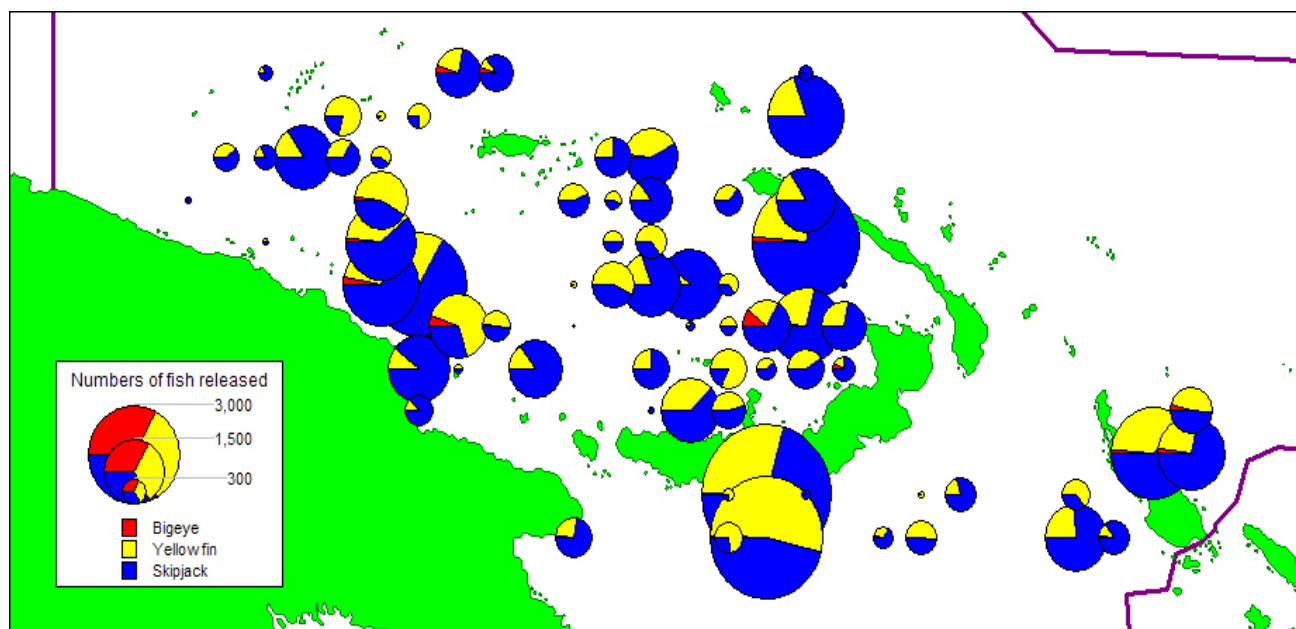


PACIFIC TUNA TAGGING PROGRAMME
MONTHLY TAGGING SUMMARY – DECEMBER 2007



PROGRAMME UPDATE

The PNG Tagging Project, the fieldwork for which was completed in May 2007, was intended to represent Phase 1 of a new Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme (PTTP). A proposal for the PTTP was presented at the August meeting of the Scientific Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, and was enthusiastically supported by the scientific representatives of Commission members and cooperating non-members. Since then, a major funding commitment (NZD 5 million) to the PTTP was announced by the Hon. Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand at the recent Forum Leaders Meeting in Tonga. This commitment, along with other funding committed by the European Commission and Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority, means that approximately USD6.4 million of the USD10 million project budget has now been pledged.

With these developments, we will continue to provide monthly summaries of tagging activity under the banner of the PTTP.

TAG RELEASES

Phase 1 (PNG) comprised two three month periods of field work (Aug-Nov 2006, Feb-May 2007). Tagging recently recommenced in the Solomon Islands in late October, and the results of this one-month cruise are reported below in Table 1.

Table 1. Tag releases, August 2006 -November 2007.

A. PNG August 2006 – May 2007

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
Conventional tag only	40338	20300	633	61271
Archival + conventional tag	2	214	40	256
Sonic + conventional tag	69	116	10	195
Archival + sonic + conventional tag	0	19	8	27
Total	40409	20649	691	61749

B. Solomon Islands October – November 2007

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
Conventional tag only	7476	3560	132	11168
Archival + conventional tag	0	5	7	12
Sonic + conventional tag	0	0	0	0
Archival + sonic + conventional tag	0	0	0	0
Total	7476	3565	139	11180

C. Total PTPP

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
Conventional tag only	47814	23860	765	72439
Archival + conventional tag	2	219	47	268
Sonic + conventional tag	69	116	10	195
Archival + sonic + conventional tag	0	19	8	27
Total	47885	24214	830	72929

TAG RECOVERIES

December was another busy month for tag returns (Figure 1), with 1,448 conventional and 1 archival tag returns, most of which were short-term recaptures of the recent releases in Solomon Islands. This brings the total number of tag returns to 8,692, with an overall recovery rate of 11.9% (Table 2) for conventional tags, 12.5% for archival tags (Table 3) and 9% for sonic tags (Table 4).

