

# Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network

Training Manual for

## Micro-tags and tagging guns

*Supported by the Scottish Shark Tagging Programme*



## 1 Micro-Tag & Tagging Gun Guidelines

For species such as spurdog, the fish may be several years old before it is large enough to be tagged using floy dart tags: this means that several years' worth of information regarding the shark's movements is currently unavailable to us.

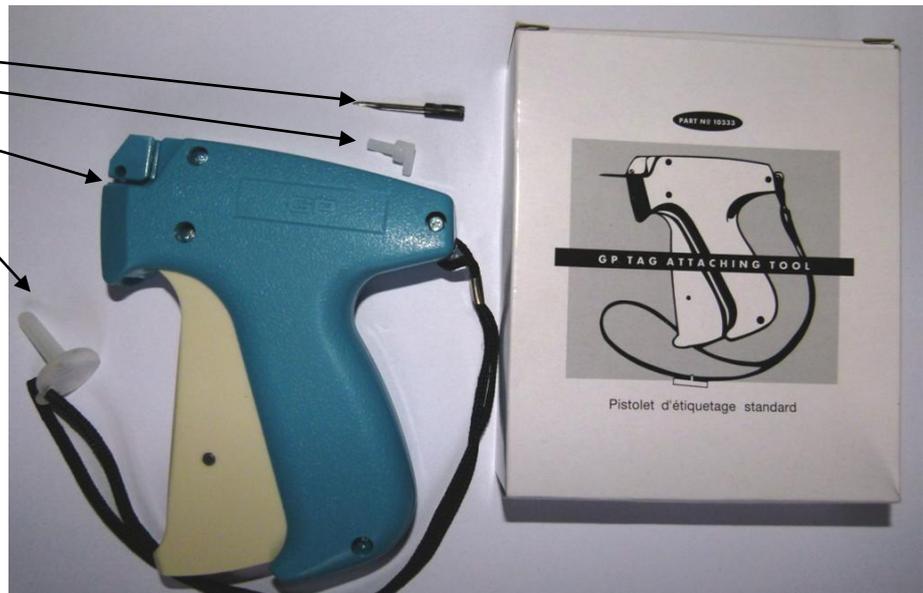
We hope that the roll out of tagging guns will allow smaller fish to be tagged whilst simplifying the tagging process by allowing sharks to be tagged with minimum stress to both the shark and the tagger!

### 1.1 Assembling the Tagging Gun

The image below shows the tagging gun as packaged, you will need to assemble the tagging gun by following the steps below.

1. Needle
2. Needle Lock
3. Tagging Gun
4. Needle Guard

**\*We recommend that the plastic needle guard (part 4) is kept on the needle at all times when the gun is not in use to avoid injury!**



#### Step 1

The needle in this tagging gun is removable; the black plastic mount of the needle has a small indentation that allows the needle to be locked in the gun using the white needle lock.

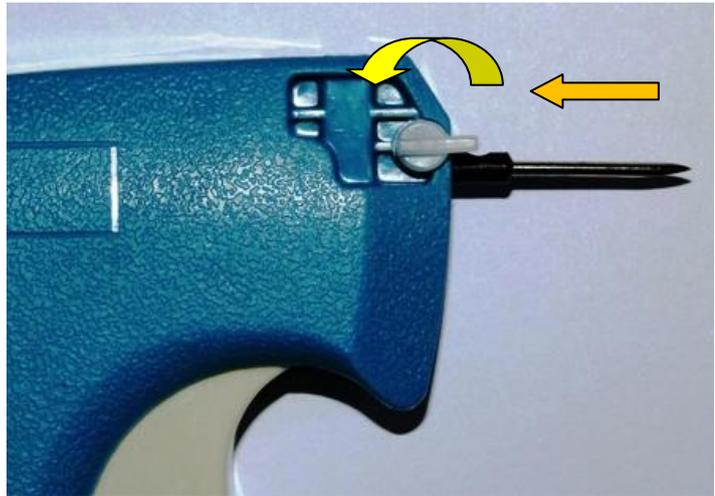
First fit the needle lock by pushing it into the gun as shown on the right.

If the needle lock is facing towards the front of the gun it is OPEN (as shown by the red arrow).



