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## Project News

### First Western Pacific Cruise Complete.



Figure 1 Vessel cruise track.

The main tagging platform, Soltai 105, entered into the waters of Indonesia on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2008 extending the second phase of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme (PTTP) into Indonesia.

A total of 25, 197 tunas were tagged and released in Indonesian waters. Tagging was conducted around the Islands of Sulawesi and Maluku and off Irian Jaya.

The tagging vessel entered the waters of Papua New Guinea on 31 October 2008. A total of 10,533 tag were released in PNG waters during cruise 6. Fishing was spent to the north of the Admiralty Islands and New Ireland to the east to explore and tag tunas in the high seas pocket to its north.

The tagging vessel returned to its home port in Noro, Solomon Islands on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2008. This marked the completion of the fieldwork for 2008, and a return home for the hard working and professional crew of the Soltai 105, after nearly 5 months at sea.

A second leg of tagging in the wider western and central Pacific is scheduled for early next year.

## Tag Releases

Total tag releases at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009, stands at **56,680** for Phase 2. This brings the total number of tag releases for the project to **161,695**. Figure 1 shows the route taken by the tagging vessel during the five month tagging cruise in the western Pacific. Figure 2 shows the proportion of tuna tagged in an area by species. The size of the pie chart is indicative of the number of tunas tagged in a particular area.

## Tag Recoveries

Recaptures from the recent releases are starting to be reported. Total tag recoveries as at 31<sup>st</sup> January, stands at 497 for Phase 2. This brings the total number of tag recoveries for the whole project (PTTP) to 17,427 with a 10.77% recovery rate. Figure 4 shows the displacement of tagged tunas from the area which they were tagged.

The number of tag recoveries by month shows large fluctuations in the rate of recovery with the larger amounts of tags being returned a month or so after the commencement of tagging operations. Figure 5 shows the number of tag releases against the number of tag recaptures since the start of the tagging programme. Table 1 shows the number of tags released, tags recaptured and the recapture rate as at 31 January 2009. Table 2 shows the number of recaptures by vessel flag.

Table 1. Tag releases – recaptures and recovery rate.

	Releases	Recoveries	%
Skipjack	100,894	10,813	10.71%
Yellowfin	56,355	6,055	10.74%
Bigeye	4,446	559	12.57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>161,695</b>	<b>17,427</b>	<b>10.77%</b>

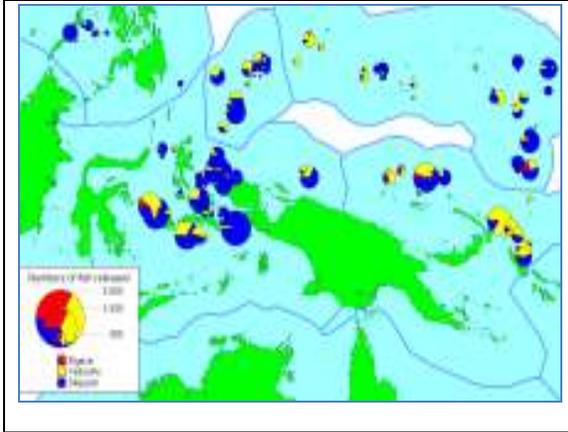


Figure 2 Tag release pie charts by species.

