

Pseudo-Tag Identification in Database, problems & questions

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We would like to address the issue of identifying pseudo-tag release groups. These release groups have been very difficult to identify and manage in the database. For example, we have had agencies recover a pseudo-tag in the fishery and are seeking some information as to its origin. It is suspected that, among all ~146,000 release groups in the database, there could be about 500 rows which are pseudo-tag releases.

- **Problem #1:** Given the current field values and validation requirements, it appears there is **no way** to be sure if a particular group of fish went out with blank or agency-only wire.
- **Problem #2:** Efforts to identify pseudo-tag releases (to the extent possible) are exacerbated by the fact that the data entity known as Tag Coordinator which is represented in the database by field #6, (Coordinator) is often confused with the entity known as agency wire prefix which – esp. in the case of agency-only wire – has no representation whatsoever in the database. **Note that these two entities are different, but they appear identical, and are used interchangeably in the same field in different circumstances(!)** (See: RL, field #7, Tag Code or Release Id).

These problems could possibly be addressed by making changes to one or more of the following Release fields:

- field #1, Record Code p. 8
- field #6, Coordinator p. 8
- field #7, Tag Code or Release Id..... p. 9
- field #8, Tag Type p. 10

Consider the following (hypothetical) case:

1. Assume that a group was released in Oregon by ODFW with Agency-only wire '090000' some years ago (ex: Brood Year = 2006). Assume also for relative simplicity that it was unassociated with any other release group (tagged or otherwise);
2. As currently specified, the record of this group should be assigned: Record Code = 'N', Coordinator = '05', Tag Code or Release Id = '!05ssssssss' where 's' is agency determined string value, Tag Type = '16';
3. However, if Record Code = 'N', then Tag Type is not a required field (because, in the case of general unassociated groups, Tag Type is not applicable and therefore cannot be assigned a value);
4. **Problem #1:** For this group in question, if Tag Type was not assigned the value '16' then there is no way of knowing it was a pseudo-tag release. We have found several rows of data where Tag Type is NULL, and informal comments indicated it was probably a pseudo-tag release (see: RL: field# 41, Comments); There was no other way to find this. See list of data rows [JRL]..

5. **Problem #2:** Given this hypothetical case, consider now the user's attempt to select this agency-only wire release from the database (i.e. to link to '09BLANK' recovery records or for whatever reason). To do this one must resort to either Tag Type (field #8), or Tag Code or Release Id (field #7). As seen above, Tag Type cannot be relied upon to locate these release groups. Furthermore; using Tag Code or Release Id, one cannot simply enter the wire code (as applies to all Tagged groups) to select the data - nor can one enter any readily-identifiable string value in the case of general unassociated groups. I.e. the actual wire code '090000' cannot be located using either the string '090000' or any pattern matching prefix of it. Again, with the hypothetical case above, a '!09%..' value will select all BCFW releases if any exist; whereas '!05%..' must be used to select any ODFW releases – even though the wire had the code '090000' on it. Note that **the above release group might be found with the '!05%..' selection, or might not** – since there's no enforceable requirement that it be identified as a blank wire release(!) Even if found however, we have had many instances in which users are not aware of Coordinator or do not understand the use of Coordinator in this context. All they know is that their selections return no data when entering a plausible agency-only wire prefix into their selection queries. Given the many agencies involved (involving numerous Coordinator codes, and numerous agency-wire prefixes) we have experienced some difficulty explaining to the user how one might attempt to locate these data records.

Proposed /possible solutions:

- **Solution #1:** As currently defined, Tag Type cannot be relied on to have a value present to indicate the pseudo-tag since in general, records with Record Code 'N' are unassociated releases where Tag Type is not applicable. Therefore, we would recommend identifying all known pseudo-tag records with a different Record Code: e.g. the value 'P'. In this way, we could render Tag Type a required field for all 'P' coded release records (along with existing 'T' coded records), and allow all 'N' records to continue to have Tag Type as NULL.
- **Solution #2:** In addition to Solution #1 (above), there are a number of potential database changes that could allow greatly improved access to pseudo-tag records. One rather simple such change is as follows: in field #7, Tag Code or Release Id, change the format requirement as follows:
 - **from the current format:** '!ccssssssss' where cc= coordinator and ssssssss= <agency assigned string value>
 - **to this format:** '!pp0000sssss' where pp=<actual wire code prefix>, with blank digits indicated by '0', and sssss=<agency assigned string value>.

This would render data identification of pseudo-tags consistent with identification of other data records.

We welcome any alternative ideas that might address the issue of identifying and/or accessing pseudo-tag records in the database.