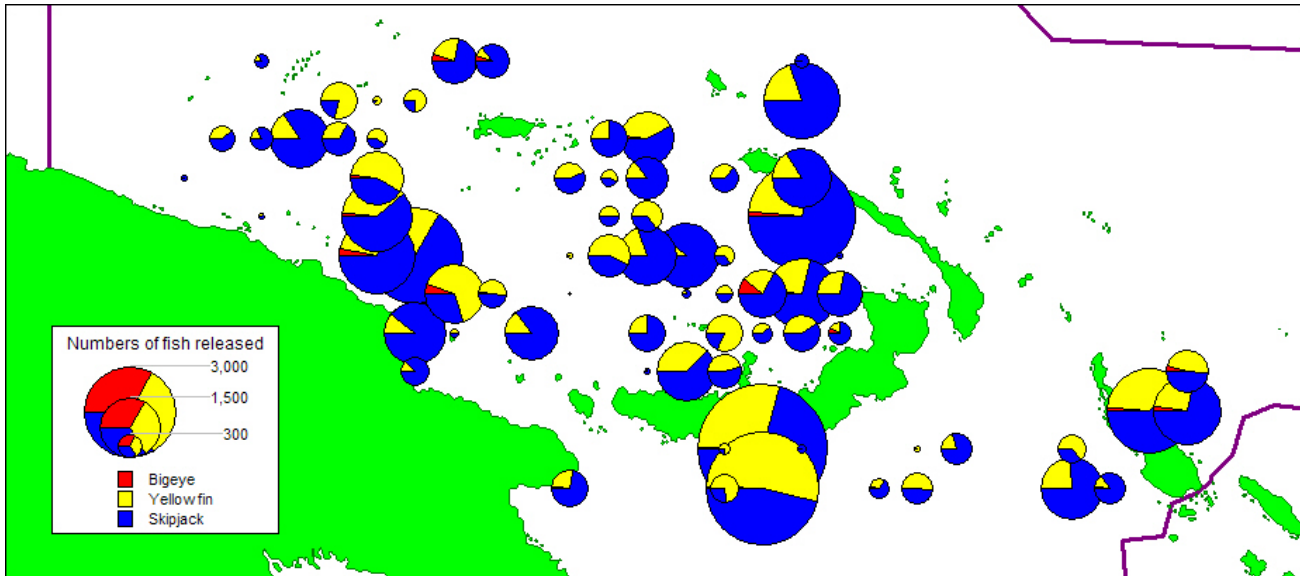


PACIFIC TUNA TAGGING PROGRAMME
MONTHLY TAGGING SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2007



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

Field work for Phase 1 (PNG) was completed in May 2007. Tagging recently recommenced in the Solomon Islands in late October, and the results of this one-month cruise will be reported in the November Monthly Summary. Therefore the numbers of releases reported below in Table 1 remain unchanged since the previous report.

Table 1. Tag releases, 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

TAG RECOVERIES

October was another busy month for tag returns (Figure 1), with 365 conventional tag returns, 2 archival tags and 1 sonic tag. This brings the total number of tag returns to 6,649, with an overall recovery rate of 10.8% (Table 2) for conventional tags, 12% for archival tags (Table 3) and 8.1% for sonic tags (Table 4).

A tag recovery officer (Hudson Wakio) has been appointed in Solomon islands, to cover mainly tag recoveries from the purse seine transshipment operations that occur in Honiara.

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

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
October 1st – 31st recoveries	181	168	16	365
Total to October 31st	3920 (9.7%)	2511 (12.2%)	218 (31.5%)	6 649 (10.8%)

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

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

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
October 1st – 31st recoveries	-	2	-	2
Total to October 31st	1 (50%)	23 (9.9%)	10 (20.8%)	34 (12%)

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

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
October 1st – 31st recoveries	-	1	-	1
Total to October 31st	2 (2.9%)	9 (6.7%)	7 (38.9%)	18 (8.1%)

The October recoveries were dominated by a large delivery of tags from the RD fishing company in PNG, our recovery contact in Thailand (Table 5) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

