



Status and Extent of External Tagging in NASCO Parties¹

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide information about the status and extent of external tagging by the NASCO Parties.

Decisions

- the FAC may wish to consider recommending to Council whether NASCO's Tag Return Incentive Scheme should be brought to an end.

Background

In the 2023 Annual Meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee (FAC), [CNL\(23\)05](#), Norway questioned whether NASCO's Tag Return Incentive Scheme should be brought to an end. The FAC was informed that, in Norway, external tags were (generally) no longer allowed to be used. The FAC agreed that Parties / jurisdictions would be asked to provide information about the status and extent of external tagging in their countries. This would be included in a paper for the 2024 FAC Annual Meeting, when the FAC would consider whether the scheme should continue.

The NASCO Tag Return Incentive Scheme was established on a trial basis for four years: 1989; 1990; 1991 and 1992 to encourage and improve tag returns. At its Sixth Annual Meeting the Council agreed the Rules of the Scheme, CNL(89)17.

During the discussion of FAC business in the Council meeting, the United States noted that Parties / jurisdictions provide information on all kinds of tagging annually, to ICES, as part of the recurring NASCO request to ICES for scientific advice and that these data are published annually in the ICES advice to NASCO.

Given this, the tables in the ICES advice have been interrogated for information on external tagging. Table 1 provides the total number of external tags reported to be used by each Party / jurisdiction from 2003, from 2008 and from 2013 to 2023 – for comparison. Figure 1 provides an illustration.

In 2023, there were 32; 98; 4 tags returned to NASCO for inclusion in the draw for the scheme from the North American, North-East Atlantic and West Greenland Commissions respectively.

¹ Revised on 24 May 2025 to note that data from Russia are unavailable from ICES for 2022-2023

Table 1. External Tags, by Party, for 2003, 2008 and 2013 to 2023.

	Canada	DFG	EU ¹	Iceland	Norway	Russian Federation ²	United Kingdom	United States	Total External Tags
2003	66,603		28,585	898	51,501	2,218	-	360,504	510,309
2008	35,008		10,468	4,694	62,208	2,602	-	2,372	117,352
2013	14,885		70,663	255	11,714	1,406	-	2,668	101,591
2014	13,776		8,412	106	7,181	1,751	-	92,970	124,196
2015	25,566		176,526	194	12,784	1,751	-	118,116	334,937
2016	26,152		116,908	88	7,961	1,524	-	102,247	254,880
2017	12,384		116,903	272	6,747	1,253	-	69	137,628
2018	7,827		175,411	98	4,432	1,254	-	0	189,022
2019	7,828	20	1,769	142	8,169	1,424	-	19	19,371
2020	14,978	0	1,549	165	4,546	238	-	88	21,564
2021	17,822	70	0	415	3,401	784	937	4	23,433
2022	16,097	100	0	355	376	-	853	13	17,794
2023	13,448	0	64,129	218	234	-	1,318	0	79,347

¹UK tag returns included in the EU numbers up to and including 2020

²Data for Russia unavailable from ICES for 2022 — 2023

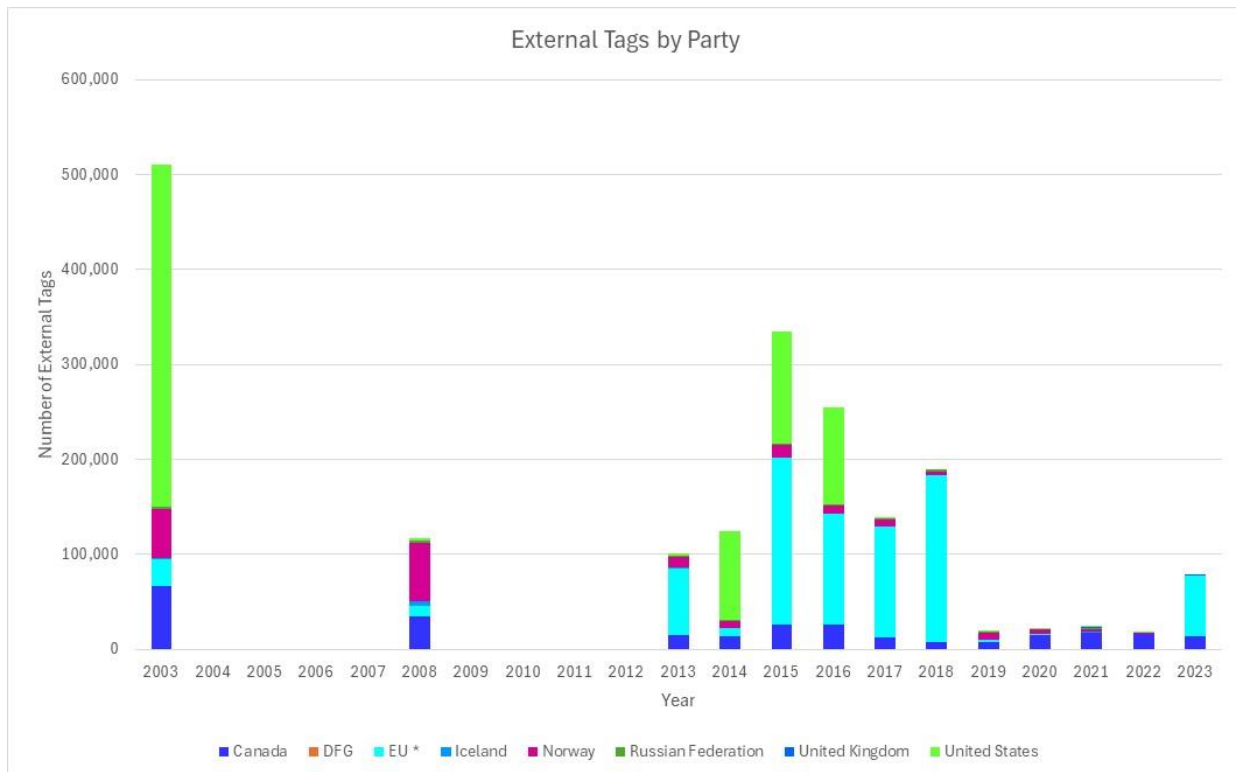


Figure 1. Bar chart to show the number of external tags, by Party, for 2003, 2008 and 2013 to 2023

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