



TINDALE  
MARINE RESEARCH  
CHARITABLE TRUST

# Summer Report

## #32

1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026



Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust quarterly report. Includes Trust member news, activities, engagements and achievements over summer 2026

Scott Tindale, Sue Tindale,  
Clinton Duffy, Rex Harrison  
Founding Directors

Content contributions from the members of the TMRCT inshore tagging program



# TINDALE MARINE RESEARCH CHARITABLE TRUST

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## **Newsletter No. 32 summer update 1<sup>st</sup> December to 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2026**

The lead up to Christmas has been a busy one especially on the Fisheries front. Although the tuna and marlin arrived early and in good numbers, politics, protests and slanging matches online took centre stage. Even the global conflicts took a back seat as fishers both here and in Western Australia headed to the streets. Full closures greeted our Aussie cousins in Western Australia just in time for Christmas bringing recreational, commercial and retail together to try and salvage their jobs and lifestyle. Meanwhile this side of the ditch working together is not an option. Here in New Zealand the relationship between the recreational and commercial is monotonously adversarial. The Fisheries Amendment Bill 2022 enabled the placing of cameras aboard commercial fishing vessels to monitor catch of target and non-target species and regulations requiring commercial fishers to land all their catch instead of being able to discard unwanted fish at sea. All great stuff according to the recreational sector lobbyists at the time

(<https://legasea.co.nz/2022/10/25/amendment-bill-retains-environmental-protections/>). However, come time to implement that legislation and those same lobbyist seem to have forgotten that. They now argue that dead marlin and undersize snapper should continue to be dumped at sea but I expect we all know



what will happen when someone sees a commercial vessel doing just that. Personally I would rather unwanted or undersized fish went back into the ecosystem they were taken from, and hopefully live, than going to landfill. When a dead fish is a dead fish, what matters is that the amount is accurately reported and comes off the TAC for the relevant fishing year. With no reliable recreational catch reporting in NZ, all this noise has now turned a spotlight on recreation fishers too, how many go fishing, what is their harvest levels including high-grading and dumping, and what's their impacts on the environment and fishery from poor tackle selection. As it's an election year we probably

haven't heard the last of it. Hopefully some of us will just get out and enjoy the fishing or grab a good feed of seafood at the local fish and chip shop while we still can before the fishery gets shut down here too.

## **News**

Just before Christmas the Hauraki Gulf Te Papa Atawhai, The Hauraki Gulf Forum, Department of Conservation and Auckland Council invited the Trust directors to celebrate the creation of 16 new marine protected areas in the Hauraki Gulf / Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui ā Toi. Celebrations were held at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron on Wednesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December. Guests included a variety of organisations, dignitaries, celebrities and members of the public.

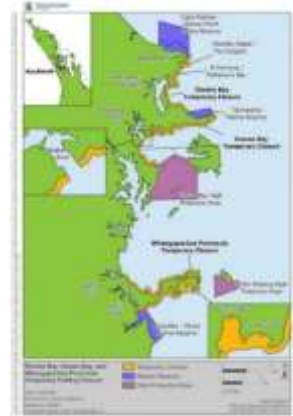


The evening speakers included local iwi, Nicola Rata-MacDonald, past Councillor Hon Christine Fletcher and via zoom The Minister of Conservation, Hon Tama Potaka (who was stuck in Auckland traffic).

MC Mandy Kupenga (TV personality and fish care ambassador for Legasea) spoke about the years of work to get to get to this point and said she was looking forward to increasing protection to **50%** in the near future. Live entertainment followed with tasty bites and meaningful conversations around this predominately recreational fishery.

## Fisheries NZ

The Minister for Oceans and Fisheries has announced a 2-year closure of the fisheries waters along half of the shoreline from Cape Rodney to Long Bay in the Hauraki Gulf. The closure will come into effect on 12 March 2026 and extends 200 m off shore. The main areas affected are Omaha Bay, Kawau Bay and all of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula. The closure prohibits the removal or harvesting of all seaweed and invertebrate species. An invertebrate means any aquatic life that is a multicellular animal without a backbone or a dorsal spinal column. This includes, but is not limited to, shellfish and molluscs (cat's eyes, chitons, cockles, limpets, mussels, oysters, pāua, pipi, sea snails and tuatua), crustaceans (barnacles and crabs), jellyfish, sea anemones, sea squirts, sponges, and starfish. This closure does not apply to spiny rock lobster and scallops as there are already closures in place for these species. Kina (sea urchin) is also excluded from the closure and can still be taken within the current recreational fishing limits. So, you can still take fin fish in these areas just make sure you bring your own bait, and if its shellfish or squid bait you're using make sure you keep it in the bag you bought it in. Questions are now being asked about the special permits required to remove fouling organisms or invasive species from boat hulls moored in Gulf Harbour marina. It seems that everyone forgot this is included in the closed area.



This decision has been made with no scientific assessment of the status of any of the species in question that project remains on MPI's longlist of potential research projects. Implementing or reducing daily bag limits is normally the first step if there are concerns about the sustainability of a fishery.

Councillor John Gillon, claimed *"This is a huge win for the local community and Ngati manuhiri who have campaigned for this protection after rock pools were being stripped bare of all sea life. Meanwhile, late last year the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board requested the proposed temporary ban area be extended to cover the eastern North Shore coastline, however unfortunately this hasn't been included in the new ban by the Minister. This is something to work towards as I believe we need a take-ban around the whole of the North Shore coastline"*.

However, a look at the rock pools around Whangaparaoa Peninsula on March 4 where all the protests began, bucket in hand of course, showed the coast to be brimming with seaweed, starfish, triplefins, limpets, oysters, cats eyes, barnacles and crabs etc.



## Snapper tagging in the south

The **Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust** has been approached by Fisheries New Zealand looking to support the tagging of snapper in the top of the South Island. As you will be aware, snapper numbers around the upper South Island have increased significantly over the last decade, and fishers and fishery managers want to know more about the movement and mixing of snapper between areas, such as the top of the South and lower North Island west coast.

The aim is to understand of snapper movements and connectivity between what is considered separate stocks. With the Tasman and Marlborough Sounds fisheries seemingly recovering, now is a good time to learn how they are likely to be affected by fishing occurring locally and elsewhere. The recreational daily bag limit of 3 snapper per person in the Marlborough Sounds is based on research, including tagging in Golden Bay, which was carried out last century. This suggested the Tasman Bay-Sounds population was isolated and dependent upon recruitment from local nursery areas. Since the introduction of the **TMRCT inshore fish tagging program** in 2018 the Trust has recorded movements of snapper from Kaipara Harbour to the upper South Island, and snapper tagged in Picton have been recaptured off the Kapiti coast, North Island. This challenges the current understanding of snapper stock structure. More information on movements of South Island snapper is needed to understand if the increase in snapper numbers seen is being driven by recovery of local stock (i.e. the Tasman Bay-Sounds population) or by fish from the west coast North Island.



This should be an exciting and informative citizen led program. The tags for these will be free of charge and we are looking for prizes and bait sponsorship to help out members wishing to get involved around the top of the South. The budget is not large but we will have a few free tagging kits available for fishing clubs and events, dedicated avid fishers, keen charter boat operators etc. For the casual fisher we will have the usual subsidised kits and accessories available through our website and from Trade Me. There will also be free replacement tags for any snapper tagged and recorded to the Trust website.

The project is looking to encourage tagging of snapper as far south as possible, not just across the top of the South (Marlborough Sounds and Golden/ Tasman Bays). We also need fish tagged across as wide a size range as possible. Large fish are capable of moving further and are more likely to migrate for spawning.

If this is something you or your friends would like to get involved in please contact the Trust. We already have a few local ambassadors to help out and hopefully plenty of additional keen fishers will get involved.

To register go to <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/tagging-program/tagger-registration-form/> Add the area you wish to fish in the comments section and any other suggestion to help others in your area.

If you catch a tagged fish please consider releasing it again to continue its life journey but not before you've recorded the tag serial number, fish length and catch details first. Then report this information to the Trust ASAP.

## Sharks at the museum

### SHARKS

An exhibition about sharks opened on 10th December at the Auckland War Memorial Museum and will run until June.

**Scott and Sue Tindale** were invited to attend a pre-opening member's tour hosted by the museum's Marine Curator and shark expert **Clinton Duffy**. There is plenty to see and keep any shark enthusiasts going back for more.



Created by the Australian Museum, Sharks takes you beneath the surface to discover the diversity, biology, and cultural significance of one of the oceans most extraordinary creatures. Blending science, storytelling and immersive design, it's a chance to see sharks in a way you never have before. With state-of-the-art projections, interactive models and even a specially designed 'oceanarium' that brings sharks to life as they swim virtually through their ocean habitats.



### ABOUT THE CURATOR

#### **Clinton Duffy**

Clinton Duffy is the Curator of Marine Biology at Auckland Museum. His role focusses on developing and promoting access to the Museum's marine research collections. Identifying and addressing gaps in them, contributing to development of exhibitions and public programs, and collection-based research on marine biodiversity and ecology of New Zealand and the regional Pacific.

