

Bringing Back Winter Flounder



Hatchery reared winter flounder are tagged with fluorescent red Visible Implant Elastomer to distinguish them from wild fish after release. Dr. Fairchild releases the flounder into shallow coastal waters at a length of about 40 mm.

The winter flounder *Pseudopleuronectes americanus* is an important commercial and recreational fish along much of North America's Atlantic coast. Inshore habitat degradation and overfishing contributed to stock declines throughout their range, leaving catches at a fraction of historical levels. Reducing fishing mortality and protecting essential habitat have helped stocks to begin recovery, but they still have a long way to go.

To accelerate the recovery of winter flounder, researchers in New Hampshire, led by Dr. Elizabeth Fairchild, are developing and evaluating a stock enhancement program. They have established the culture techniques for winter flounder, determined the optimal size for releasing juveniles for predator avoidance¹ and evaluated release sites². They are

now evaluating how well the released fish contribute to the natural populations and developing strategies to maximize post release survival³.

An essential aspect of the investigation is the ability to identify individuals derived from the release program. This is achieved using NMT's Visible Implant Elastomer (VIE). Critical characteristics of VIE include the ability to tag small fish, the capacity to identify different batches of fish, the rapid rate of tagging that can be achieved, and the low cost tag.

Please contact us to discuss our systems for tagging aquatic organisms.

1. Fairchild EA, Howell WH. 2000. J. Sea Research 44(1-2):81-90.
2. Fairchild EA et al. 2005. Aquacul. Res. 36(14):1374-1383.
3. Fairchild EA, Howell WH. 2004. J. Fish Biol. 65:69-87.

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