



2023 Mandatory Commercial Tautog Tagging Program

**** Please note: DEEP Marine Headquarters in Old Lyme remains closed to the public. All tag distribution will be completed via the mail through the USPS.**

Amendment 1 to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Tautog (blackfish) Interstate Fishery Management Plan (approved in October 2017) mandated implementation of a coast-wide commercial tagging program for tautog. The program is designed to combat illegal and unreported harvest of tautog, particularly in the live fish market.

The commercial tautog fishery in Connecticut opens on April 1st. Please be advised that **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 2023 tag issued by CT DEEP.**

Important note: 2023 tautog tags will not be issued to any fisherman who has not accounted for the full allotment of 2022 tautog tags they were issued. Unused 2022 tags MUST BE RETURNED to CT DEEP Marine Fisheries. For questions concerning your 2022 tautog tag status, please contact Renee St.Amand via email at Renee.St.Amand@ct.gov or by calling 860-876-8726.

Important facts concerning the 2023 tagging program:

- CT DEEP will make tags available to all commercial fishermen holding the appropriate license(s) and who wish to participate in the commercial tautog fishery.
 - The application to participate in the program can be accessed using the following link: <https://portal.ct.gov/commercial-tautog-tagging>
 - Tags and logbooks will be sent via USPS mail. Please contact DEEP Marine Fisheries at 860-876-8726 or via e-mail at renee.st.amand@ct.gov for more information.
 - There is no charge for tags. Applicators will need to be purchased from the vendor. DEEP highly recommends use of the purpose-built applicator for these tags. Vendor information can be found on the tag order application.
- 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.
- No person engaged in commercial fishing shall possess or land any blackfish, wherever taken, except from April 1 to April 30, July 1 to August 31, and October 8 to December 24, all dates inclusive. Please refer to the [CT DEEP Commercial Fishery Possession and Landing Limits](#) page on the CT DEEP website for current season and trip limit information.
- 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 15th 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.
- 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 completed 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.
- Additional information regarding the blackfish tagging instructions can be found on the CT DEEP website at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/fishing/fishing_forms/Tautog-Tagging-Instructions.pdf

Staying Informed:

Regulation changes, notices of public meetings and other important and relevant information are disseminated via the *DEEP Marine Fisheries News*, our periodic email notice to fishermen. If you haven't already, you can join our email distribution list by sending an email to listserv@list.ct.gov. Leave the subject line of the email blank and remove any signature and/or footer blocks in the message body. In the body of the email, type *subscribe DEEP_marine_fisheries* then leave a space and type your first name then leave another space and type your last name. After you send the email, you will receive an email that you have successfully subscribed to the listserv.

Call our 24/7 phone line: 860.434.6374 for a recorded message detailing current commercial possession limits and other timely commercial fisheries related news. Visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Fishing/CT-Fishing> for all current commercial fishery possession limits, notices to fishermen and other useful information concerning commercial and recreational fishing in Connecticut. NOTE: We do not use email addresses provided through the licensing system for commercial fishery or personal use lobster / gillnet related communication.

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