Clinton is a zoologist with particular interest in elasmobranch (class of cartilaginous fish that includes sharks) taxonomy, biology and conservation. Prior to joining Auckland Museum in 2024 he worked in a variety of marine technical and science advisory roles for the Department of Conservation (DOC).

Clinton is also a member of the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group for Australia-Oceania region, a member of the New Zealand CITES Scientific Authorities Committee, the Marine Conservation Action Fund (New England Aquarium) and a director of the **Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust**.

If you would like to join these member events find out more at [aucklandmuseum.com/member](https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/member)

For more information about the exhibition, you can follow this link here –

<https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/visit/exhibitions/sharks>



reported māko was caught about 24 km off Huntington Beach, California, in June 2013 and weighed 600.1 kg (1,323 pounds). It measured 373 cm TL, and had a girth of 243 cm. When this shark was examined by fishery biologists it was found to have distended uteri and spent ovaries indicating it had recently given birth. Its stomach contained a female California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*) which would have accounted for around 90–100 kg of its weight. Vertebral band analysis estimated its age at about 22 years old. The New Zealand men's all tackle record is a 481.26 kg shark caught off Mayor Island by J. Penwarden in February 1970. A 379 cm TL female caught off Gisborne in 2001 went 458.5 kg.



Like most sharks, māko give birth to live young. Reproduction is ovoviviparous, meaning the young develop from eggs retained in the females' uteri. The embryos initially develop inside a thin egg case nourished by a yolk sac. They probably hatch from the egg cases at 5–6 cm after the yolk sac has been absorbed and begin feeding on unfertilised eggs produced by the female throughout most of the pregnancy. Litter size is 4–25 but litters of more than

18 pups are rare. Average litter size increases with maternal size. Estimated gestation is 15–24 months, with females giving birth in late winter to midsummer, probably with a peak in late winter–early spring. Size at birth is 700–800 mm TL. Males mature around 2 m TL aged 7–9 years, and females around 3.1 m TL and 19–21 years old. Juveniles have been estimated to grow between 26.5 to 39 cm per year during their first year of life, and 22.4 to 28.6 cm per year in their second. Males and females grow at similar rates until maturity, after which growth slows. Maximum estimated age is 38 years but may be much older as vertebral aging has been found to greatly underestimate maximum age of several species of shark (e.g. porbeagle).

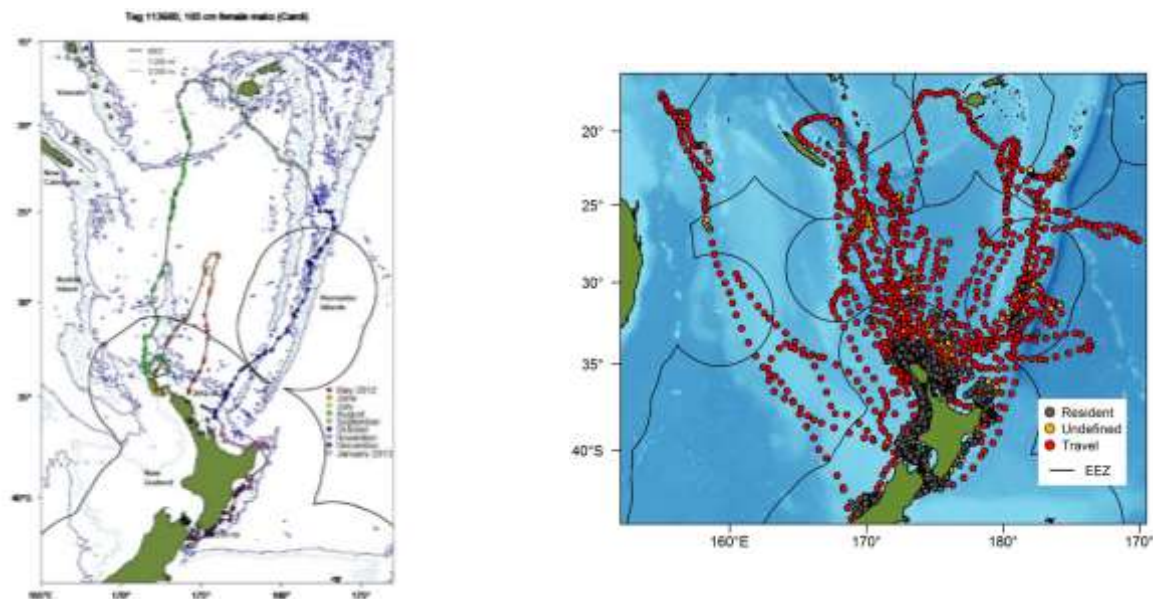
Fisheries data and tagging shows that juvenile māko are generally found over continental shelves, often in coastal waters, and that sub-adults and adults spend most of their time in oceanic regions beyond the shelf break. Between 2012 and 2017 Scott and Clinton collaborated with Dr Malcolm Francis, to satellite tag 13 juvenile māko off the Bay of Islands, Hen and Chicken Islands and Manukau Harbour (<https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/project/shark-satellite-tagging-in-nz/>). This research showed that although māko are considered a highly migratory species (HMS) the juveniles spend most of their time within the New Zealand Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (median 77%, five sharks more than 90%), much of it inside the Territorial Sea. It also showed that even when māko do leave our EEZ they return, often to the same area they were tagged in. This finding refutes the view that māko are nomadic wanderers and shows that how we manage this species within our EEZ matters. Satellite tagging has also shown that māko are generally more active, and spend more time in deep, colder water during the day. The deepest dive by a NZ mako was to 1400 m but have been recorded to 1900 m elsewhere.

Photo right. A 156cm TL shortfin mako (Heinrich) fitted with a SPOT satellite tag off the Hen and Chicks. Spot tags transmit the shark's location each time the tag rises above the surface.



Note: It is common to give satellite tagged fish nicknames. These are usually chosen by the tag sponsor.

The maps below show an individual track over several months for a 185cm female mako (Carol) and an overlay of all the mako shark tracks from this project. *From Francis et al. (2019)*



Māko feed on a wide variety of pelagic and demersal prey. Fishes and cephalopods (squid and octopus) generally predominate in the diet, particularly of juveniles. Bony fishes recorded in the diet include small bait fishes (e.g. anchovies, clupeids, and sauries), flying fishes, lancetfishes, kahawai, jack mackerel, yellowtail kingfish, trevally, hapuku, scabbardfish, barracouta and gemfish, alfonsino, bluenose, broadbill swordfish, marlin, skipjack tuna, albacore and other scombrids. Blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) are common prey of large shortfin māko in New Zealand waters, and a large māko landed in Hawke Bay was found to have a spine-tailed devil ray (*Mobula mobular*) spine embedded in its head (CD pers. obs.). The tip of the spine had penetrated the roof of the shark's mouth and was visible protruding in front of its right eye suggesting the shark had at least attempted to consume the ray. Elsewhere whaler sharks (*Carcharhinus* spp.), hammerheads, skates, eagle rays and cownose rays have been reported in the diet. In South Africa sharks and rays made up a larger proportion of the diet of māko caught in coastal waters compared to those caught well offshore. As already mentioned, very large māko will occasionally take marine mammals. Records from New Zealand include a bottlenose dolphin in the stomach of a large māko found dead in Mill Arm in Doubtful Sound, Fiordland in 2004; anecdotal accounts of large māko preying dolphins in Bay of Plenty and Hauraki Gulf; and YouTube footage of māko attempting to take a New Zealand fur seal off Gisborne. Māko have also occasionally been observed attempting to take seabirds resting on the surface (C.D. pers. obs.). Known predators of māko in New Zealand waters include sleeper sharks (*Somniosus antarcticus*), striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*) and killer whales. Elsewhere great white sharks have been implicated in predatory attacks on shortfin māko. Māko have also been caught with swordfish and marlin bills embedded in them.



This photo right is of a large mako shark around 180kg filmed in the Hauraki Gulf sporting tooth puncture wounds around its head. The spacing of the punctures suggest a lucky escape from a much bigger shark.



Mako are regarded as the ultimate gamefish by some due to their speed, agile agility and spectacular jumps when hooked. Recreational fishers often catch mako on trolled marlin lures and are also known to attack teasers and even propellers while a boat is moving.

Given that reputation it is not surprising mako are among the fastest fish in the ocean. Their average sustained (cruising) swimming speed is reported to be around 1.9 to 3.2 km per hour, similar to other large



pelagic fishes such as tuna, but they are estimated to have burst speeds between 35-74 km per hour (9.8 m per second) based upon calculation of the escape velocity required to reach an observed height above water during a breach. Direct measurements of burst speeds of free-swimming mako using attached tags are generally much lower than this (i.e., 13.3 to 18.1 km per hr.) and are probably more indicative of the speeds mako usually reach when feeding or avoiding other large fishes. Mako are able to achieve such speeds because they are “regional endotherms”, that is they retain metabolic heat through the use of vascular counter-current heat exchangers situated in the white muscle (often called the ‘blood line’). This retention of heat raises their metabolic rate allowing them to cruise roughly 1.6 times faster than their cold-blooded (ectothermic)

counterparts. Cruising muscle temperatures in mako are around 1.5–3.9°C warmer than the surrounding water. It has also been shown that mako are able to control their warming and cooling rate, with one shark observed to warm its muscles above the surrounding water temperature in preparation for a deep dive.



