

Before purchasing tags and tagging fish, please research and comply to any country, state, and local wildlife regulations regarding tagging and releasing fish. Please also research and comply with any fish species restrictions.

Always practice tagging and check correct location of the dart head before engaging in actual tagging.

A. Care and Storage of Tags

- Plastic tipped dart tags are constructed from a cylindrical printed and numbered marker, molded to a plastic barbed head. Each dart is unique in it's numbering.
- Tags should not be subjected to heat much above normal ambient temperatures.
- Leave tags in the original packaging until all tags are used. Then keep the packing for considerate disposal on-shore.

B. Applicator Needles

- Fix in a suitable handle or pole of timber/plastic with a wrist strap so that it floats when you drop it in the water. Another way is to heavily wrap the applicator end in duct tape in order to form a handle at the blunt end.
- A screw-chuck type screwdriver handle is useful when using multiple pre-loaded applicators.
- The tip only of the applicator should be kept sharp to a V point and preferably spiked on a cork when not in use to prevent damage or injury.
- When sharpening the applicator, take care not to create a cutting edge on the rear of the sliced off part.
- After use, wash in clean water and dry.

C. Loading of Applicator

- It is a good idea to keep a pre-loaded applicator with the tags, your measure, notes and a pen, in a handy place so that the fish does not have to wait too long for you to find them. We have a handy PDF File - Fish Tag Log Sheet - that you can print out and write on when performing tagging. The Log Sheet can then be brought back to your computer and information about the tag can be entered.
- Load tag with only the barb exposed at the pointed end.
- If the tag does not slide easily out of applicator then it is either choked with debris or bent. This must be rectified otherwise you will probably get a hung-up tag.
- Loosely fitting tags can be secured by making a slight bend in the printed marker - do not alter the applicator.

D. Insertion of tags into fish

Minimize trauma and damage to fish. If the fish has noticeably suffered by capture, do not waste time tagging it.

- Remove a scale with the applicator point just below the base of a dorsal spine, usually the second to fourth depending on the species. Avoid placing the tag deeply into muscle.
- Hold the needle with exposed tag barb in line with fish, with barb facing head. Turn needle so barb is on the fish side.
- Start inserting the needle at a shallow angle under the scales until you feel it pierce the skin, then raise the needle to an angle of 45 degrees so making clearance for the barb.
- When barb is below skin, return to a shallow angle and insert until the barb is just beyond the fin spine. A slight "click" can be felt as the barb slides over the bone and locks behind it.
- Pause for a second then withdraw the needle smoothly. A slight tug will help "set" the tag.
- The fish should then be gently released. Fish showing undue stress, damage or inability to swim should not be released if tagged.

