



TAGGED SHARK HEADS WEST

A tagged blue shark, over 2 metres long, was recently recaptured by a Japanese tuna longliner working south of Esperance in Western Australia, outside the Australian Fishing Zone.

The shark was originally tagged off Apollo Bay in January 2000, by recreational fisher Mr. Neil Sturzaker. It had travelled more than 1730km westward and some 420km due south of Esperance before its recapture, after 20 months at liberty. The tagged shark was recaptured by fishers on board the fishing vessel, *FV Wakashio No. 88*. The tag details were forwarded to the National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries, Japan, where they were eventually passed on to the Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute (MAFRI) in Queenscliff.

Lauren Brown, marine scientist with the Southern Shark Program at MAFRI, says that the information provided by the Japanese fishers will help to further our knowledge of the migratory movements of the blue shark. "The westerly movement of this blue shark is consistent with other tag returns that have been recorded by CSIRO Marine Research scientist Dr. John Stevens", reported Lauren.

The blue shark is the most abundant pelagic species of shark, and is found throughout all the world's oceans. It is highly migratory, with tagging studies demonstrating extensive movements including trans-oceanic migrations.

In Victoria, tagging programs on recreationally caught fish are coordinated by VICTAG, part of the Australian National Sportfishing Association. The information collected by VICTAG provides marine scientists with important information on movement patterns as well as growth rates of shark and fish species. Fishers interested in becoming involved with voluntary tagging programs in Victoria should contact VICTAG on 1800 677620, and leave their name and an after hours phone number.

If you recapture a tagged shark or fish, please accurately record all details, including date, location, tag number, species, sex and length. If possible please keep the fish frame or shark backbone frozen for collection by MAFRI scientists.