Mako sharks were introduced into the Quota Management System (QMS) on 1 October 2004 under a single Quota Management Area (MAK 1) with a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 542 t, a Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) of 406 t, and a recreational allowance of 50 t. The TAC was reviewed in 2012 and reduced to 276 t, with a TACC of 200 t in October 2012. The recreational allowance was reduced to 30 t at the same time. The decrease was in response to sustainability

concerns that mako sharks were at risk of overfishing internationally because of their low productivity. Most of the commercial catch of mako sharks is taken by tuna longliners, bottom longliners and as incidental bycatch of bottom and midwater trawlers. Since the ban on shark finning in 2015, most mako catches are now discarded or actively released alive. Catch per unit effort (CPUE) indices for the New Zealand longline fishery suggest a decline in population size the late 1990s (corresponding to the peak of the surface longline fishery in New Zealand waters), with subsequent increase since the early 2000s and relatively variable but over-all flat trend in recent years. Overall, the New Zealand mako population appears to be doing well, in stark contrast to many other range states.

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## Aging fish



### **How Old Is That Fish? - The Fascinating Science of Fish Age Calculations.**

Have you ever wondered how old a fish is? Unlike us, fish don't come with birth certificates or birthdays to celebrate! Yet knowing a fish's age is incredibly important for fisheries management, conservation, and aquaculture. Scientists have developed clever techniques to read the hidden "time stamps" inside a fish's body. Welcome to the fascinating world of fish age calculation.

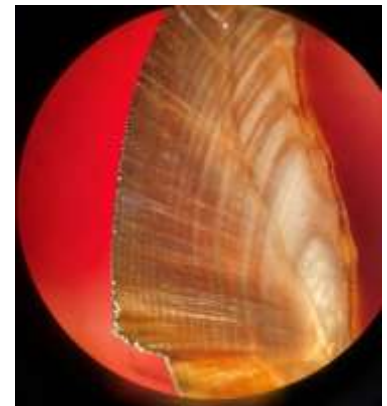
Just like trees add a ring each year, many fish add microscopic rings to certain body structures. These natural "black boxes" can record the story of growth and time. But unlike trees, fish move. This in itself complicates using any growth ring method as fish can move into and out of warm or cold waters daily and can migrate great distances following warmer currents. Aging fish raised in captivity has shown variations in growth rings not matching the known age of these fish when harvested questioning the ability of aging wild fish where it is almost impossible to validate the age of a fish, but through the following methods we can have a reasonable attempt at estimating age and growth over time.

#### **1. Otoliths. The Gold Standard.**

Otoliths are "ear stones" located inside a fish's head. They are not bone but hard, calcareous white crystals (aragonite) located in the inner ear just below the brain. They grow continuously and form daily and annual rings. These rings are called annuli. By counting the opaque (active feeding over summer) and translucent (slow growing over winter) layers, scientists can determine the age of the fish in years. As mentioned above the timing of ring formation can be difficult to validate as fish can move to warmer or cooler waters throughout the year.

Another drawback is that the fish must be dead for scientists to extract the otolith. Fish have three pairs of different types of otoliths. The largest, the sagittae, are used for aging. These are prepared by cutting, polishing, or burning and the rings are counted under a microscope.

Each ring usually represents one year, making otoliths the best aging tool we have. This is a photograph showing the break and burn otolith preparation done by Oliver Evans who was working on snapper aging at NIWA in 2022. This snapper was aged at 17 years old and came from a recaptured TMRCT tagged snapper measuring 66.5 cm fork length. It had been tagged and released 4 years earlier in 2018 as one of the first east coast tagged snapper in the Trust tagging program. A photo of its release was used in our recapture certificates. See more on this topic in the winter report #18.



In the first stages of a fish's life growth rates are very fast until it reaches maturity.

For larvae or juvenile fish otoliths daily rings can be counted. Imagine counting 365 rings for just one year! This helps scientists understand early life survival, larval development and hatchery success rates. It's like zooming in on fish life, day by day.

MPI uses otolith reading for more than 5,000 hoki each year

#### **2. Scales. The Gentle Method, used on live fish.**

Many fish grow annual rings on their scales as well. These rings are called curculi. A scale is removed (fish stays alive) and viewed under a microscope and the rings are counted. This is a great method for live fish aging, though not always as precise as otoliths.

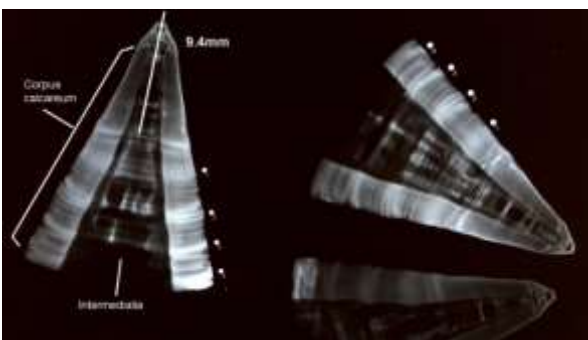
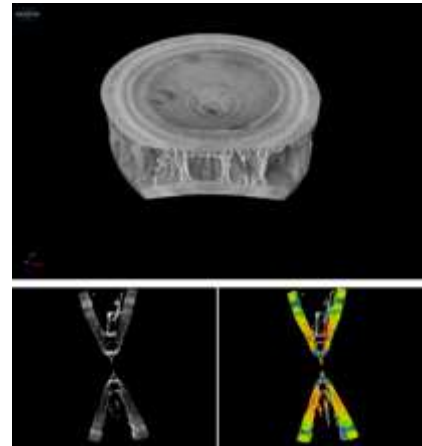
### 3. Fin Rays & Spines.

In some species—like catfish—fin rays or dorsal spines are used instead of otoliths. These grow rings similar to tree rings. Like scales, these structures can be collected and read with minimal harm to the fish.

### 4. Vertebrae & other ‘hard parts’.

Sharks, rays and chimaeras don't have otoliths, so scientists have trialed other parts of their body to try and determine their age. This has included vertebrae, eye lens, tooth plates (in chimaeras), dorsal spines (in dogfish), and caudal thorns (in skates). Success using these alternative methods varies and is very dependent on validating how often these species deposit any observed growth bands (which we largely don't know).

Radiation from nuclear testing in the Pacific found in vertebral growth rings of some particularly long-lived sharks has raised questions about the way we estimate ageing by some of these methods.



Here Dr Brittany Finucci, Fisheries Scientist at Earth Science New Zealand provides us with a close-up view of a shark vertebrae showing the growth rings (indicated by a white dot) in this 4 year old specimen.

### Modern Tech: Aging Without Cutting

New technologies are making fish age estimation even easier. Science is evolving, and so is our ability to “read” fish ages through X-ray imaging to view bones and otoliths non-destructively, Laser ablation for precise ring reading and Isotope and DNA analyses to estimate age chemically or genetically. Marine scientists have been working on epigenetics to develop ‘clocks’ used to estimate the age of fish and shellfish species. While different species undergo different epigenetic change over time, there are some common patterns that occur as animals’ age. Epigenetic clocks, based on methylation of DNA have been developed and are in use for humans and other mammals are considered to be about 99% accurate but are less well developed for fish and have been trialed on 10 finfish species including farmed snapper. Fish are currently aged from the growth rings in their otoliths. Reading otoliths is a specialist, time consuming task. If epigenetic clocks for fishes, particularly commercial species, prove to be more accurate and cost-effective they may eventually replace the time consuming otolith reading.

### Why Does Fish Age Matter?

Age tells the story of a fish’s life—its growth, maturity, reproduction, and survival. Fisheries scientists use age data to answer questions like, how fast do fish grow? When do they reproduce? Are their populations stable or declining? Or how many fish can be safely harvested? Without age information, sustainable fisheries would be guesswork. When we understand a fish’s age, we understand an important part of its life story giving us informed advice on how to better manage our impacts on each species future.