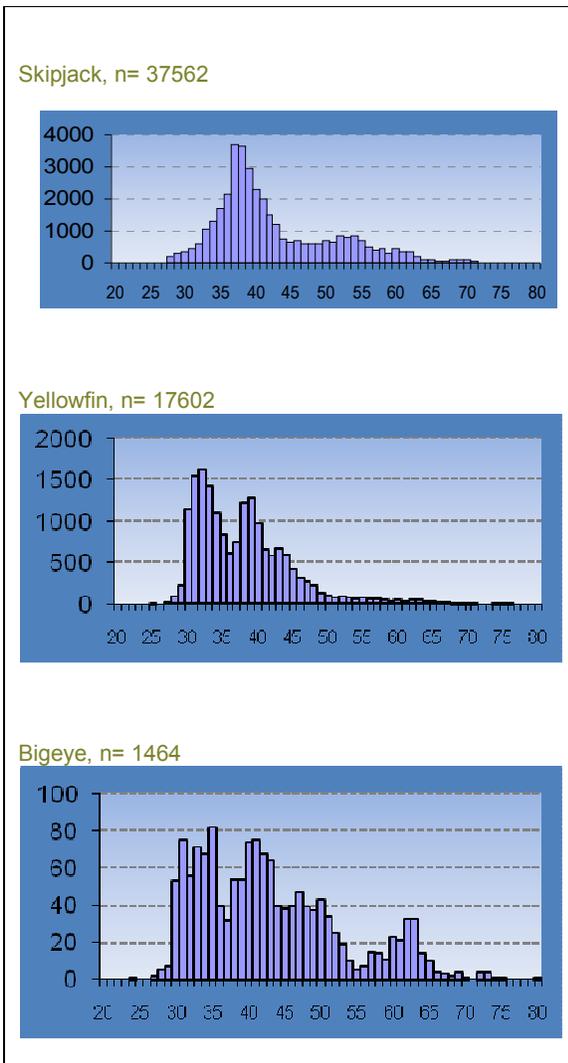
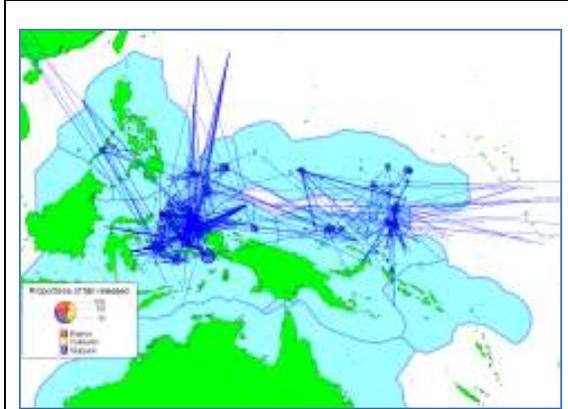
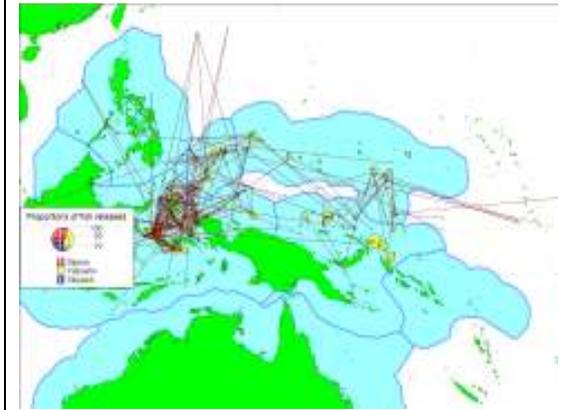


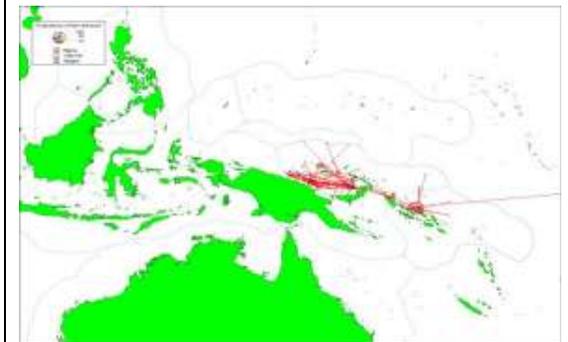
Figure 3 Length frequency distribution of tag releases



a. Skipjack recaptures greater than 200nm.

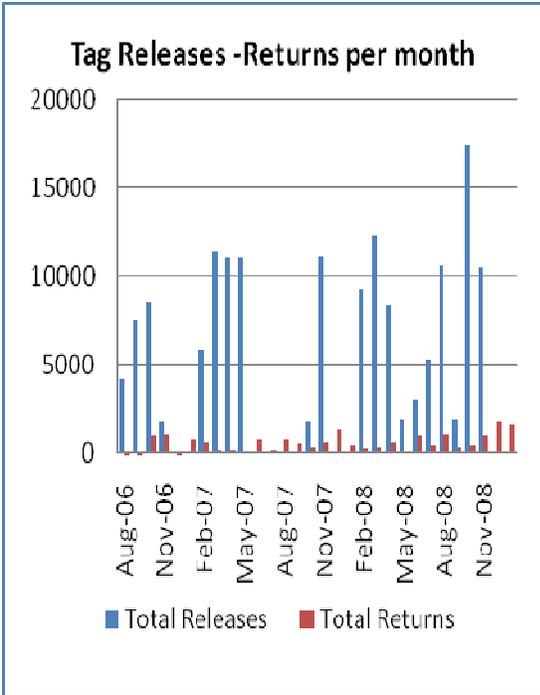


b. Yellowfin recaptures greater than 200nm



c. Bigeye recaptures greater than 200nm

Figure 4 Tag release – recapture arrow map for recaptures greater than 200nm.