Table 2. Conventional tag recoveries, as at 31 December 2007.

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
December 2007 recoveries	1114	332	2	1448
Total to 31 December 2007	5367 (11.2%)	3097 (12.8%)	228 (27.6%)	8692 (11.9%)

Note : numbers include returns that were double tagged with conventional and electronic tags.

Table 3. Archival tag recoveries, as at 31 December 2007.

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
December 2007 recoveries	-	1	-	1
Total to 31 December 2007	1 (50%)	25 (10.5%)	11 (20%)	37 (12.5%)

Table 4. Sonic tag recoveries, as at 31 December 2007.

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
December 2007 recoveries	-	-	-	-
Total to 31 December 2007	2 (2.9%)	11 (8.1%)	7 (38.9%)	20 (9%)

The December recoveries were dominated by a large delivery of tags from Solomon Islands (NFD and Global Investment) and from our recovery contact in Thailand (Table 5).

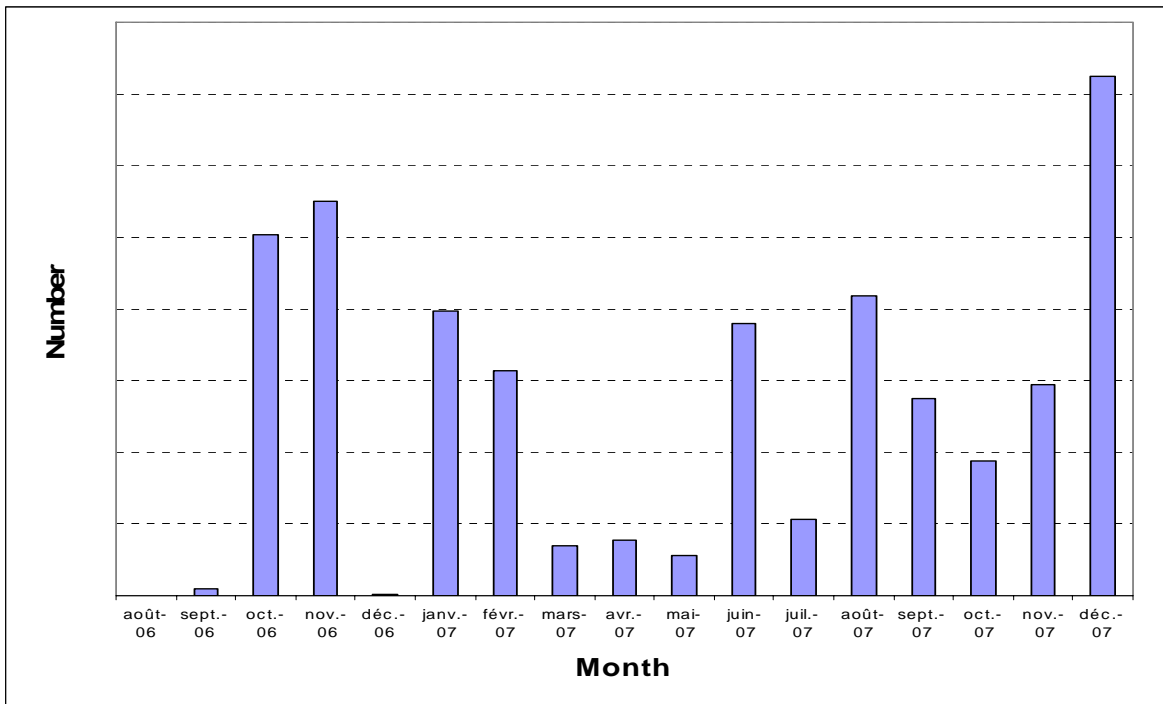


Figure 1. Number of tag returns by month.

TAGGED FISH MOVEMENTS

Updated graphics showing the movements of tagged tuna are shown below in Figures 2-4. Skipjack continue to show the greatest mobility, followed by yellowfin and bigeye tuna.

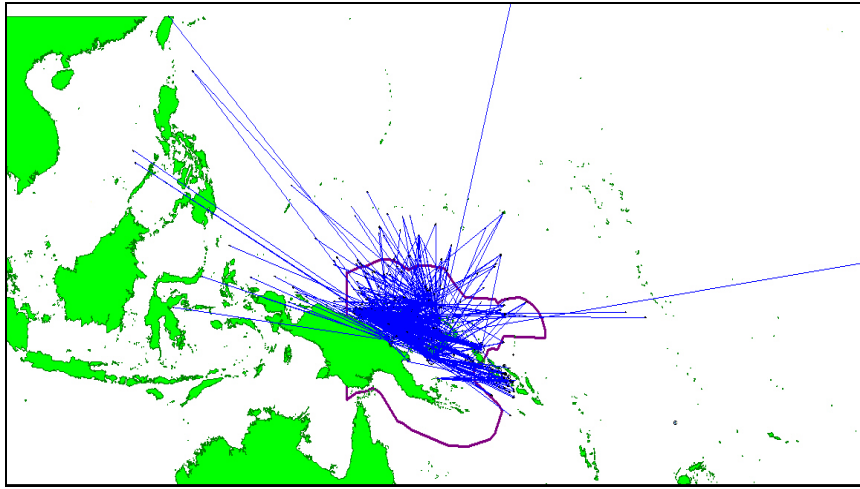


Figure 2. Displacements of tagged SKIPJACK > 300 nmi.