## Handy links and resources for the online savvy

Remember to share or tag your fish tagging adventures on your Trusts' social media community page

- **Website** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz>
- **Email** [tindaleresearch@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tindaleresearch@xtra.co.nz)
- **Instagram** [#tindaleresearch](https://www.instagram.com/tindaleresearch/)
- **Facebook** [www.facebook.com/tindaleresearch/](https://www.facebook.com/tindaleresearch/) @tindaleresearch  
@Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust – Community
- **Donations** <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/tindale-marine-research-charitable-trust/>
- **Updates and newsletters** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/newsletters/>
- **Fish ID guide** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/project/fish-id-guide/>
- **Inshore tagging program** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/tagging-program/>
- **Fish Tagging explained** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/tagging-program/what-is-tagging/>
- **Tagger Registration** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/tagger-registration-form/>
- **Report Tag & Release** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/fish-tag-release-form/>
- **Report Tag Recapture** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/fish-tag-recovery-form/>
- **Tagging kits & Accessories** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/tagging-program/order-tagging-gear/>
- **Printable forms** <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/tagging-program/downloadable-printable-forms>



### How to tag fish YouTube videos

- How to tag and release a small **snapper**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbiusrEw11Y>
- How to tag and release a **Snapper**: [https://youtube.com/shorts/xTE\\_id7lbgs?feature=share](https://youtube.com/shorts/xTE_id7lbgs?feature=share)
- How to tag and release an **Eagle ray**: <https://youtu.be/diqjZkZXOuI>
- How to tag and release a **Rig**: (spotted smooth hound): <https://youtu.be/9AhR6cDnwdE>
- How to tag and release a **Tope Shark**: (School Shark): <https://youtu.be/eia0-LWzDM8>
- How to tag and release a **Kahawai**: <https://youtu.be/7xkCJCI9vBM>
- How to tag and release a **Gurnard**: <https://youtu.be/AiEGBvf0Emg>
- How to tag and release a **Trevally**: <https://youtu.be/buOdM8agfT4>
- How to tag and release an **Elephant fish**: <https://youtu.be/daf90AMYg1s>
- How to use a release weight <https://youtu.be/a5aV1E0HZYU>

### ➤ Q codes, scan for:

Tag & release



Tag recaptures



Website



- **IGFA International Game fish Association & Angling World Records** [www.igfa.org](http://www.igfa.org)
- **NZ Recreational Fishing Rules** [www.fisheries.govt.nz/travel-recreation/fishing/fishing-rules/](http://www.fisheries.govt.nz/travel-recreation/fishing/fishing-rules/)

# TAGGING KITS

**\$50.00**

**Includes:**

- \* Free Registration & Membership
- \* 1500mm roll up PVC Measure mat
- \* Tag Applicator with floating handle
- \* Cartridge of 10 serial numbered dart Tags
- \* Tagging Instructions
- \* Code of Practice & handy hints
- \* Recording Sheet
- \* Citizen Science bumper sticker
- \* Handy zip up carry bag
- \* Free stuff from our supporters
- \* Online support, reports and updates



# MEASURE MAT

**\$20.00**

**Features include:**

- New Zealand designed & manufactured
- 1500mm roll up PVC Measure mat with PVC head board.
- Easy to read digits to 0.5cm increments
- Suits left or right handed measuring
- Durable and washable



# GAME FISH MEASURE

**\$20.00**

**Features include:**

- New Zealand designed & manufactured
- 3000mm x 75mm roll up PVC Measure Mat
- Easy to read digits starting from 1000mm to 3000mm at 1cm increments
- Great for Boat or Land based fishers
- Suitable for Marlin, Shark and Tuna
- Durable and Washable



# TMRCT TAGS



*"Save a fish with a gold coin donation."*

#### Packs Include:

- \* Cartridge of either 10 or 50 individually serial numbered PDS dart Tags
- \* Tagging Instructions
- \* Code of Practice & handy hints
- \* Recording Sheet
- \* Citizen Science bumper sticker
- \* Free stuff from our supporters
- \* Online support, reports and updates.

**Top up your tagging kit ready for the next fishing adventure with family or friends.**



All tagging equipment including tagging packs, fish tags and accessories are available from our website orders page <https://tindalresearch.org.nz/tagging-program/order-tagging-gear/>

Also available from Trade Me (credit card and surcharges apply).

## Tagging Members updates.

### House keeping

Thank you to all the tagging program members that send in their tagging data early. This helps with data collating and keeping you all informed of recaptures and results in a timely manner. It is important to send in your tag and release data ASAP so it doesn't get lost or forgotten and is essential if you want the stats to be consistent throughout the program. Photos have been a great addition to the tagging program giving us an insight into fish condition before and after as well as showing recovery from barotrauma, healing from injuries or recovery from conditions like milky flesh syndrome and zombie snapper. These are best to send by separate email or you will have to reduce the file size to attach to the website portal.

Some of you will notice the website has been upgraded to include a quick link button for "reporting new tag and releases" on the front cover of the website. This is next to the well-used report tagged fish recaptures button and is there to make reporting easier.



Postage has been an issue for years but this year has been the worst. Reduced services like no deliveries to business street addresses, constant unannounced price increases and members with no letterboxes has made sending out printed material like recapture certificates near impossible. We even tried to hand deliver some of the last batch of recapture certificates only to find street numbers confusing or randomly allocated along the street. Some of you have received the email versions of the recapture certificates in PDF format as a trial to counter these issues and looks like it will be the way forward. This in itself has its own problems with email spam blocks or changes of addresses so please ensure you have sent in your updated information and current addresses and check you have added the Trust email address to your approved emails so you don't miss out on important announcements.

## Questions & Answers

The Trust is often contacted for guidance or answers to questions on all manner of subjects, many are difficult to find online or by other means. Some are angling record related, many are on species ID or biology and others are in support of sustainable practices. We try to avoid opinions and instead look to research for the answers. With so much misinformation circulating within the fishing community, it's great to see that the tagging program is helping you to make more informed decisions.



**Q.** *Hi Scott, I hope you have had a great summer so far!*

*I am emailing you to ask if you could possibly share some information with me regarding the recapture rate of big snapper (75cm+ size).*

*There is a new growing trend of people dismissing catch & release, saying that there is no point as the majority of fish end up dying anyway?*

*How many snapper have been successfully re-caught after being tagged? I feel that this is the best evidence to prove that they do survive (if correct steps are taken).*

*If there is anything else that you could add to help me with this debate I would greatly appreciate it. Many thanks, Tony*

**A.** Fortunately the Trust tagging program has a huge amount of data on snapper throughout their size range.

Catch and release anglers are a bit different from the general fishing public in that they handle fish quickly and methodically in order for a best chance of survival. Most post-release mortality is due to poor tackle selection leading to gut hooking, taking too much time before release (internet jockeys love long videos with fish held out of water before finally releasing) and poor handling like fingers in the gills, or fish being dropping onto sharp rocks etc.

We have over 7660 tagged snapper recorded in our data base. Just over 350 of these have been recaptured giving a recapture rate of around 1:22 or 4.6% (around 50 additional fish have been reported with missing or poor data so are not included in this figure). This is seen as a very high recapture rate for a wild, open ocean fishery and indicates recreational fishing is more widespread and recreational catch is higher than the generally accepted estimates by official surveys. Of the recaptured snapper 71% are killed ending the breeding cycle and any opportunity to learn more from their journey.

Recreational fishers catch around 86% of our tagged snapper, 15% are caught by land based fishers.

**For snapper over 75cm V-Length (fork Length) the recapture rate is almost double at around 1:14 or 7%.**

Although the chance of a tagged fish being released again after recapture is slim, two Snapper over 75cm have been caught three times. One was tagged at Kawau recaptured at the Alderman's and then again at Kawau before it was killed. Releasing these larger fish potentially has greater benefits for the population than releasing a few smaller fish because big fish produce considerably more eggs than their smaller kin. As fishing generally removes the largest fish in a population first releasing large fish may also help prevent genetic selection for a population of small fast growing individuals. Larger fish generally take larger prey than smaller fish meaning that releasing large fish can maintain the natural processes that support a healthy marine environment.

Recaptures are routinely reported in our quarterly reports these can be found at <https://tindaleresearch.org.nz/newsletters/>

## Minimising Post-release Mortality

Post –release mortality can be an issue in some fisheries and is always something you want to minimise when tagging fish. In December last year Fisheries New Zealand released the following after we responded to their request for ideas.



### Fishers around the country innovating to reduce blue cod release mortality

*Fisheries New Zealand, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025*

**Release mortality is a major issue for blue cod in the Marlborough Sounds**, caused by damage from inappropriate hooks, poor handling of fish, and predation by seabirds such as shags. To support recent measures to reduce fishing pressure on blue cod (an extended closed season and further measures being considered), it is key that we all do our part to fish sustainably and responsibly. This minimises disruption of blue cod during closures and ensures the best chances of survival for any released fish.

We've heard a clear and simple message from the local community on this issue: **the best way to avoid release mortality for blue cod is to not catch them in the first place**. Here are some tips to achieve this:

- **Be intentional in your fishing.** When the blue cod season is closed, target other species selectively using the appropriate gear, fishing in different areas, and staying away from rocky reef blue cod habitat where possible. Don't just anchor up on your local point like it's business as usual.
- **Use the right hook.** Large (6/0+) circle or recurve hooks avoid gut hooking fish and less regularly catch smaller blue cod which you need to return.
- **Move on** when you are catching undersize blue cod or any blue cod during closures. Some areas serve as juvenile nursery grounds, and every time you bring up a small cod to release, it reinforces the feeding behaviour of shags.

This being said, it is sometimes inevitable that you will catch a blue cod during closures, or small blue cod throughout the year, which you will need to safely release to help ensure the fishery's sustainability.