**TAG RETURN LOTTERIES**

Tag return lotteries were conducted in Busan, Republic of Korea and in Lae, Papua New Guinea during the month of December 2008. Special thanks goes to our tag recovery contacts in Lae, Rosalina Lagada and in Busan, Seon Jae Hwang for their assistance in carrying out the lotteries in the two countries. Figure 6 shows the tag return lottery draw being conducted at Frabelle (PNG) Ltd in Lae, Papua New Guinea.

The winners of the Korean lottery were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize – H. Jang – Sony Cybershot Digital Camera.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – M. W. Lee – iPod Nano
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - S. W Moon – iPod Nano

The winners of the Lae lottery were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize – K750.00 – Carlito Miparanum
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – K500.00 – Headley Sakoa
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – Otto Momo – Motorola Cellphone

**TAG RETURNS BY VESSEL FLAG**

Table 2 Tag recaptures by vessel flag

Vessel Flag	Nov 08 - Jan 09	Total
Australia	0	4
China	33	179
Ecuador	30	36
Fiji	0	0
FSM	5	29
Indonesia	2865	3037
Japan	402	2012
Kiribati	0	30
Korea	29	809
Marshall Islands	20	46
New Zealand	1	9
Panama	2	22
Papua New Guinea	138	9618
Philippines	877	3093
Seychelles	0	2
Solomon Islands	222	6772
Spain	51	167
Taiwan	185	1149
Tonga	0	6
United States	99	291
Vanuatu	12	2062
<b>Total</b>	<b>5335</b>	<b>17427</b>



a. Drawing the winners of the lottery.



b. Brian Kumasi, Sir Nestor Defensor, Rosalina Lagada and a Frabelle staff member after the lottery.

## PROFILES

### PROFILES

In this section we would like to acknowledge the persons who have contributed to the success of the project. We will endeavor to profile an SPC staff member involved in the project as well as one of our tag recovery contacts.

#### SPC PERSONNEL



After a BSc in 1986 at the University of Rennes (France), Bruno has been successively a biologist in a sub-antarctic island and a lobster fisherman in the North coast of Brittany, France.

From 1992 to mid 1996 he worked for IFREMER (French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea) in many roles, these experiences included at sea-observing, catch sampling, fishery activities surveys, cetacean sighting surveys and fish growth studies.

Bruno joined the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of SPC in June 1996 with the SPRTRAMP EU project. During this project and its successor, the PROCFISH EU, Bruno established a research laboratory devoted to fish ageing studies and completed tuna and by-catch growth studies by reading otoliths. He trained students to lab techniques and observers at sea. He also started to tag tunas and this last role has expanded with the development of the tagging with electronic devices.

With the GEF/OFM project that started in Oct 2005, Bruno has been more involved in coordinating field and laboratory research to provide the data needed to enhance our knowledge of the pelagic ecosystem. From mid-2006 Bruno started to be in charge of organising a large scale tuna tagging project in the WCPO.

### TAG RECOVERY CONTACTS

Thomas Usu Jnr.  
Scientific Officer (Tuna Fishery)  
Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority.



Thomas is the Scientific Officer – Tuna Fishery with the Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority (NFA). Thomas graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Papua New Guinea in 2006. In the same year he joined NFA as a project assistant as part of the Papua New Guinea Tuna Tagging Project, the first phase of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme. His role then was to conduct tuna tagging in conjunction with SPC scientists in the waters of Papua New Guinea, implement tag recovery measures and provide project publicity.

Thomas now is a regular member of the personnel aboard the tagging vessel during the fieldwork operations and liaises regularly with the SPC Oceanic Fisheries Programme as part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme.

Regards,

The Tagging Team

