



# Spurdog Tagathon

## 2010

Welcome to a brief summary of SSACN's 2010 Spurdog Tagathon.

### Demonstrating commitment.

How can a sea angler **really** demonstrate the level of commitment they have for their sport and for the conservation of fish stocks.?

By turning up in very adverse weather conditions in the middle of November to fish the Argyll Lochs, to catch, tag and release fish in an attempt to help safeguard their future.

### The greatest attendance so far.

Over 100 anglers did so this year, the greatest turnout in the three years it has been running.

### Effort up – Catches down

Unfortunately the quality of the fishing didn't quite match the effort put into it; although numbers are still slowly coming in, around 275 fish were taken, of which only 25 or so were of taggable size.

### In case we forget

A reminder of why the Spurdog tagging events are so important comes from a recent OSPAR report, which concluded that spurdog stocks are seriously depleted by fisheries throughout the OSPAR Maritime Area.

It also highlighted that the scarcity of large mature females - fish that in the past were specifically targeted by commercial long-liners which resulted in continued poor recruitment for many years and consequently, very slow recovery of the stocks.

**Our taggers are key to gathering data to monitor the state of Scottish shark stocks.**

**Please help support them by joining SSACN today - [www.ssacn.org](http://www.ssacn.org)**



### Summary - Key figures

- 102 Anglers
- 25 Boats
- 5 Kayaks
- 15 Shore fishing
- 250 Fish caught
- 20 Tagged



**Ellie with a PB spurdog.**

(The fish, like all the others tagged, was returned to the sea immediately after the photo)

### Comparing Spurdog Tagathon and Sharkatag

SSACN also run Sharkatag - a tagging event held in SW Scotland; in the following we compare the results of an exit survey of this years Spurdog Tagathon (**in black**) to one performed after Sharkatag 2009 (**in blue**).

- 80% of anglers were non-local (**90%**)
- 10% came from outwith Scotland (**36%**)
- Average total local spend for an angler attending Spurdog Tagathon is **£274** (**£195**)
- Average daily local spend in the region outwith Spurdog Tagathon / Sharkatag is **£95** (**£61**)
- Over the weekends, anglers contribute some **£28,000** (**£41,000**) to the local economy.

**Minimal impact – Best Value**

## Why are we tagging these fish ?

The focal species for this Tagathon is spurdog and though these used to be found in huge numbers in Scottish waters, their stocks, as with many other species of Scottish shark, have been depleted by excessive commercial exploitation.

The decline of spurdog has been exacerbated due to their exceptionally slow growth, late maturity and litters of as few as six young.

Females do not start to reproduce until they reach teenage years and gestation lasts nearly 24 months - one of the longest of any animal.

Evidence from anglers suggested some of the west coast sea lochs could be centres for the remaining stocks; SSACN believe this is especially true for the general areas around Lochs Sunart and Etive.

Government marine fisheries research typically does not include many of the species of interest to sea anglers, including spurdog, so little is known of their habits, lifecycle, migration patterns etc.

To try and ensure a future for sea angling, SSACN have begun the long process of gathering that data, Tagathon is an important and part of that work.

Quality data also enables us to raise the public awareness of the very poor state of the inshore marine environment.

### Increased Interest

Following the publicity given to the Tagathon and Sharkatag Events we have received inquiries from several other UK and EU bodies with respect to helping them establish tagging events.

Perhaps at a point in the future we will have viable EU wide data which help all politicians understand the true situation of shark stocks.

### **Dates for your diary:**

**Skate Tagathon** - Crinan : 8-10 April 2011

**Sharkatag** – SW Scotland : 24 -26 June 2011

**Spurdog Tagathon** – Argyll : 11-13 Nov 2011

## And now to say thanks :

**To the anglers** who came from all over the country and covered all their own costs – what incredible commitment guys;

**To the journalists** from the national and angling press who have given great coverage.

**To the staff and management** of the Resipole Holiday Park – [www.resipole.co.uk](http://www.resipole.co.uk), the Salen Hotel [www.salenhotel.co.uk](http://www.salenhotel.co.uk), the Lochnell Arms Hotel [www.lochnellarms.co.uk](http://www.lochnellarms.co.uk) and the Salen Jetty [www.salenjetty.co.uk](http://www.salenjetty.co.uk) all of whom allowed us extensive use of their facilities.

**And finally** to the SSACN Event Team and all the volunteers who make the event possible.

### And now for something completely different



Stuart Cresswell and a wayward 7lb cod

### Some final words from Tagathon participants -

*"Anything that helps you guys in your cause."*

*"I didn't catch anything big enough to tag this year but it's a great cause and a great time with a great bunch of people – I'll be back ! "*

*"This year was our first Tagathon and although we were unlucky with the spurries we did get a couple of good thornies, see you next year."*

*"I'd never fished before at all, thanks to all the guys who took time out to help me."*

### You too can get even further involved

to join SSACN, make donations, offer your services or just to find out more of what we do, please visit us at [www.ssacn.org](http://www.ssacn.org) or [www.tagsharks.com](http://www.tagsharks.com)

## Scottish Sea Angling

Sea angling is a selective, environmentally friendly and low-impact fishing activity; it is the # 1 coastal recreation activity in Scotland and is of great social and economic importance supporting around 4000 jobs and contributing £141 million/yr to the Scottish economy.

**The Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network** - [www.ssacn.org](http://www.ssacn.org) – [contact@ssacn.org](mailto:contact@ssacn.org)  
A registered Scottish charity RegNo. SC039015

