Any Tarpon, Anywhere, Any Size!

DNA – the new way to tag tarpon

Angler participation in collecting tarpon DNA samples throughout Florida is essential to the success of this valuable project. In 2008, we had a fantastic year. Angler participation increased and the number of samples returned increased 3.1 times as compared to 2006.

Our Goals for 2009:
- Increase participation from East Coast and Florida Keys anglers
- Collect 2,500 samples

2008 Tournament Participants

The following tournaments improved our sample collections rate by allowing presentation of our program at tournament events, distributing sampling kits directly to anglers and/or requiring the collection of DNA samples as a condition of entering fish in their competitions.

14th Outback Steakhouse Golden Fly Tarpon Tournament, Islamorada
22nd Faro Blanco Invitational Tarpon Tournament, Indigo Reef
25th Annual Crosthwait Tournament, Bradenton
32nd Ladies Tarpon Tournament, Marathon
32nd Women’s Spring Fly Tarpon Tournament, Islamorada

42nd Annual International Tarpon Tournament, Marathon
APG Electric Tournament, Clearwater
Don Hawley Tarpon Fly Tournament, Islamorada
Ed Alber Tarpon Rodeo, Tierra Verde
Firefighters Challenge, Tierra Verde
Gold Cup Invitational Tarpon Fly Tournament, Islamorada
Howl at the Moon Invitational Tarpon Tournament, Boca Grande
Mike Alstott Family Tournament, St. Petersburg
Professional Tarpon Tournament Series, Boca Grande
Redbone Sunrise/Sunset Tarpon Tournament, Marathon
Sarasota All Release Tarpon Tournament, Sarasota
Sarasota Slam Challenge, Sarasota
Silver King Classic Tarpon Tournament, Ft. Myers Beach
Slaw Dawg Invitational, Anna Maria
Suncoast Tarpon Roundup, St. Petersburg
The Old Man of the Sea Tarpon Classic, St. Petersburg
TP Lucerne Gossman Memorial Tournament, Everglades National Park
Who takes the credit?

You do! Anglers who take a genetic sample from their tarpon may voluntarily fill out the contact information on the back of each data slip. We use this contact information to mail you updates, to enter you into annual raffle drawings, to tally total samples collected, to contact you if we have a question regarding your sample, or if we need to contact you because you had a recaptured tarpon.

There have been questions about what to do if you are a guide and your client catches the tarpon. We ask that the guide please fill out the data slip using his/her contact information. You may include the name of your client who caught the tarpon if you wish to keep them up-to-date on potential recaptures. However, guides are more likely to be Florida residents and are usually easier to find if we have a question about the sample, but both names (captain and client) are kept in the database (see privacy policy article). Captains can inform their customers of any recaptures and that may be good for repeat business.

Top ten 2008 samplers
Ed Walker
Jeff Owens
Roy Bennett
Chris Rhea
Clark Nash
Mike Clark
Tom Stephens Jr.
John Manuel
Gary Giles
Raymond Baird

Anglers who contributed:
50 or more samples
Roy Bennett
Jeff Owens
Ed Walker

30 or more samples
Mike Clark
John Manuel
Clark Nash
Chris Rhea
Tom Stephens Jr.

20 or more samples
Raymond Baird
Gary Giles
Steven Jones
Dave Market
Jay Masters
Billy Miller
Robin Murphy
Lee Roberts

10 or more samples
Bill Burrows
Charlie Crisp
Jeff Hagaman
Timothy Humphries
Ed Hurst
Bill Jones
David Laggner
Nathaniel Lemmon
Sharon Masters
Joe Mercurio
Robby Mielsch
Jim Parkhill
Larry Pentel
Frank Rhodes
Ashley Templeton
Mike Wrenn

