



# PTTP Bi-Monthly Summary

June - July 2009

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## Project News

### Time out for the crew



Figure 1. Tagging action.

June saw the end of the second five months of tuna tagging in the wider western Pacific. After a grueling five months at sea the crew of the tagging vessel, Soltai 105, headed home in June for a well earned break. Tagging operations recommenced after a few weeks of rest for a final three month phase in beginning in mid-July.

In mid-July the tagging vessel headed for Papua New Guinea before turning for Federated States of Micronesia. Tagging was conducted around the TAO equatorial buoys before conducting a brief stint in the Bismarck Sea of Papua New Guinea and heading west into the waters of Indonesia.

## Tag Releases

Total tag releases for the second western Pacific tagging cruise as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009, stands at 51, 270. This brings the total number of tag releases for the project to 218,628. The second figure includes tag releases for the third western Pacific tagging cruise that commenced in mid-July.

## Tag Recoveries

Recaptures from the recent releases are starting to be reported. Total tag recoveries for June and July 2009 as at 31<sup>st</sup> July, stands at 2,058. This brings the total number of tag recoveries for the whole project (PTTP) to 26,307 with an 12.03% recovery rate (Table 1). Figure 2 shows tag releases for the entire PTTP, including the releases in the central Pacific. Figure 3 illustrates the size classes tagged over the PTTP for each of the three target species. Figure 4 shows the displacement of tagged tunas from the area which they were tagged.

The number of tag recoveries by month (Figure 5) 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.

Table 1. Total tag releases, recoveries and recovery rate as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

	Releases	Recoveries	%
Skipjack	137,552	16,516	12.01%
Yellowfin	71,150	8,578	12.06%
Bigeye	9,926	1,201	12.10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>218,628</b>	<b>26,307</b>	<b>12.03%</b>

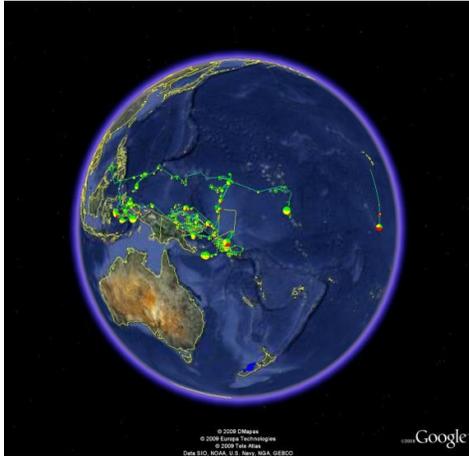
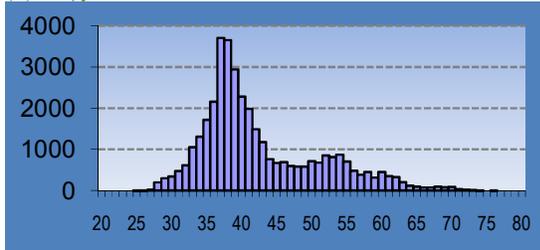
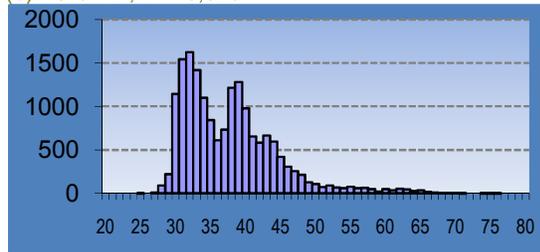


Figure 2. Tag release pie charts for the project including the central Pacific.

(a) Skipjack, n= 150,579



(b) Yellowfin, n= 73,323



(c) Bigeye, n= 9,939

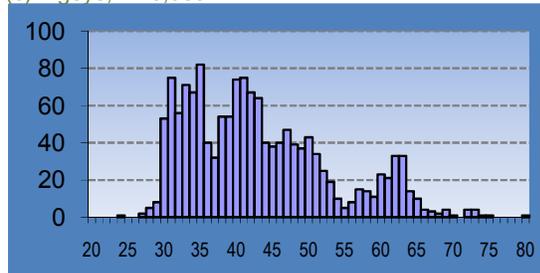
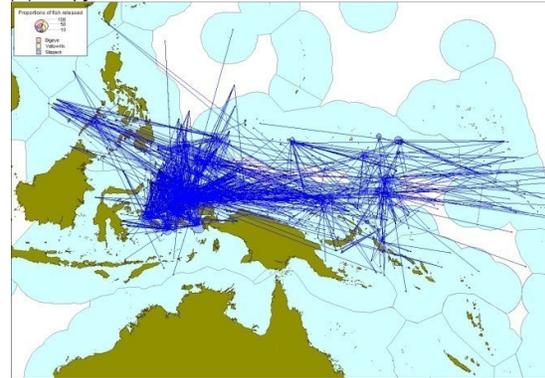
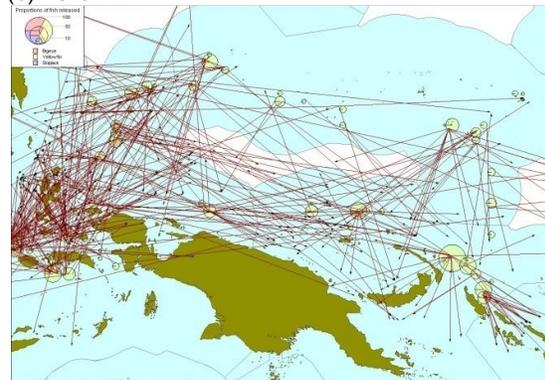


Figure 3. Length frequency distribution of tagged tuna population.