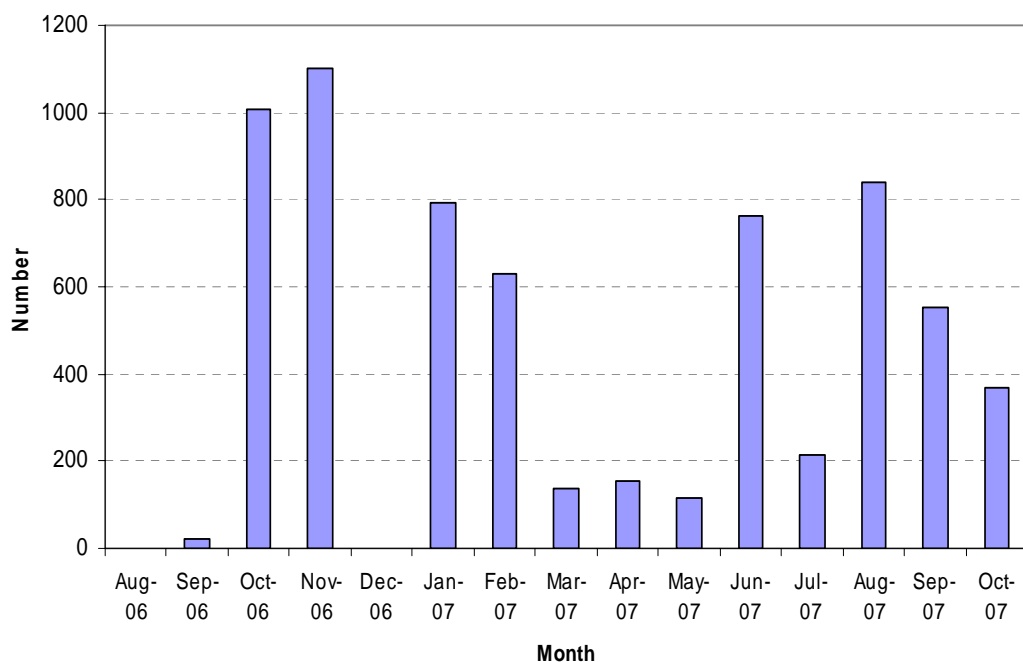


Figure 1. Number of tag returns by month.

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

Tag return source	October returns	Total returns
American Samoa	0	11
China	0	1
FSM	0	1
IATTC	32	82
Indonesia	8	42
IOTC	0	2
Japan	0	171
Korea	0	81
Other	0	5
Philippines (direct)	84	187
Philippines (Frabelle)	0	162
PNG (Frabelle)	0	370
PNG (NFA)	1	87
PNG (other)	0	29
PNG (RD)	190	4814
PNG (SSTC)	0	58
Solomon Islands (Soltai)	0	72
Solomon (other)	11	11
Tagging vessel	0	23
Thailand	39	440
TOTAL	365	6649

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	October 2007 returns	Total returns
Non identified	46	251
China	0	19
FSM	1	4
Indonesia	8	43
Japan	1	182
Kiribati	3	8
Korea	16	126
Marshall Islands	0	4
New Zealand	0	2
PNG	186	5154
Philippines	83	574
Solomon Islands	0	83
Seychelles	0	1
Taiwan	19	157
United States	1	5
Vanuatu	1	36
TOTAL	365	6649

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.

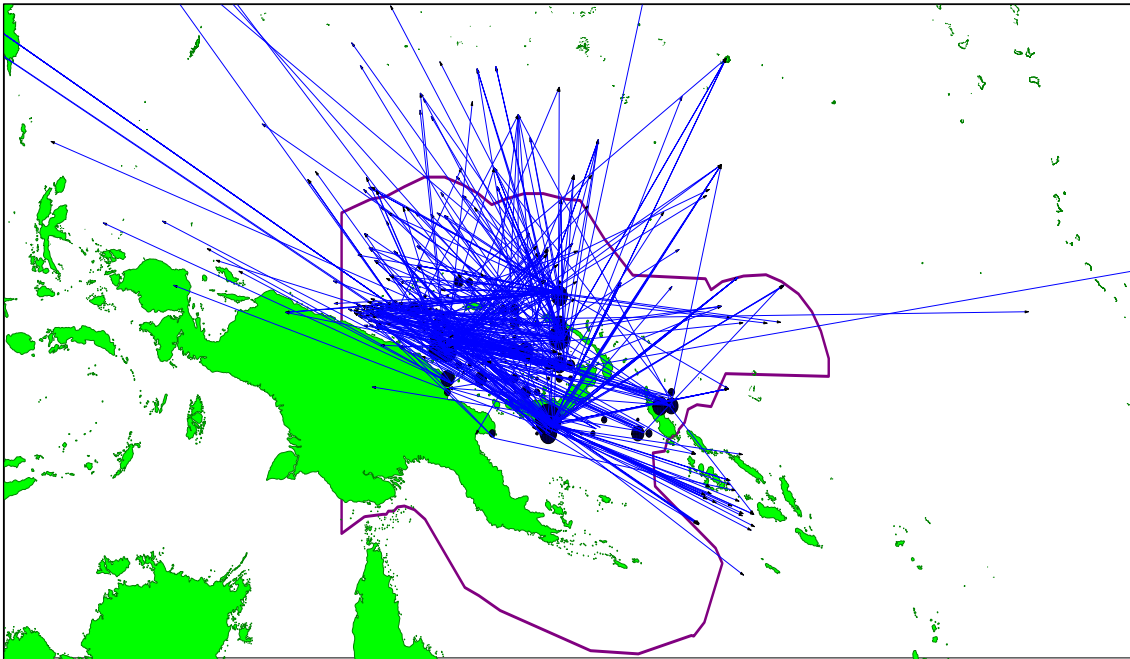


Figure 2. Displacements of tagged SKIPJACK > 300 nmi.