We've worked with some proactive fishers around the country to profile what they are doing to address release mortality in their local fisheries. Have a read ahead of this summer for some inspiration to give something new a go and minimise your impact when out on the water.

This article covers some, but not all, of the available techniques being used to reduce release mortality for blue cod. If you have ideas, content, or suggestions, we'd love to hear these at [info@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:info@mpi.govt.nz).

#### **Scott Tindale, Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust, Auckland**



My wife Sue and I set up the Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust in 2018, to promote environmental education, conservation and research. One of our key initiatives is the recreational inshore fish tagging programme, which earned the 2023 Supreme Seafood Sustainability Award.

Hearing concerns about seabird predation of blue cod, my mind turned to the release weight as a solution. Used widely overseas and increasingly in NZ to return fish affected by barotrauma (like snapper), I've also used these rigs when fishing in Kapiti and Otago to easily get cod down to the bottom faster than hungry seabirds.

The concept is simple, being a clip or lip gripper and a weight below rigged on a spare rod or handline. After removing the hook from a fish' lip, insert the wire clip through the same hole then release the fish overboard. At the appropriate depth, simply jerk the rod to slide the clip out and let the fish swim away.

To give this a go, you can make a clip at home with a bit of wire or a shark clip and a YouTube guide, or you can buy pre-made rigs online. To see how they work go to <https://youtu.be/a5aV1E0HZYU>



## Summer 2026 tag and recapture summary- (1/12/2025 to 28/02/2026)

- 622 additional fish tagged and released this quarter
- 27 tagged fish were recaptured during this quarter
- 5 recaptured from recreational boats
- 16 recaptured from recreational shore fishers
- 4 recaptured by commercial fishers
- 1 recreational spear fishing
- 18 recaptured tagged fish were released again this quarter
- Longest time at large before recapture this quarter is 2187 days
- Longest time at large before recapture to date is 2187 days
- Furthest displacement via sea of a TMRCT tagged fish, is 3132km (satellite tagged school shark) and 3132km shortest distance by sea for a recapture of a TMRCT conventionally dart tagged fish



## Tagging Leader board

As of the end of February 28 members in the TMRCT inshore tagging program have tagged over 100 fish, 10 have made it to the leader board tagged and released 250 or more fish. Quite the milestone. Still a way to go to catch Scott and Sue.

Scott & Sue Tindale	3007
Robert Janse	571
Graeme Johnson	513
Graham Wilson	513
Michael Jenkins	393
Liam Shadgett	280
Hadley Dawes	271
Luke Davis	258
Michael Bawden	255
Richard Nawisielski	254



## Longest fish leader board

The following chart shows the longest fish tagged and released for the most common species. There are a few ties but the first fish of that length recorded stands. Many of these are also New Zealand angling length records and required a photo of the fish on the Trust measure mat.

<u>Snapper</u>	<u>5/02/2023</u>	<u>S. Jameson</u>	<u>Port Jackson</u>	<u>88.5cm VL</u>
<u>Kahawai</u>	<u>5/03/2020</u>	<u>D. Adams</u>	<u>Tauranga</u>	<u>61.5cm VL</u>
<u>Kingfish</u>	<u>9/11/2023</u>	<u>J. Aubertin</u>	<u>East Cape</u>	<u>140cm VL</u>
<u>Gurnard</u>	<u>4/06/2022</u>	<u>G. Gilbert</u>	<u>Nape Nape</u>	<u>53cm VL</u>
<u>Trevally</u>	<u>15/05/2025</u>	<u>P. Mills</u>	<u>Rangaunu</u>	<u>74.5cm VL</u>
<u>Blue cod</u>	<u>12/07/2019</u>	<u>T. Dawson</u>	<u>Chatham Island</u>	<u>48.5cm VL</u>
<u>Blue Moki</u>	<u>8/04/2021</u>	<u>G. Wilson</u>	<u>Marlborough</u>	<u>62cm VL</u>
<u>Hapuka</u>	<u>9/10/2025</u>	<u>B. Finucci</u>	<u>Dusky Sound</u>	<u>73cm VL</u>
<u>Tope shark</u>	<u>16/06/2020</u>	<u>M. Jenkins</u>	<u>Karekare Beach</u>	<u>174cm TL</u>
<u>Rig shark</u>	<u>10/09/2022</u>	<u>G. Gilbert</u>	<u>Nape nape</u>	<u>137cm TL</u>
<u>7 gill shark</u>	<u>8/09/2024</u>	<u>H. Dawes</u>	<u>Havelock</u>	<u>270cm TL</u>
<u>Bronze Whaler</u>	<u>31/01/2021</u>	<u>E. Ballantine</u>	<u>Rangiputa</u>	<u>305cm TL</u>



## TMRCT Inshore Tagging Program

As we approach the ninth year of the Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust Inshore Tagging Program Sue has put together a few statistics to illustrate some of the results so far.

Membership in the tagging program has increased to just over 1700 and our following on social media platforms and hits on our website are not just from keen fishers here in NZ, but include people interested in the marine space from around the world.



Tagging program members had received 37,480 fish tags to the end of this quarter and have reported 14,469 tagged and released fish to the Trust. The number of species tagged and released is 73 with the bulk being the most common species found in our coastal waters.

Recapture ratios can vary considerably between anglers as it is up to them to decide where to fish and what species to tag and release. Isolated areas, seasonal fishing effort, and fish density are just some of the factors influencing recapture rates. Those members that joined the tagging program early on are now seeing recaptures of fish that have been at liberty for almost 6 years. A few have had tagged fish recaptured multiple times.

Sadly, over 60% of the tagged fish recaptured are killed ending their story on a plate or are used as bait. Under current legislation commercial fishers cannot release tagged fish but recreational fishers are not subject to the same constraint. Releasing tagged fish after recording the tag number and the length of the fish helps describe seasonal and longer-term movements, growth rates and hopefully return migrations. More to the point these tagged fish have an opportunity to continue breeding, replenishing future stocks if let to carry on their life journeys. We have a long way to go for a sustainable fishery if we can't even convince everyday fishers to release these tagged fish again.

We commend all those that understand the importance of tag and release and reporting data on tagged fish. It is building a substantial resource that already helping to monitor trends and changes in the fishery under constant pressure.

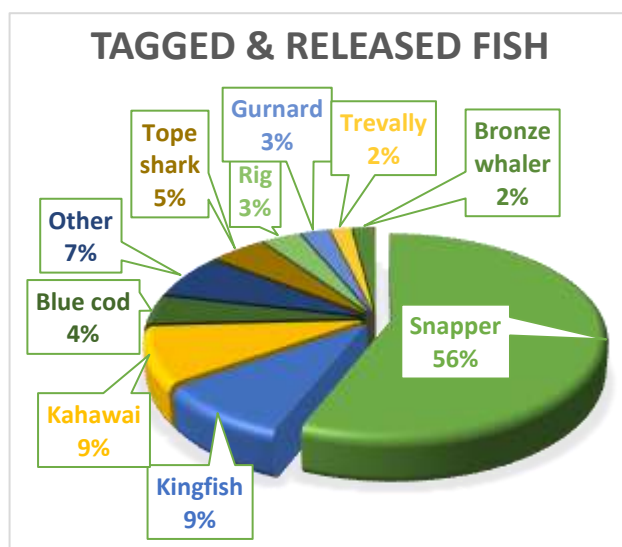
The nationwide recapture rate across all species combined is still around one fish in seventeen (1:17). The bulk of these recaptures are still by recreational methods showing how extensive recreational fishing effort around the country truly is. This recapture ratio is also considered very high for wild, open ocean fisheries like ours and does not take into account under reporting, tag shedding, natural and fishing related mortality. If that could be quantified the recapture rate would be even higher.

Right: Google map showing TMRCT tagged fish recaptures in New Zealand territorial waters and beyond



## TMRCT Inshore Tagging Program

The inshore fish tagging program membership covers all of New Zealand coastal waters as well as a few overseas locations. This unique program collects data on a wide range of fish species living in a diverse range of habitats at varying depths. The data provided by the members show trends in area specific growth rates, size composition and seasonal movements helping to understand the demographics of the fish we catch, their condition on release, as well as barotrauma and post release survival. It can also be used to understand fisher behaviour by analysing method of catch, the platform used and who are catching the fish. All this information can be used to support a sustainable fishery and enhance fisher experience. The most common species are those hotly contested between the commercial and recreational sectors so it is appropriate to look more closely at the results in this shared fishery. Tagging has predominately been undertaken in this program by recreational fishers, other participants include permitted commercial



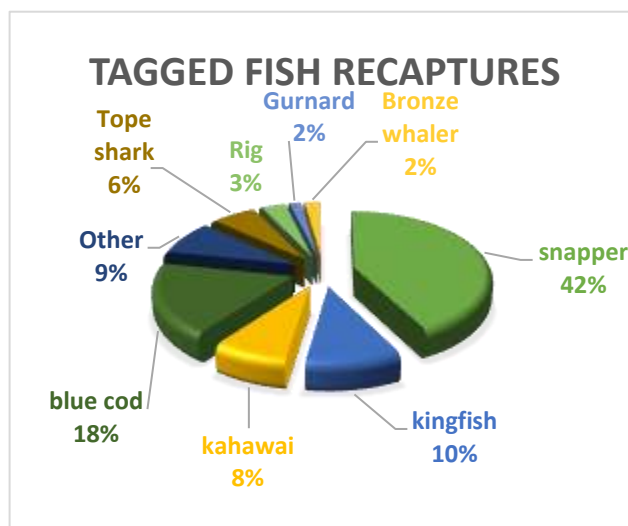
fishers, Department of Conservation staff, research scientists and university students. Inshore species have been tagged and released around the nation so overlap in the areas fished by each sector is high.