(a) Skipjack



(b) Yellowfin



(c) Bigeye

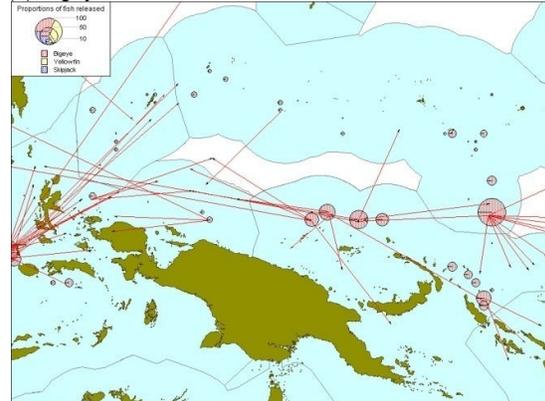


Figure 4 Tag release-recapture arrow map for skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye; >200nm during the first five month cruise into the wider western Pacific.

**TAG RETURNS BY VESSEL FLAG**

Table 2. Tag recoveries by vessel flag.

	<b>JUN-JUL 09</b>	<b>Total</b>
Australia	0	2
China	46	224
Ecuador	12	165
El Salvador	2	4
Fiji	1	3
FSM	176	215
Indonesia	99	3740
Japan	0	1360
Kiribati	45	49
Korea	49	612
Marshall Islands	15	58
New Zealand	0	5
Panama	1	18
Papua New Guinea	79	6417
Philippines	146	3004
Seychelles	0	1
Solomon Islands	372	4281
Spain	34	59
Taiwan	317	1222
Tonga	0	0
United States	369	753
Unknown	79	1071
Vanuatu	212	1307
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>26,488</b>

Figure 5 Tag releases and tag returns per month

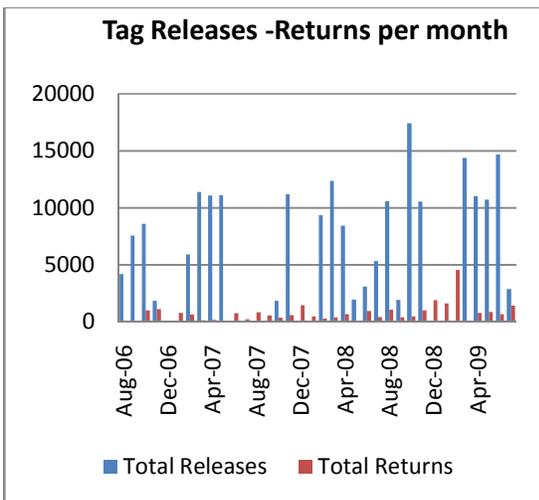


Table 3. Tag returns by tag recovery source

<b>Tag Return Source</b>	<b>JUN-JUL 09</b>	<b>Total</b>
American Samoa	12	39
Carriers	0	0
China	0	1
Fishing Vessel	301	301
FSM	0	10
IATTC	102	909
Indonesia	98	3588
IOTC	1	8
Japan	0	1299
Kiribati	45	51
Korea	24	317
Marshall Islands	43	58
Philippines (Direct)	263	2380
Philippines (Frabelle)	0	163
PNG (Frabelle)	0	944
PNG (NFA)	0	117
PNG (RD)	1	5119
PNG (SSTC)	0	799
PNG (Other)	2	52
Solomon Islands (NMFMR)	0	151
Solomon Islands (Soltai)	484	803
Solomon Islands (Global Investment)	26	1043
Solomon Islands (NFD)	39	3418
Solomon Islands (Other)	0	30
Taiwan	0	14
Tagging Vessel	1	151
Thailand	2	2359
Other	2	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>26,488</b>

**TAG RETURN LOTTERIES**

Tag return lotteries are currently being planned for the Indonesia and Japan. These are being planned to coincide with large meetings and events in order to greater generate publicity and continued awareness of the importance of the tagging program.

## 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

#### Helene Ixeco



Helene is the Project Assistant with the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP). Helene is from Lifou in New Caledonia. Helene has been with SPC for over ten years and is a valued member of the OFP team. Helene's duties are to assist the Programme Administrator in the day-to-day running of OFP.

Helene is one of the SPC staff that is heavily involved in the Pacific Tuna Tagging programme. Much unsung, she has the very large responsibility of checking and entering the thousands of tag recoveries into the tagging database, and assisting the Programme Administrator to send funds to all of our tag recovery contacts, arranging tag reward shirts and caps, arranging travel for SPC staff and contracted personnel as well

## TAG RECOVERY CONTACTS

#### Ambrose Ori'anihaa



Ambrose is the Observer Placement Officer for the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Ambrose himself is a Solomon Islands national from the Malaita Province.

Ambrose handles observer placement for the US treaty purse seine vessels operating in the Pacific. Ambrose duties include observer placement, performing debriefing and training for observers in data collection.

Ambrose has also been greatly involved in the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme. As well as tagging tunas onboard the tagging vessel, Ambrose acts as a tag recovery contact in the Solomons and assists with the monitoring of at-sea observers who are actively monitoring tuna caught for tag recaptures.

Regards,

The Tagging Team