

This paper is not to be cited without prior reference to the author.

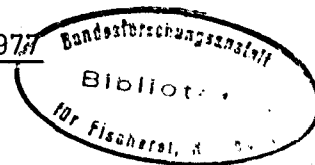
International Council for the  
Exploration of the Sea

C.M. 1977/N:22  
Marine Mammals Committee

TAGGING OF ICELANDIC SEAL PUPS 1976-1977

by

Sólmundur T. Einarsson  
Marine Research Institute  
Reykjavik, Iceland



In 1976 pups of the common seal (Phoca vitulina) were tagged twice in Icelandic waters. Tagging took place on the southwest coast, near the river Markarfljót, on the 9th, and 15th-16th of June. The pups were weighed, length was measured and their sex determined. The tags used are made in England (Dalton Henley Pat. No. 894143), so called lamb tags, and the colour is yellow. The word HAFRÓ (for Mar. Res. Inst. in Icelandic) is written on one side, a number on the other. The tags were fastened to the right hind limb of the pup. The seal pups were caught on the sand banks by net or simply by hand. In all, 10 common seals were tagged and 5 tags have already been returned (see table 1).

On the 19th of January 1977, 5 grey seal pups (Halichoerus grypus) were tagged on the west coast, on islands called Hvalseyjar. For that purpose we used a helicopter that the Icelandic Coastguard kindly placed at our disposal. Very few pups were seen so late in the breeding season and we only managed to tag 5. They were not measured in any way, only their sex was determined. One tag has already been returned a month after tagging. Table 2 shows where and when the tagging took place.

This is the first time seal tagging has been carried out in Icelandic waters, so results are limited as yet. The returns of tags are based on pups and youngsters killed, since very few adults are killed. But we hope to obtain information on juvenile mortality rates, migration routes, and other information in future. Looking at the map one can see that one common seal pup tagged in June on the south coast has travelled over 300 nautical miles in 9 months. This is rather surprising since the common seal in Iceland is considered non-migratory. These tagging experiments will be continued.

Table 1.

Tagging of common seal pups (*Phoca vitulina*) in Icelandic waters in the year 1976.

Tags No	Locality where tagged	Date	Weight kg	Length cm	Sex	Locality where caught	Date
1.	Bakki (A-Landeyjar)	9/6 '76	8.5	85	♂	Same	16/6 '76
2.	-	-	9.0	85	♂		
3.	-	-	10.5	86	♂	30 km east for the tagging place	10/6 '76
4.	-	-	13.0	92	♂	Ísafjarðardjúpi.	3/3 '77
5.	-	-	11.5	85	♀		
6.	Markarfljót	14/6 '76	11.0	86	♂	Þjórsá	29/6 '76
7.	-	-	14.0	87	♂		
8.	-	-	11.0	86	♀		
9.	Krossasandur	15/6 '76	22.0	95	♀		
10.	-	-	23.0	98	♂	Sólheimasandur (found dead)	8/8 '77

Table 2

Tagging of grey seal pups (*H. grypus*) in Icelandic waters 1977.

Tags No	Locality where tagged	Date	Sex	Locality where caught	Date
101	Hvalseyjar	19/1 '77	♂		
102	-	-	♂		
103	-	-	♂		
104	-	-	♀	Akurey	15/2 '77
111	-	-	♂		