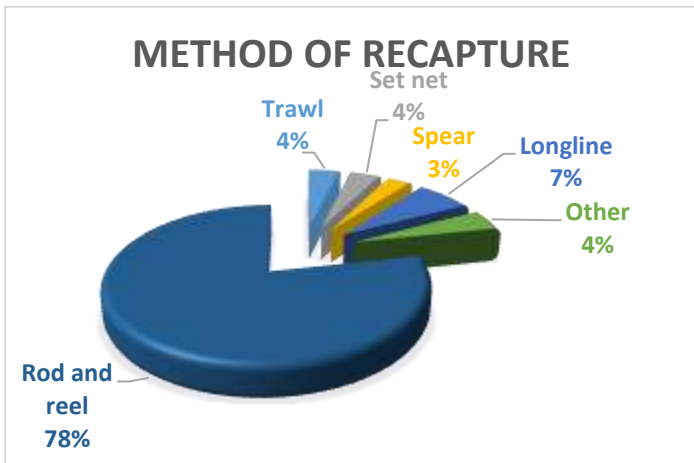
This graph shows the proportion of different species (total number of species 73) tagged and released in the Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust Inshore Fish Tagging Program. As you can see, the most frequently tagged and released species is snapper (56%). Members have tagged a great cross section of snapper sizes from juveniles to trophies. These have been caught around all of North Island and as far south as Otago. Kingfish and kahawai make up 18% of all tagged and released

fish and feature high in the recaptures also. Tag and release studies have always given a good understanding of a fishery. They provide information on movements but also information that helps in understanding mortality by method, depth, handling and location.

Recaptures are not controlled by any fisher or the members of the tagging program. Fish have tails and can move at will to areas of preferred habitat or due to seasonal and breeding migrations. As recaptured fish have been reported by all sectors of the fishing community, reported recaptures can be broken down into who, when, where and how the fish was recaptured, making for interesting discussions. Remembering recapture rates are generally high in this program for a wild catch fishery that spans thousands of square kilometres of ocean habitat off our 15,000 km coastline. With the ability of tagging a fish in most of our inshore waters it still amazes me how many are recaptured again, and so soon. It's not like we are fishing in a lake or river.

This graph shows the percentage of tagged fish recaptured by species. The interesting thing about this graph is that most species are more or less recaptured in proportion to the number tagged except blue cod.





Tagged fish have been recaptured across all types of marine habitat and by all types of methods.

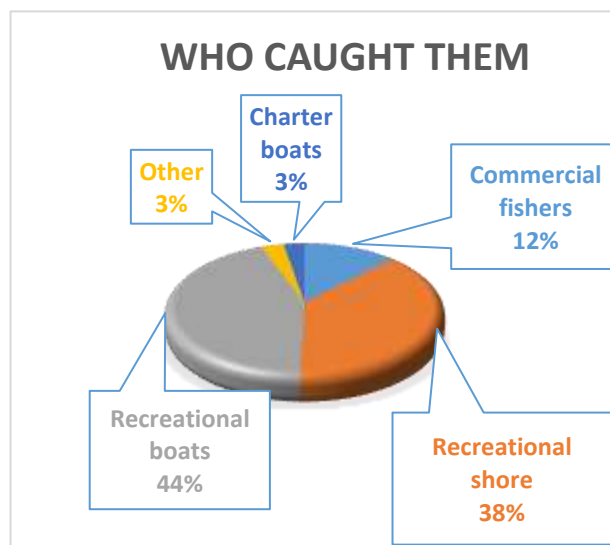
The most common recapture method is recreational rod and reel, with 78% of all reported recaptures being by this method. Next is long line which includes both commercial and recreational setups at 7%. Commercial trawl and make up 4% of recaptures by method and equals to the combined recreational and commercial set net method. Spear fishing accounts for 3% of recaptures.

### Who recaptured them?

\*Recreational boat includes: fishing from all types of watercraft, i.e.: raft, kayak, Jet Ski, runabout, launch, yacht, houseboat, super yacht, etc.

\*Recreational shore includes: land-based fishing from the shore ie, a beach, rocks, wharf or jetty. Also includes kontiki, torpedo and drones fished from the shore and heli-fishing trips.

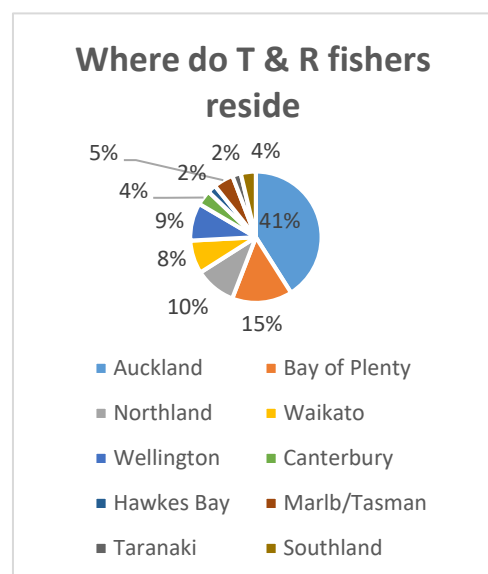
\*Commercial fishers includes: long line, drop line, trawl, seine, set net, cray pot and reported by fish receivers and MPI observers.



Note, these percentages have remained consistent since this program began nearly 8 years ago, despite the huge growth in that time.

### From where do our tagging members reside?

Tagging programs can also tell us about fishers. Things like where anglers reside in comparison to how often they fish, what time of year and how far we travel to our fishing locations. Many of our members travel the length of the country looking for new challenges, on holiday, for fishing tournaments or fishing with friends. Much of this is seasonal, very much like some of our fish. Whether we travel or fish locally, variations in movements are influenced by available free time and the weather. This graph shows the percentage of taggers by location, which in some cases looks proportional to the population of those areas. This gives a great indication of distribution of our members across the country. What will be interesting in the future is to look at where taggers from each region fish.



This volunteer program was not created or intended for fisheries management purposes but it is an important source of independent data on our inshore fishery. We are focused on providing open, up to date independent research and providing opportunities to those willing to participate in this citizen science to monitor fish in their own area. In addition, we have supported students studying for marine science degrees and collaborated with research organisations and institutions with fish tagging projects, fish data collecting as well as advising on best handling and mitigation methods for a variety of fish species.

Empirical evidence, that is evidence obtained through measurement or experimentation, on our recreational fishery is needed more than ever as New Zealand's resident population continues to grow past 5 million. Unfortunately, the informal nature of recreational fishing makes it difficult and therefore expensive to study. With no recreational licencing or catch reporting in NZ how it is even possible to quantify how many fishers there are or how many fish are harvested each year. Especially when there are over 3 million visitors and seasonal workers that enjoy fish too, how many of them go fishing while they are here?

The significance of recreational fishing has become increasingly evident with the recent protests aimed at influencing fisheries policy and management. Scary stuff, as many of us believe data derived from fish landed by recreational fishers is needed if we are ever to avoid opinion-based advocacy in decision-making. These reports are updated every quarter and help document and highlight current trends in the fishery, continue to provide robust information on what the fish are doing and what the fishery currently looks like.

### TMRCT Inshore Tagging Program Recaptures

As usual there was a constant flow of tagged fish recaptures over summer, many with interesting stories attached. Here are some of the highlights.

We apologise if your fish is not included but we give preference to the ones that have photos and interesting stories attached.



#### **T33686/B Blue Cod**

Russell Wilson has caught this blue cod three times. Russell was surfcasting in Karaka Bay on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2025, and he caught a 36cm blue cod. Russell returned to Karaka Bay on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2025 and while surfcasting he recaptured this fish. Russell measured the fish at 39cm before re-releasing it again. The third time that Russell caught this fish was on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 while surfcasting at Karaka Bay. He measured the fish at 39cm.



Since its initial tag and release **211 days** (6months, 27 days) earlier this fish has grown 3cm and stayed in the same general area.

### T14337 Snapper

On December 8, 2025, Nathan Reid from Moana contacted the Trust to report the recapture of a tagged snapper that had been recovered while processing fish caught by Sam Hayes on the trawler FV Kawhia. The fish had been caught in the Colville Channel on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 and was a healthy-looking fish.

Greg Stewart had tagged and released this fish along with two others while fishing in 22m of water at Motuora Island in the Hauraki Gulf **385 days** earlier on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.

