**Proposal to RCMT for Conducting a Workshop on CWT Laboratory Standards**

**An agenda item for the 2023 RCMT Mark Meeting**

**Issues:**

The number of CWT recovery labs are increasing. These are primarily tribal operations, but also include private entities. This is primarily a result of the following factors:

1. An increase in the number of CWT user groups
2. The need for real time data (i.e. broodstock selection), or in-season data (for fisheries management)
3. The ease with which alpha-numeric tags can be read.

Many of these new tag labs are only reading the tags, and then sending the tags and the sampling data to a state agency for validation and reporting to RMIS. However, the number of CWT reporting agencies are also increasing.

There have also been cases of CWT users recovering tags without considering the need to report the data. In looking at the RCMT document on *Regional Coordination and Agreements on Marking and Tagging,* there is no mention of a requirement that recovery of tags entails a reporting responsibility.

There is extensive documentation on the format for reporting recoveries, but we are not aware of any RCMT documentation on standard protocols that these new tag labs could use as a reference for recovery procedures. This also raises the question if all of our current CWT labs are using standardized procedures in producing their reported data.

**Proposed Solutions:**

1. Add a section in our *Regional Coordination and Agreements on Marking and Tagging* that states a requirement for reporting the data from tag recovery operations.

2. Develop a RMIS document on standard protocols/best practices for CWT recovery lab operations. This could be done by forming a subcommittee of the Mark Committee who could compile the information through a workshop format. This could be a workshop sponsored by RMIS with presentations sought from the major recovery labs. Each of the labs/agencies could describe their procedures. The results of the workshop should be summarized into a document on lab procedures and data standardization. This workshop should be very useful for the new and smaller labs to design and review their operations, as well as for the established labs to compare their methodologies. Over the years, other workshops have been held on different aspects of CWT operations and have been well attended. There are also existing agency manuals that include aspects of recovery protocols which could be used in compiling this document.

When discussing CWT labs and their capabilities of accurately reporting data, it is important to understand each component that creates quality recovery and C/S data. Below are four areas and potential questions which should be of interest for a workshop and/or developing a document.

1. **Sampling**. Does the sampling scheme accurately produce data that enables a reasonable expansion of each CWT and the creation of an accurate catch/sample file? Do the current forms collect all the data needed? What are the upper limits of expansions that should be placed on a tag? What type of sampling (visual or EDT) is being used at the sample site? How accurate are the various counts?
2. **Reading**. What equipment is used in the lab to find and read the CWT? Is there double reading to validate the CWT? Is subsampling used to determine reader error rates and re-reads? What criteria are used for listing tag type 2,3,7 and 8? What techniques save time/errors such as scan bar readers?
3. **Verification of Tagcode**. Is the release file checked for the tagcode? Does release BY correspond to recovery year? Does the release location make sense for recovery location? Does species match? Is tag type checked from release file? What triggers verification re-reads?
4. **Reporting**. Who will report the data in the proper/current RMIS format? What is the required reporting schedule for validated data to the database, and can this be met? Are CWTs being returned to original agencies in a timely manner, and what data is included?