



NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center

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\$1000 PRIZE TO BE AWARDED IN YELLOWTAIL TAG LOTTERY

\$1000 Award in Yellowtail Tag Lottery

Woods Hole, Mass. – NOAA Fisheries and the Massachusetts Bay Inshore Commercial Groundfish Association will host a tag return lottery April 6 at Pier 44 in Scituate, Massachusetts. One tag will be pulled from among more than 600 returned since a large research project began last summer to track movements of yellowtail flounder off New England and the Mid-Atlantic. The winning tag is worth \$1,000 to the returner.

During 2003, nearly 10,000 yellowtail flounder were captured, tagged and released off Cape Cod, in the Gulf of Maine, on Georges Bank, and off Southern New England in this, the largest tagging study ever conducted for yellowtail. Some tags are instant \$100 winners and others are entered into the lottery.

Contact:

Teri Frady,
NOAA
508 495-2239

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Westport, Massachusetts fisherman Peter Collins was the winner in the first lottery drawing last December at the New Bedford Fishermen's Center. He returned a pink disk tag from a fish caught on August 12, 2003 from

Cultivator Shoals, approximately 8 miles southeast of the original release location. The fish was a female, tagged on July 16, 2003 on the northern edge of Georges Bank.

The tagging project is a joint effort among NOAA Fisheries, commercial fishermen, state fisheries agencies in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the University of Massachusetts School for Marine Science and Technology, the Canadian government, and the University of Maryland. The project is intended to gather data on both vertical and horizontal movements of these fish over time.

This past winter, researchers began to analyze 2003 tag return data. From the tag returns, some movements of yellowtail flounder been documented. Data storage tags keep a record of time spent on- and off-bottom. Disc tags help build a picture of geographic movements. The program was recently awarded new funding through the Northeast Consortium for 2004 field work. Beginning in late spring, the tagging season will extend through the fall. Six commercial vessels will tag on either single day or extended trip bases to complement and continue last year's tag distributions.

The Northeast Consortium is a federally-funded competitive grant program

that encourages cooperative research among scientists, commercial fishermen, and other stakeholders in marine resources. It comprises four research institutions, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Maine, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who jointly administer the program.

Trip details and highlights are posted to the study website:

<http://www.cooperative-tagging.org/>

Found tags can be reported to (877)826-2612, and mailed to YTF Tagging Project, 166 Water St., Woods Hole, MA 02543.

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NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources through scientific research, management, enforcement, and the conservation of marine mammals and other protected marine species and their habitat. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries, please visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

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