This fish was recaptured a straight-line distance by sea of 45.4km away from its original tag and release location.

This is Greg's 1<sup>st</sup> recapture from the nineteen fish that he has tagged and released since joining the tagging program.



### T15617 Snapper

We received a report from Egmont Seafood's of a tagged fish recapture by the fishing vessel Robert H. The snapper had been caught in 90m of water approximately 31 km offshore on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2025. The fish was reported to be 42cm fork length and weighed 1.35kg.

This snapper was tagged and released just over 4 years earlier on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2021 by **Sue Tindale** fishing inside the Kaipara Harbour in 8.66m of water. It measured 29cm fork length before release.



In the 1468 days at liberty this fish was recaptured a shortest distance by sea of 285km away and had grown 13cm in length during that time.



### T31441 Bronze Whaler Shark

Lucas Bell was surfcasting a bait from shore at Tahunanui Beach in Nelson on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 and he recaptured a Bronze Whaler Shark.



Lucas said '*it was a very large sized Bronze Whaler in a very good healthy condition, and it put up a hard fight*'.

This 224cm shark was tagged and released **368 days** earlier in Nelson on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 by Tom James who had won a tagging kit in the Peter Davies Rig fishing competition.



### T19161 Snapper

Over the summer month's snapper migrate into very shallow water in and around our Harbours. On a rather windy New Year's Day in 2022 Sue Tindale was fishing in 2.2 m of water close to the mangroves in the upper Kaipara harbour where she tagged and released this 49.5cm snapper caught on a pink Daiwa Bait junkie softbait lure.



Just over 4 years later on the 9th of February 2026 Losefa Manulele was fishing in Maretahi creek when he recaptured this tagged snapper. He measured the snapper at 54 cm fork length and also measured the total length of 55.8 cm. Losefa did not notice the tag until he got home but commented that a big school of snapper all around this size were roaming in very shallow water when they caught it.



This fish has been at liberty for 1501 days, growing 4.5 cm in that time and was recaptured a shortest distance by sea of only 4.1km from where Sue had tagged and released it. This area is void of snapper over the cooler winter months and it had likely left the harbour on a seasonal migration returning to the same general area as summer arrived.

### T33673 blue cod

Russell Wilson was surfcasting in the Marlborough Sounds on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2025 where he caught a 28cm blue cod. Russell took a photo of the fish before tagging and releasing it. Russell returned to the same bay on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 where he recaptured this fish now measuring 32cm. Russell also tagged 4 other blue cod including one that was to be recaptured 57 days later.



Since this blue cod's initial tag and release **273 days** (8months, 28 days) earlier it had grown 4cm.

### T29689 Seven Gill Shark

Nigel Spencer was surfcasting at the Oreti Mouth in Southland on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2025. One of the two fish that he tagged and released was a 210cm sevensgill.



**29 days** later on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 this shark was recaptured by Hugo Dolan at Awarua Bay a straight-line distance by sea of 36.2km away from its tag and release location. Hugo was surfcasting a bait when he recaptured this fish. Hugo measured the fish at 210cm before re-releasing the fish again.



This is Nigel's 1<sup>st</sup> recapture from the 20 fish that he has tagged since joining the tagging program.

## T26966/C Blue Cod

This blue cod has been caught four times.

Its story starts here, Russell Wilson was surfcasting in Karaka Bay on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2024, and he caught a 36cm blue cod that he tagged and released. Russell returned to Karaka Bay on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2024 and while surfcasting Russell recaptured this fish. Russell measured the fish at 36cm. The third time that this fish was caught was on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 by Glen Richardson while fishing at Karaka Bay. Glen measured the fish at 38cm before re-releasing it again. This fish has now been caught for a fourth time by Russell Wilson while surfcasting at Karaka Bay on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2025. Russell measured the fish at 43cm before quickly re-releasing the fish again.



Since its initial tag and release **409 days** (1 year, 1 month, 14 days) earlier this fish has grown 7cm and stayed in the same general area. As blue cod reach maturity at around 2-3 years of age the offspring from this fish when first tagged and released still have a way to go before spawning themselves. This is something to think about when it comes to deciding to keep or release a fish.

## T30365 Bronze Whaler Shark

This is Wynand Gertzen's first recapture since joining the tagging program. Wynand was surfcasting from shore at Mangawhai on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2024 and caught a 261cm Bronze Whaler Shark which he tagged then posed



for a quick photo before re-releasing again.

**363 days** later Ryan Beith was surfcasting at Mangawhai and recaptured this shark. Ryan measured the fish at 261cm total length, photographed it and re-released the fish. Many of these tagged sharks return to the same areas the following year.



## T31789 Snapper

Occasionally a tagged fish is recaptured with only a partial tag, another fish may have bitten it off or someone could have tried to cut off the tag. This is the reason that the Trust tags have serial numbers on both ends.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2026 S. McKendrick was fishing in 7m of water at the Hokianga when he recaptured a snapper with a partial tag sticking out of it. He said that he was only just able to read the last digit '9' sticking out and the tag was only just visible in the skin of the fish.

This fish had been tagged and released by founding member Robert Janse **256 days** earlier on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2025 while surfcasting in the Hokianga Harbour and was recaptured a straight-line distance by sea of 4.56km away from its tag and release location.



### **T37487 Short Tail Stingray**

Angus Skipage is a very keen land based fisherman and has tagged 42 fish. This is his 2<sup>nd</sup> recapture.

Angus was surfcasting from shore in Nelson on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2025 and caught a 90cm disc width (DW) short tail stingray which he tagged and released.

**54 days**, (1 month, 24 days) later on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2026 Angus was surfcasting a bait at the same area where he recaptured this short tail stingray, releasing it again.



### **T22239 Bronze Whaler Shark**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2026 the Trust was contacted by Jayden Boughey who reported the recapture of a Bronze Whaler Shark that was caught by Reinah Coma while surfcasting a bait from the shore at Rangiputa Beach that morning.

Jayden said *“The fish didn’t fight as hard as most sharks of this size. It was extremely docile; however, it was in really good shape. The fish swam away confidently after the hook was removed. There was no sign of other hooks in its mouth, however, there appears to be a fresh hole from perhaps a previous hook”*.

This shark had been tagged and released **278 days** (9 months, 3 days) earlier by Gilbert Groenewald while shark fishing from shore at Papamoa. He measured the pre-caudal length at 194cm (PCL). This shark was recaptured a straight-line distance by sea of 470km away from its tag and release location in Tauranga and is the second bronze whaler shark we’ve seen move from the Bay of Plenty to Rangiputa.



### **T37484 Short Tail Stingray**

This is Angus Skipage’s 2nd recapture for this report. Angus was surfcasting from shore in Nelson on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2026 and recaptured a 130cm DW (Disc Width) Short Tail Stingray. Angus took a photo before releasing the fish again and reported that the fish was in a good condition.

This fish had also been tagged and released by Angus **233 days** (7 months, 9 days) earlier on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 in the same general area.



### T34571 Snapper

Liam Shadgett was surfcasting from shore in the Manukau Harbour on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 and one of the fish that he tagged and released was a 32cm snapper that he caught on a bait.



**33 days** later in the same general area this fish was recaptured by Myka Roose Butcher who was surfcasting with her father on her 12<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Her dad Tom contacted the Trust to report the recapture. He said that it was a good-looking fish and they would be having it for the birthday celebratory dinner.



Tom then joined the tagging program and purchased a tagging kit so that his whole family could get involved in tagging the fish they released.

This snapper is Liam Shadgett's 12<sup>th</sup> recapture from the 280 fish that he has tagged and released since joining the tagging program.

### T16095 Kingfish

Wilson Mangubat was jigging from shore in Tauranga Harbour on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 and caught a 59.5cm kingfish which he tagged and released after taking a quick photograph.

**670 days** (1 year, 9 months, 30 days) later on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 Luca Biel was saltwater fly-fishing in 0.5m of water on a king tide when he recaptured this fish. Luca said that it was one of three ray riders that they saw. Luca measured the fish at 61cm before releasing it again.



This fish was recaptured a straight- line distance by sea of 7.2km away from its tag and release location and had grown 1.5cm.

### T28772 Snapper



Geoff Crawford was spearfishing near Bland Bay on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 where he speared a tagged snapper in 6-10m of water, reporting the recapture to the Trust.

This fish was tagged and released **190 days** (6 months, 6 days) earlier on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2025 near Bland Bay by Shiloh Rumbal while surfcasting from shore. It measured 75cm.

The fish was recaptured a straight-line distance by sea of 16.5km away from its original tag location.



### T25504/B Bronze Whaler Shark

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time that this Bronze Whaler Shark has been caught.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 2025 Glen Newman was shark fishing with friends at Collingwood in Golden Bay where he caught a 240cm total length (TL) Bronze Whaler Shark. Jason Boa had his tagging kit on hand so they tagged and released it.

**84 days** later on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 2025 this fish was recaptured by Logan Hall while surfcasting at Pakawau in Golden Bay. Logan noted down the catch details and tag number before releasing it again.

