



SSACN

Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network

Annual Review 2009 – 2010





SSACN Annual Review

This has been another terrific year for SSACN as we continue to develop on all fronts thanks to the hard work and commitment of all those involved and the support given by our membership.

Responding to various consultations, especially the Marine Scotland Act, have and will continue to, make substantial demands on our time and though there is some cause for optimism in many of the proposals, the state of the Clyde and the potential impact of wind farms, give quite a cause for concern.

We have continued to develop the Scottish Shark Tagging Programme (SSTP) thanks to some external funding and support from other tagging programmes.

The Events Team successfully ran another Tagathon and Sharktag and piloted an additional event to run in Easter targeting common skate in the Crinan area.

Sharktag, which brings close to £50K in revenue to the Solway region over a weekend, shows what can be done where the angling opportunities still exist.

Once again, the work of SSACN has attracted strong TV, radio and written media interest. We have made contributions to a variety of news, current affairs and documentary programs.

We even made it on to Cbeebies !

In the next few pages we will highlight some of the main events of the past year, which are covered in greater depth on our websites at www.ssacn.org or www.tagsharks.com.

To recognise everyone who has given their support is impossible, but in closing we would especially like to like to thank all those who have helped get the SSTP really up and running.

All the best for 2010/11

The Trustees of SSACN



Upcoming Events :

Spurdog Tagathon – 13th -14th November 2010

Skate Tagathon - 8th-10th April 2011

Sharktag – 24th -26th June 2011

Keep an eye out for more details on www.ssacn.org and www.tagsharks.com.



Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network (SSACN)

Our Mission

is to work through advocacy, education, research and action for the regeneration of near shore fish stocks and marine environments.

To achieve that, we are working on a variety of activities at a variety of different levels, some of the key ones are :

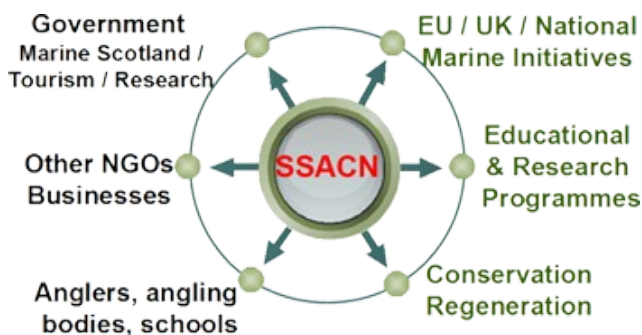
- Scottish Shark Tagging Programme (SSTP) – to gather data on Scottish species of sharks, skates and rays.
- Scottish Industry Science Partnership (SISP) acting as the industry lead researching the development and evaluation of methods for surveying fish populations in nearshore waters.
- Contributing to government task forces whose focus is the alignment of priorities and activities for integrated marine and coastal stewardship and providing input to the development of a strategy for sea angling.
- We are also very active in helping children get to know more about the various species of fish and natural environments in their local waters.

More information on these and other projects may be found at www.ssacn.org/projects.

Our approach

At SSACN we realize this cannot be achieved solely through our own energies.

To that end we work in partnership with a variety of other bodies and organisations to find good, practical solutions to many issues associated with regenerating fish stocks and their natural environments.



Dreamstore Award

The hard work of all those involved in SSACN was recognised earlier this year when we were awarded the

Dreamstore Active Conservation Award.

The Award is given to organisations who undertake conservation work with imagination and organisation and whose work benefits fish conservation and also makes a substantial contribution to informing public policy development.



In making the Award, Dreamstore's David Hoey said:

"As an independent Charity, the Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network has undertaken outstanding work in creating focus on conservation issues and the marine environment, especially those affecting sea anglers.

"Its education, environmental awareness, research and events programme is an exemplary example of the power of harnessing voluntary endeavour in conservation.

"SSACN has worked hard in building collaborative partnerships, and sought practical solutions to problems created by inefficient and ineffective fisheries management and practices which have left many species void in several areas and have destroyed many habitats.

"This includes their 'Give Fish A Chance' (GFAC) awareness campaign, and the very impressive Scottish Shark Tagging Programme which they have popularised through Tagathons."

On receiving the Award, our Secretary Denis Kelly thanked David for the Award on behalf of all those Members of SSACN who have contributed so much in so many different ways.



Join SSTP on Facebook and keep up with what's happening
<http://www.tagsharks.com/facebook>



The SSTP

The SSTP is a long term initiative aimed at gathering data on species of sharks, skates and rays found in Scottish waters by :

- Setting up a database for to record tagging data on all species of shark in Scottish waters.
- Collecting detailed data on the common skate and spurdog populations by tagging fish with sophisticated data logging and satellite tags.
- Supporting the work of scientists and academic institutions on other inshore fish species of interest to anglers such as pollack and coalfish.
- Encouraging the use of sustainable angling and commercial fishing practices.
- Increasing the general public's awareness of the issues affect Scotland's shark species

Thanks to Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Argyll and the Islands LEADER Programme, who have helped with funding we have been able to accelerate the initiative.