5 or more samples
Mike Badarack
Joel Bickford
Andy Boyette
Jerry Chesney
Gary Clark
Bob Donzalski
Mike Ferguson
Keith Goodman
Robert Hansen
Bobby Hilbrunner
Derrick Jacobson
Tom Karrow
Larry Leszczynski
Becky Moore
Chris Myers
Charlie Owens
Wayne Quinette
Larry Rudisill
Casey Steil
Kelly Stilwell
Jeff Totten
John Ulrich
Karen Wotring
It’s all about location!
A huge Thank You to our 105 participating bait and tackle shops who support our Tarpon Genetic Recapture Study around the state of Florida and those shops in neighboring states. You have been a valuable asset in promoting the program to your local angler communities and increasing angler participation each year! There are many personnel in several shops who have gone above and beyond in promoting the study in 2008 by urging captains and recreational anglers to take DNA samples. We would like to extend a special thanks to Lehr’s Economy Tackle, North Fort Myers, the U.P.S. Store, Fort Myers, Skeeter’s Lagoon, Titusville, Half-Hitch, Port St. Joe, Half-Hitch, Destin, Bett’s Fishing Center, Largo, Angler’s Outlet, Cape Coral, Indian Pass Campground, Indian Pass and Economy Tackle, Sarasota, for obtaining a number of tarpon samples from your anglers.

We are always looking for additional shops to join us in promoting the program, providing free sampling kits to anglers, and acting as a drop-off location for samples. Even if you can just help by displaying a poster promoting the study, please contact us and get on-board for 2009.

To see our list of statewide sample collection centers go to the Web site at: http://research.MyFWC.com/features/view_article.asp?id=26619#list.

2008 Raffle Winners
Everyone who returned a DNA sample was eligible to win a thank you gift box from our annual random raffle. Congratulations to this year’s winners:
• Douglas Casey
• Brent C. Gaskill
• Tyler Kapela
• Larry Lutz
• Robert McCue
• Stacy McLeod
• Chris Myers
• Bob Pascale
• Troy Salmon
• Gene White

Sample Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of samples returned</th>
<th>By regions of Florida</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007: 1,031</td>
<td>SW: 516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008: 1,257</td>
<td>West Central: 453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SE: 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of samples in database: 3,143*</td>
<td>Keys: 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Panhandle: 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NE: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gulf Coast: 1,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Coast: 106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top 5 counties in 2008

| Pinellas: 241               | Samples from other states received in 2008 |
| Manatee: 187                | Texas: 18                      |
| Charlotte: 179              | South Carolina: 7             |
| Sarasota: 155               | Louisiana: 1                   |
| Lee: 136                    | North Carolina: 1             |
|                             | Virginia: 1                   |

Though the primary focus of this study is tarpon in Florida, this year we also received 11 samples from Africa, 18 samples from Mexico and one sample from the Pacific coast of Panama.

Based on your data, 410 (33%) samples came from tarpon over four feet long this year; 227 (18%) samples came from tarpon less than three feet long. Length data were not provided for 620 (49%) of the submitted samples.

Please be sure to fill out your data slips!
Recaptures, recaptures

The tarpon genetic recapture program has had four recaptures during its first two years. The recaptured tarpon from 2008 will not be disclosed until the upcoming 2009 press release this spring. There were some personnel changes on the tarpon project this past year and we were short staffed during peak season, particularly in the Molecular Genetics Laboratory in St. Petersburg. As a result sample processing ran a little behind schedule. Our new technician started in October and she will have us all caught up by the end of January. Keep watch for this exciting news!

Privacy Policy

Cooperation from anglers is the lifeblood of our research and we earn that cooperation by being trustworthy with the valuable information you provide. Your privacy is very important to us. Simply stated, our policy is to collect no personal information about you unless you affirmatively choose to make such information available to us. If you choose to share the information, such as by subscribing to this newsletter, sending an e-mail, or filling out a form with personal information, the information will be saved for a designated period of time so that we may comply with the state of Florida’s archiving policies. However, your information will not be disclosed to third parties or other government agencies, unless required by state or federal law. Please note that Florida’s public records law requires that all information received in connection with state business be made available to anyone upon request, unless the information is subject to a specific statutory exemption.

Contributors

Art Ensemble International (www.artsensemble.com); Captain Joe Hebert (www.captainjoe.fishing.com); Columbia Restaurants (www.columbia.restaurant.com); Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (http://myfwc.com); FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (http://research.myfwc.com); Get Reel...Get Fish (www.getreelgetfish.com); Mote Marine Laboratory (www.mote.org); Mote Marine Laboratory Center for Fisheries Enhancement (www.mote.org/fisheries)