

# BARNEGAT BAY WATCH

## ANGLERS AND THE BAY

### Angler's Guide to Catching and Releasing Tagged Fish in the Barnegat Bay Region



Anglers fishing in the Barnegat Bay region may catch a fish tagged with a plastic streamer, button, or strap attached to its back, side or fins. These are fish tags, the tools of fishery scientists and managers. Fish tags can assist scientists and fishery managers in gaining knowledge essential to understanding and restoring troubled fisheries.

Fish tags are used to identify individual fish of a particular species. Each tag return provides information valuable toward the understanding of the life history of the species. Tags help provide answers to questions related to the longevity of the species, growth rates, migratory patterns or mixing of various components of the stock.

If you capture a tagged fish, please take the following steps to accurately record the necessary data for the tag return:

- Record the name and address of the tagging agency or program printed on the tag.
- Record the species of the fish.
- Record the tag number on the tag.
- Record the date and location of capture.
- Record the length and weight of the fish if possible.
- Mail the data to the agency or program named on the tag.

If you intend to release the fish after recording the tagging data, follow these essential catch and release DO's and DON'TS:

- Land the fish quickly; don't fight it to exhaustion.
- If possible, leave the fish in the water while dislodging hooks (use pliers, a dehooking device, etc.); if too difficult to remove, cut leader near hook. Eventually the hook will work out of the fish's mouth.
- When you must handle a fish; to reduce injury, keep it from thrashing about; use a wet glove or rag to hold the fish; turn the fish on its side or back and cover the eyes with a wet towel to calm it; do not put fingers in the gills.
- Place the fish back in water gently; if necessary move it back and forth to pass water through the gills.



Anglers fishing in the Barnegat Bay and adjacent coastal waters should keep an eye out for fish carrying tags from the following programs. Many programs offer small rewards as incentives to anglers returning tags. At a minimum, you will receive, for your efforts, information on the original tagging and return of your fish.

**American Littoral Society  
Sandy Hook, Highlands, New Jersey 07732**

The American Littoral Society is an organization dedicated to the study and conservation of the coastal marine environment. The Littoral Society also conducts the largest volunteer fish tagging program through the efforts of its members.

Species: Dozens of species including Striped Bass, Fluke, Winter Flounder, Bluefish, Blackfish, Black Sea Bass

Tag: Yellow streamer located just behind the dorsal fin

**Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Fish Tagging Program  
Tawes Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service tagging program is conducted in cooperation with state natural resource agencies. Striped bass are being tagged in cooperation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife. American Shad are being tagged in cooperation with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Species: Striped Bass; American Shad

Tags: Striped Bass - Orange streamer located in the vicinity of the dorsal fin\*  
American Shad - Red T-bar tag

\* Note: Striped Bass tags are internally anchored and should be cut off rather than pulled out of tagged fish to be released after capture.

**Fish Unlimited  
P.O. Box 1073  
Shelter Island Heights, New York 11965**

Fish Unlimited is an organization that focuses on the protection, preservation and perpetuation of fresh and saltwater fish and their respective environments. Similar to the American Littoral Society, anglers can participate as volunteer taggers for this organization.

Species: Dozens of species including Striped Bass, Fluke, Winter Flounder, Bluefish, Blackfish, Black Sea Bass

Tag: Orange spaghetti tag located just behind the dorsal fin

New Jersey Sea Grant Education and Outreach Program, New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium, Building 22, Fort Hancock, Sandy Hook, NJ 07732.

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