Quick Summary of SSTP data to date

No of anglers contributing data :	176
No of SSTP tagged fish :	1400
No of recaptures :	84
Recapture rate :	6 %
Species Tagged : Blonde ray, bull huss , common skate, tope, spurdog, smoothhound and thornback ray.	

Tagging Programmes

SSACN runs three major annual tagging events at various locations and times of the year, these are :

- **Tagathon**, centred around Lochs Sunart and Etive in late autumn and primarily targeting spurdog as evidence suggests there are resident populations and pupping grounds in the region.
- **Sharkatag**, a mid-summer event based around the Solway and SW Scotland with the focus on tagging tope, smoothhound and collecting data on other shark species.

- **Skate Tagathon**, an Easter event centred around Crinan, Oban and Loch Aline where it is believed the skate populations are largely resident.

Top Taggers

As a small reward to anyone who regularly reports tagging data, the SSTP awards 'Top Tagger' fishing caps at three levels – bronze, silver and gold.



For more details have a look at :

www.tagsharks.com/hall-of-fame-2/top-tagers

Sharkatag2010

Sharkatag 2010 ran from the 18th to 20th of June.

Although the event is a recent addition to the sea angling calendar, once again around 200 anglers of all capabilities and from all over the UK attended.

The overall numbers of fish tagged was approx 10% down on last year, however, 449 rods fishing over the three days managed to catch 840 fish (excluding lesser spotted dogfish), of which 176 were tagged.

Worryingly, the tope didn't arrive in their expected numbers with catches down almost 50%, however, smoothhound and bull huss increased.

Once again, the written media, TV and radio gave us good coverage; the BBC ran an item on Breakfast TV, CBBC Newsround came along and Border STV showed Sharkatag on their news programmes.

Sharkatag also featured on the BBC TV web home page and worldwide coverage was achieved through many internet web sites and blogs.



Cbeebies presenter Leah with Bradley and Kiera

Slow, slow, quick, quick

SSACN Life Member Dave Wright reflects on a red letter day fishing off the Mull of Galloway.



Fishing can be hard at times, when the wind is in the wrong direction and favoured marks are unreachable, but then there are always those days which, as an angler you dream about, but very rarely achieve.

Fishing for two days late July had been booked for nearly a year, on Sunday the wind was wrong and we had to fish inshore at sheltered marks resulting in a poor day, so we were hoping for a better Monday.

Next morning was still a little windy offshore, but the forecasts all predicted a dropping wind so I was hopeful we could get out to a favourite mark.

Initially we struggled a bit with the mackerel being patchy but as the tide turned, they arrived and we proceeded to catch the bait.

After a small amount of discussion we agreed to go for an offshore mark and then one of the best 5 hour fishing sessions I have ever had started.

Using Mackerel aimed at the tope, the action started about five minutes after the baits hit the sea bed. I ended up with four tope to 40lb, two bull huss to 17lb, and 24 spurdog to 21lb!

All the fish were tagged and all swam off strongly.

The only bad thing about the day was that I had forgotten my camera so some of the better spurdog didn't have their pictures taken.

Am writing this today (Tuesday) with aches and pains from the days exertions, Oh but I can't wait for the next trip!

Greatest experience - Least impact

Maximum benefit to Scotland Plc. - Best Value

Meet the Team

This edition – Willie Kennedy – Tagging Events



I fished for many years in international shore teams winning gold at world championship and home nation levels; I am currently the chairman of Ayr SAC and love boat fishing.

For me, getting involved with SSACN was a no brainer – I had witnessed first hand the pillaging of our inshore waters for many years and when I heard that some guys had formed a conservation group I attended a meeting and liked what I saw – the rest as they say is history.

I believe SSACN has done a fantastic job with the limited resources the group has more can always be done and I ask everyone who cares passionately about our sport and has some spare time to get involved – sign up at www.ssacn.org

A few facts and figures?

- Sea angling is the #1 coastal participation activity.
- Sea anglers contribute around £150 million/yr to the Scottish economy and support 4000 jobs.
- SSACN has over 350 followers on Facebook.
- 300+ anglers have taken part in tagging events.
- 35 people have contributed material on our sites
- Over 300 people visit our sites every day.
- Over 4000 people have downloaded material.
- YOU CAN JOIN IN TOO – contact@ssacn.org

Into 2011

SSACN and the SSTP have come a long way in a very short time, this is due to the efforts of all those directly involved and the support given by our Members -

We look forward to another exiting year and your continued support and valued input.