

Lifelong Identification



Using coded wire tags, researchers at Mote Marine Lab are assessing the effect of release habitat on the recapture rate of hatchery reared snook. They recently recaptured their largest hatchery snook to date in the same spot where it had been released 6 years before. Photo by J. Brennan.

We often discuss tag retention with our customers—it varies widely with the tag, species, tag location, and skill of the tagger. Our coded wire tag is exceptional for its high retention rates across many taxa, even when implanted in very small animals. Retention for the life of the animal is the norm. Here are some interesting examples of long-term coded wire tag recoveries.

- Biologists with the Missouri Dept. of Conservation have been tagging sturgeon on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers for decades. This effort was rewarded in 2002 when biologists recaptured a fish that had been tagged an incredible 24 years before.
- The Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources began coded wire tagging lake trout from Lake Huron in 1985. Since then, several million tagged fish have been released, and a successful tag recovery program

implemented. In 2003, a lake trout was recovered 18 years after release.

- Since 1986, researchers at Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute have reared, tagged, and released more than a million white seabass to help rebuild populations of this popular sport fish. In 2004, the two oldest fish to date were recovered 10 years after release, weighing over 17 pounds.
- In the Pacific Northwest, most coho salmon return to hatcheries and spawning grounds by age 3. However, the regional coded wire tag database shows that coho often return at ages 5 and 6. The longer lived Chinook salmon mainly return by age 5, but coded wire tag data shows that there are still frequent returns at ages 7 and 8.

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