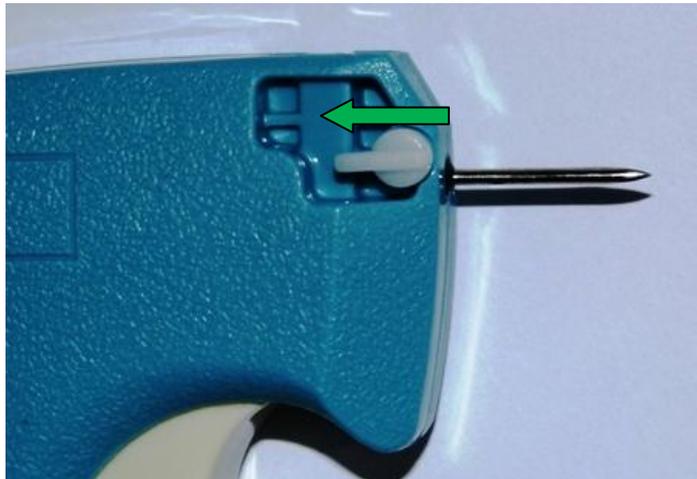
### Step 2

Fit the needle ensuring that the channel of the needle matches up with the tag channel of the gun.



### Step 3

When the needle is fitted into the gun turn the needle lock anti-clockwise to lock the needle in place (as shown by the green arrow)



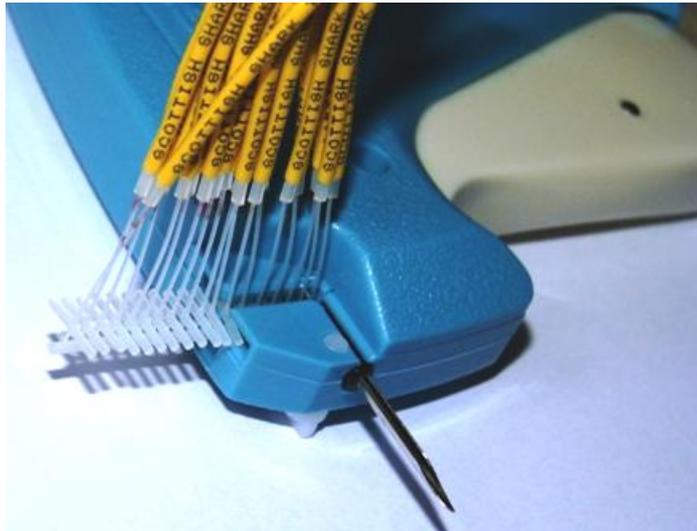
The needle is now fitted securely and ready to use.

\*The SSTP recommend that the needle guard is kept on the gun at all times when not in use both to prevent injury and to prevent damage to the needle!



## **Step 4**

SSTP t-bar tags for the tagging gun come in consecutively numbered strips. Load the strip by sliding the strip of tags into the pair of channels on the top of the gun.

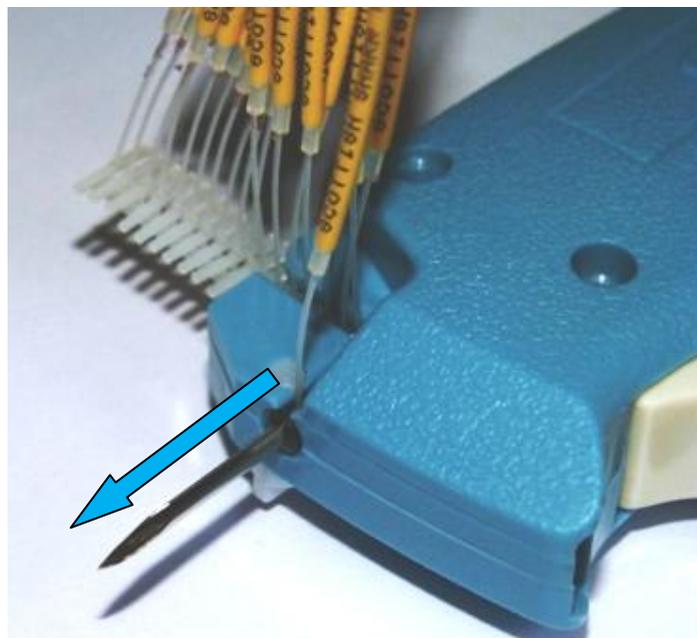


## **1.2 Using Tagging Guns**

To tag a shark using the tagging gun, assemble and load the gun as shown above in steps 1-4.

Push the needle of the gun firmly through the skin of the shark you are tagging at a 45° angle\* – for sharks the tag should be placed either side of the dorsal fin; for rays or skate the tag should be placed around 1/3 of the way into the fish's wing at its widest point.

When the needle is inserted push the trigger of the gun, this drives a small steel piston that detaches a single tag from the strip and pushes it along the needle inserting the tag.



Once the tag is inserted remove the needle and give the tag a light tug to ensure it is properly anchored.

The gun will automatically load the next tag.

## **1.3 Angle of the Tag**

It is extremely important that the tag is inserted at a 45° angle. This ensures that the tag is streamlined and lies next to the shark's body when it is swimming. If the tag is incorrectly inserted it will create resistance against flowing water and will vibrate causing irritation that may prevent the tag site from healing properly as shown in figure 13.