



Coded Wire Tags - Agency Codes in Europe

Application Note APC04

Since January 2000 all coded wire tags for use in Europe have been supplied as decimal format rather than the earlier binary format. While this gives greater coding capacity it is important to note that:-

- Agency codes remain the same as before
- The concept of two digit Data 1 and Data 2 values remains.
- Decimal tag codes will not duplicate codes already used in binary format.

Very large and some early users were allocated their own agency code; in Europe several countries were allocated such codes:-

<u>Country</u>	<u>Agency Code</u>
Finland	31
England and Wales	42
N. Ireland	43
Ireland	47
Switzerland	55
Norway	59
Faroes	60
Sweden	61
Scotland	62
Iceland	63

As there were only 63 agency codes available in the six-bit binary code, it was not possible to allocate individual agency codes to all countries. NMT now considers allocating a specific agency code only where use of the order of a million or more tags a year is foreseen. Thus all European countries not already allocated an agency code are supplied with tags with Agency code 23, "Europe miscellaneous". So far, Agency 23 tags have been supplied to 13 European counties (see table below) for use on a wide range of fish and shellfish species.

To expedite allocation of mixed-stock fishery returns, in 1995 NMT decided to allocate the Data 1 line under Agency 23 as a "sub-agency" code. With Binary CWT each Data 1 allocation had the capacity for 63 batches of tags identified by the Data 2 line; with decimal wire there is the capacity for 99 Data 2 codes. When a country or organization has used all Data 2 batches, a new Data 1 is allocated.

Up to 1995, most tags supplied under Agency 23 had a Data 1 value of 16 or 17. Unless specifically requested, no more batches will be supplied with these Data 1 values. Batches of tags already held with Data 1 codes of 16 and 17 can still be used.

The following Data 1 allocations have been made:-

Country	Agency Code	Data 1 Code
Austria	23	2
Belgium	23	3
Denmark	23	4
France	23	5
Portugal	23	6
Greece	23	7
Wales (University of)	23	8
Italy	23	9
Czech Republic	23	10
Germany (other)	23	11
Germany (Nordrhein Westfalen)	23	12
Luxembourg	23	15
Netherlands	23	18
Spain (Asturias)	23	20
Spain (Cantabria)	23	30 + 31
Spain (Galicia)	23	40
Spain (Navarra)	23	50

The four Spanish provinces have been allocated specific Data 1 codes as Spain is currently the largest user under Agency 23. We will consider requests for other intra-national splits. Any new European country commencing use of CWT will also be allocated a specific Data 1 code within Agency 23.

We have provided the above information to the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) who operate a "clearing house" of tags returned from Atlantic salmon caught in international fisheries. All CWT users who are marking Atlantic salmon are urged to make yearly declarations of tags and codes used to the ICES North Atlantic Salmon Working Group, who prepare an annual directory (the 1998 issue is entitled "ICES compilation of microtag, finclip and external tag releases in 1998", ICES C.M. 1999/ACFM:14 Supplement, 33pp.). The chairman of the working group is Dr Neil O'Maoileidigh of the Fisheries Research Institute, Dublin, Ireland.

For those dealing with returns from fisheries exploiting stocks of salmon from more than one country, please ask NMT about the origin of any Agency 23 tags with a Data 1 code of 16 or 17. For any other Data 1 code in the above table please contact the appropriate national tag clearing house according to the ICES compilation report.

We will be pleased to answer any questions on this and any other of our products and services.