**290 days** later on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 this Bronze Whaler Shark was caught for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time by Jason Boa shark fishing from shore at Pakawau. Jason measured the shark at 240cm and took a photo before releasing it again.

This shark was recaptured a straight-line distance by sea of 4.83km away from its original tag location just over a year or **374 days** earlier. All the catches were during the warmer summer months in the same general area.



### T38380 Seven Gill Shark

Scott Mennell was shark fishing from shore at Omaui Beach in Southland on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2026 and caught a 228cm Seven Gill Shark which he quickly tagged, measured, and re-released again. Scott noted that the shark's top fin was missing.

**16 days** later on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 this shark was recaptured at New River Entrance. A straight-line distance by sea of 1.31km away from its tag location, by fellow tagger Nigel Spencer who was bait fishing from the shore. Nigel also took a quick photo before releasing the fish again.



### T27404 Snapper

The Trust was contacted by Mike Langwell on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 to report the recapture of a 29cm snapper caught by Finn Langwell in 6m of water at Kawau Bay. Finn cleaned some growth off the tag and took a photo of the fish before releasing it again.

This fish was one of the three fish that were tagged and released by Tom Lusk while surfcasting at from shore at Waikauri Bay **469 days** (1 year, 3 months, 12 days) earlier on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2024. Tom measured this fish at 26.5cm when he tagged and released it.



Since its tag and release this fish has grown 2.5cm and was recaptured 3.46km straight-line distance by sea away from its tag location. This is Tom Lusk's 11<sup>th</sup> recapture from the 283 fish that he has tagged and released since joining the TMRCT tagging program.

### T34113 Seven Gill Shark

This is Scott Mennell's 2<sup>nd</sup> tagged fish recapture for this quarter.

Scott was shark fishing from shore at Omaui in Southland on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2025 and caught a 130cm Seven Gill Shark which he tagged and released.

**375 days** (1 year, 10 days) later on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2026 this fish was recaptured by Hunter Jackson who was surfcasting at Omaui. Hunter measured the fish at 187cm before releasing the shark again.

This fish was recaptured a straight-line distance by sea of only 1.59km away from its tag and release location. It is likely to have returned to this spot after an annual migration.

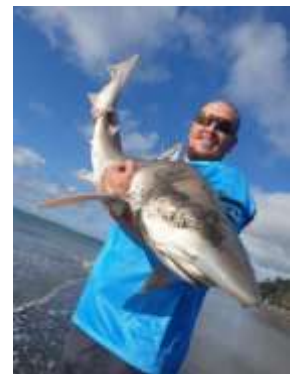


### T18834 Tope Shark

Dillon at Jacob Fishing in southland reported the recapture of a tagged 168 cm tope shark T18534 they had caught fishing in 146m of water, 7 miles south of Stewart Island's South Cape.

This shark was tagged and released by Lemmy Shadgett just over 3 and a half years earlier on the 1st of July 2022 while he was fishing from the shore at Wattle Bay, just inside Manukau Harbour.

Lemmy measured the mature school shark at 158cm total length.



In the 1297 days at liberty this shark was recaptured a shortest distance by sea, either via the west coast at 1402 km, or via the Cook Strait and east coast of the South Island of 1414 km. This sharks movements closely match a satellite tagged school shark that travelled from the Kaipara harbour to Snares Island near Stewart Island.



### T14917 Tope Shark

Hadley Dawes was surfcasting a bait from shore at Seddon on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 and caught a 78cm male Tope Shark which he tagged and released along with two others.

**902 days** (2 years, 5 months, 18 days) later on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2026 the Trust was contacted by Joe Heberley the skipper of the commercial drop liner FV Te Awa who reported the recapture of this Tope Shark in 20m of water at Cloudy Bay.

Since being tagged this fish has grown 16cm and was recaptured a straight-line distance of 3.31km away from its tag and release location.



### T34094 Snapper

Joshua Loader contacted the Trust on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2026 to report the recapture of a 29cm snapper that he caught while softbaiting in 7m of water in the upper Waitemata Harbour. Joshua released the fish again after taking a photo and recording the details.



This fish was tagged and released **14 days** earlier on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2026 by Jamie Koosache who was fishing in 10m of water in the same general area of the Waitemata Harbour.

### T11165 Snapper

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 **Sue Tindale** was fishing in 1.3 m deep water in Kaipara Harbour when she tagged and released this 41cm fork length snapper.

Almost 6 years later on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2026 this snapper was recaptured by Abdon Delapena C who was fishing from his inflatable boat near the Helensville River mouth of the Kaipara Harbour.

Abdon measured the fork length at 52cm and a total length of 60cm.



At almost 6 years at large this fish had grown in length by 11cm and was recaptured a shortest distance by sea of 9.22 km from where it was tagged and released **2187** days earlier.

This is the longest time at liberty for a tagged fish in this program so far and is the Tindale's 122<sup>nd</sup> tagged fish recapture in this program.

### T29593 Short Tail Stingray

Jason Boa was surfcasting a bait from shore in Nelson on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2026 and caught a tagged Short Tail Stingray. Jason said, *'The stingray did not have a tail, but it was very deep and fought well'*. He took a photo of the fish before releasing it again.

This 118cm Short Tail Stingray was tagged and released **18 days** earlier by Angus Skipage on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2026 while bait fishing from shore in the same general area. This is the third recapture that Angus has had for this quarter.



### T16097 Kingfish

The new administrator of the MPI co-op gamefishing tagging program forwarded an email she received from Sean Sherburn who had reported the recapture of a tagged kingfish on 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2026 while live baiting from a jet ski somewhere in the Tauranga Harbour. Sean reported the length of the kingfish at 62cm and it was released again.

This kingfish was originally tagged and released by Wilson Mangubat on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 2025 while fishing from the shore in Tauranga Harbour using a sinking lure.

This fish was at large for 44 days. Unfortunately we have no initial length or location of recapture.



### T27917 Blue Cod

Russell Wilson tagged and released a 41cm blue cod caught from the shore in Picton Harbour on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2025. It was one of 4 blue cod he tagged and released that day, as well as catching a previously tagged fish he also released again.

57 days later on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February Russell recaptured this fish in the same area, still measuring 41cm, and released it again.



For more on these check out earlier quarterly reports on our website newsletter page.



# TINDALE MARINE RESEARCH CHARITABLE TRUST

Charities Registration No. CC55555

IRD no. 126-648-057

## **End of year tax refunds**

For many of you out there the end of March is the end of the Tax year. This is important information for those that have or intend making a donation to this trust.

The Tindale Marine research Charitable Trust is a New Zealand registered charity with full donee status. This means that for individuals and corporates (companies), for any donations made to the Trust, you are entitled to a full tax credit as described below.

### **Individual's donations.**

Individuals can claim a 33.33% tax credit for all donations over \$5.00 they make to an approved donee. A tax credit reduces the amount of tax you have to pay. The total tax credits an individual can claim is capped at one third of their total taxable income. Remember to keep your valid donation receipts so you or your accountant can complete an IR526 Tax credit claim form and forward to IRD.

### **Corporate giving.**

Companies can claim tax deductions for all donations made to an approved donee providing their claim does not exceed their total annual income. A tax deduction is a reduction in the amount of taxable income. Companies can claim this deduction using the IR4 form.

You can only claim donation tax credits within a period of four years following the year in which the gift was made.



For more information go to [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz)

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For the Trust tagging program to help you and your community we need you to help us fund fish tags, prizes and supporting educational materials. Every fish released tells its own story, a small price to support sustainability, the value to our marine life's future, immeasurable.

**Donations**

**All Donations received by the Trust go back into the tagging program to supply tagging equipment and informative educational material.**

**Helping everyone to expand the knowledge of the marine environment through citizen science.**

We would like to thank those of you that have donated goods, services or funds to the Trust. Your generous support is greatly appreciated and it all goes back into supporting these programs. Many of the volunteer taggers have received a top up of tags from these donations ensuring a continuation of this citizen science project around the country.

Thousands of Fish ID posters and stickers have been distributed to government departments, educational institutions, fishing clubs, tackle stores and fishers around the country to help you identify many of our inshore fish species and participate in sustainable fishing practices.

If you, or a business or organisation would like to support helping the community with this or any other aspects of the **Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust** we would love to hear from you.

The Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust is a registered charity and all donations are tax deductible. We have attached a handy IRD guide for those wishing to support the trust financially.

You can contact us directly by emailing [tindaleresearch@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tindaleresearch@xtra.co.nz) by phone 0274760687 or by donating to our give a little page, <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/tindale-marine-research-charitable-trust>



We would also like to thank our sponsors and individuals for their kind donations and support....



So that is it for another seasonal report. Remember to keep sending in your tagging data regularly so we can keep you all up to date in the next issue. Sorry to those whose recaptures were not mentioned, we will endeavour to include these on the Trust social media pages.

Catch you on the next issue....Have a great fishmas, tight lines from the team at

**Tindale Marine Research Charitable Trust**

*“To Promote and encourage environmental education, conservation and research for a sustainable future”*

