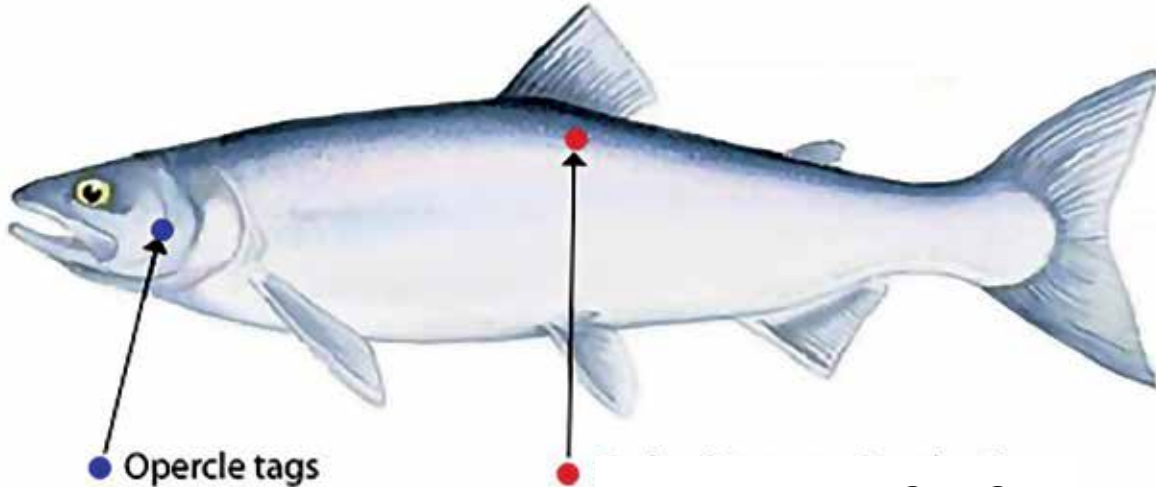


FISH TAGGING 101



January Speaker **DOUG ZEMECKIS**

by **Carl Bruge**



The usual mid-winter gathering of HRFA members and friends were well enlightened by a local Jersey man who has truly done well in education, first with a marine science degree at Rutgers and then with a Doctorate at U. Mass. The incredibly informative and relevant material shared by our guest speaker generated plenty of specific questions and concerns about the fish species covered in the professional power point presentation and additional impromptu personal asides that showed what a true angler and outdoorsman Zemeckis is to go along with his awesome credentials as a gifted marine scientist.

This scribe was surprised to record the myriad methods available to marine scientists to chart fish and their movements in the sea around us. Types such as the bar anchor, Peterson disc, dorsal loop tag, dart tag and internal anchor are some of the inexpensive choices available to even anglers like us to help in surveys for groups like The American Littoral Society. Many dollars can be invested for very detailed and complex units like the lipstick sized electric acoustic transmitter, an archival data storage tag (DST), a PSAT or Pop-up Satellite archival tag, or an Argos tag with a special antennae to pick up specific signals.

Dr. Zemeckis applied these tagging studies to fish we were very interested in like striped bass, bluefish, fluke, cod etc. and shared how they could be used to track migration, catch rates, mortality, concentration, spawning areas, and a myriad of other useful applications. This could end up benefitting sport anglers, commercial fishermen, and marine biologists who are trying to maximize all the biomasses to man's greatest advantage.

One of the offshoot problems that came up in discussion was the presence and proliferation of seals in the Hudson River, and now along the Jersey coastline. These pinipeds are huge mammals that can weigh several hundred pounds. They will ingest vast amounts of fish, shellfish and crustaceans in their daily diet. US laws protect all marine mammals so all we're left with is a major question mark and a fear that without enough sharks or killer whales at the tip-top of the food chain to take out the hungry seals, will the latter deplete fish?