Connecticut Department of
ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

DEEP Marine Fisheries News

March 13, 2020

N20-11

Mandatory Commercial Tautog Tagging Program

Our facility is now closed to the public. As a result, we will not be able to dispense the tags nor applicators in-person. All distribution will be done via mail.

Amendment 1 to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Tautog (blackfish) Fishery Management Plan (approved in October 2017) mandated implementation of a coast-wide commercial tagging program for tautog. This program is designed to combat illegal and unreported harvest of tautog, particularly in the live fish market. Initially slated for 2019, implementation of this program was subsequently delayed by ASMFC until 2020.

The commercial tautog fishery in Connecticut opens on April 1st. Please be advised that beginning in 2020, **all commercially-harvested tautog offloaded and/or landed in Connecticut must be tagged by the commercial harvester prior to offload and/or landing with a tag issued by CT DEEP**.

Important facts concerning the tagging program:

- CT DEEP will make tags available to all commercial fishermen eligible to participate in the commercial tautog fishery.

    o The form for the program, tags, applicators and logbooks will be sent via mail. Please contact DEEP Marine Fisheries at 860-447-4325 or e-mail renee.st.amand@ct.gov for more information.

    o There is no charge for tags. Applicators are available for $25.00 each. Payment can be made by check/money order made out to "DEEP". DEEP highly recommends use of the purpose-built applicator for these tags.

- Prior to offload and/or landing in Connecticut, all commercially-harvested tautog must be tagged in the left operculum (gill plate) with a DEEP-issued tag, such that the tag number is visible.

- Tags are individually numbered, are single use, and are assigned to individual fishermen. Tags cannot be transferred between individuals or fish.

- Tags are issued on an annual (calendar year) basis. All issued tags not used by the end of a calendar year must be returned to DEEP (either in person or certified mail) by February 15 of the following year.

- Commercial harvesters will also be required to complete a supplemental report (in addition to standard monthly logbooks) accounting for the use of all tags they are issued. Completed supplemental reports must be submitted to DEEP when requesting additional tags during the calendar year, or by Feb 15 of the following year. DEEP will not provide additional tags

to a commercial fisherman during the calendar year until that fisherman submits a completed supplemental report accounting for the use of tags issued previously that year.

- Failure to return unused tags and/or provide required supplemental report(s) may result in an inability to acquire tags for the next year. Fishermen will be required to submit a notarized affidavit explaining the disposition of any unused tags that are not returned to DEEP.

- Tautog must remain tagged until they reach the final consumer. Processed tautog or tautog filets shall be packed with the tag and the tag must be available for inspection, until such time as the processed tautog or tautog filets are sold to the final consumer.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer that is committed to requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Any person with a disability who may need information in an alternative format may contact the agency's ADA Coordinator at 860-424-3194, or at deep.hrmed@ct.gov. Any person with limited proficiency in English, who may need information in another language, may contact the agency's Title VI Coordinator at 860-424-3035, or at deep.aaoffice@ct.gov. Any person with a hearing impairment may call the State of Connecticut relay number - 711. Discrimination complaints may be filed with DEEP's Title VI Coordinator. Requests for accommodations must be made at least two weeks prior to any agency hearing, program or event.