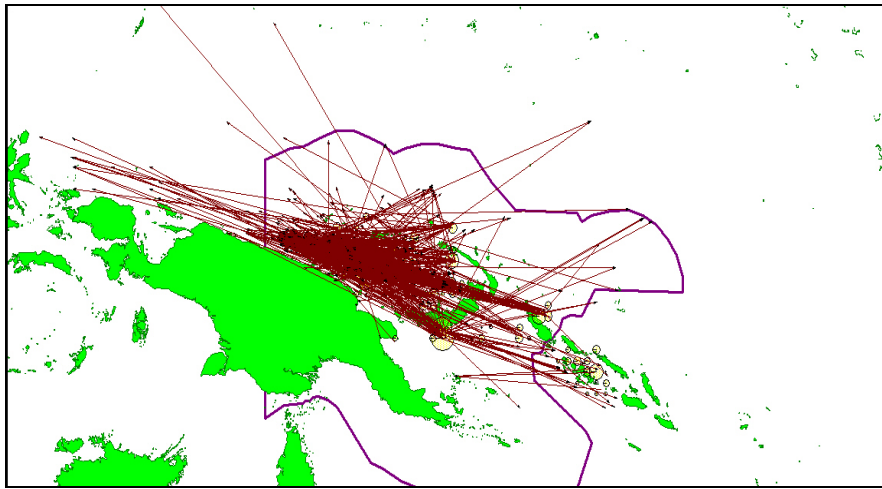


Figure 3. Displacements of tagged YELLOWFIN > 200 nmi.

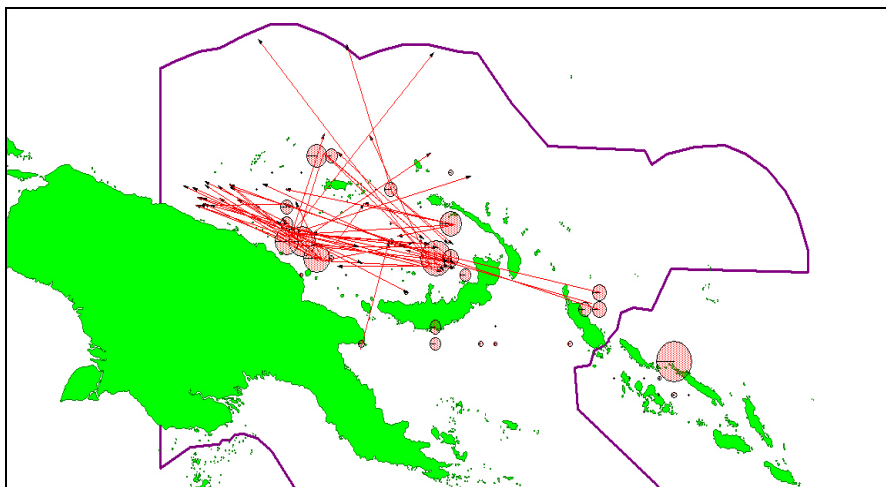


Figure 4. Displacements of tagged BIGEYE > 100 nmi.

Table 5. Number of tag recoveries by source (location found).

Tag return source	December returns	Total returns
American Samoa	0	13
China	0	1
FSM	0	1
IATTC	21	103
Indonesia	0	69
IOTC	0	2
Japan	0	226
Korea	34	115
Other	1	6
Philippines (direct)	25	265
Philippines (Frabelle)	0	162
PNG (Frabelle)	0	463
PNG (NFA)	0	87
PNG (other)	1	30
PNG (RD)	0	5022
PNG (SSTC)	0	145
Solomon (NFD)	844	844
Solomon (Global Investment)	405	405
Solomon Islands (Soltai)	22	128
Solomon (other)	6	20
Tagging vessel	0	23
Thailand	89	562
TOTAL	1448	8692

Overall, tag recoveries continue to be dominated by PNG flagged or affiliated vessels fishing primarily in the Bismarck Sea, where most of the tagged tuna were released (Table 6). However, significant recaptures of tagged tuna continue to be made by all of the major purse seine fleets (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Vanuatu).

Table 6. Number of tag recoveries by vessel flag.

Flag	December 2007 returns	Total returns
Non identified	143	407
China	5	26
FSM	1	5
Indonesia	0	71
Japan	3	240
Kiribati	2	10
Korea	12	140
Marshall Islands	6	10
New Zealand	0	2
Panama	8	8
PNG	13	5424
Philippines	25	766
Solomon Islands	874	992
Seychelles	0	1
Taiwan	31	223
United States	0	5
Vanuatu	325	362
TOTAL	1448	8692