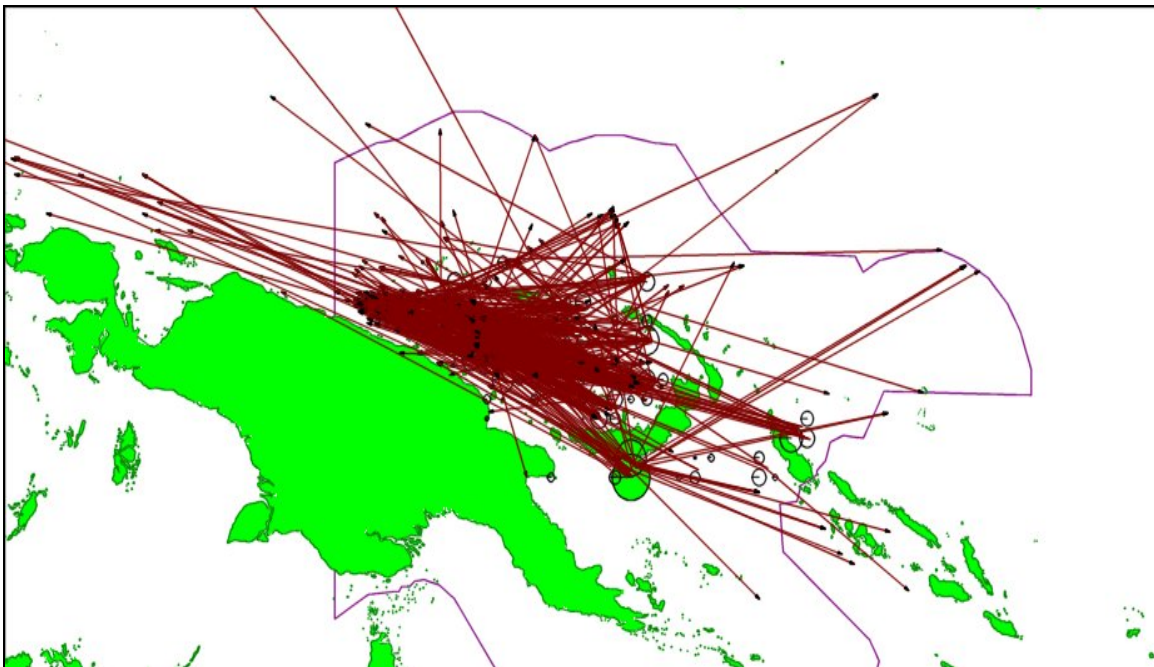


Figure 3. Displacements of tagged YELLOWFIN > 200 nmi.

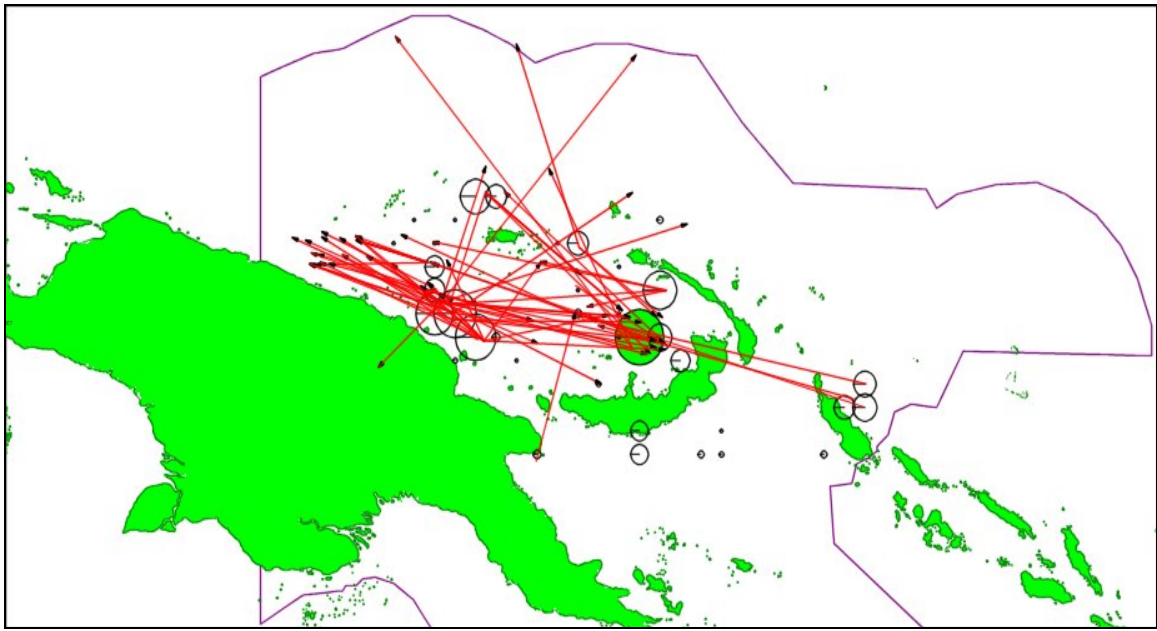


Figure 4. Displacements of tagged BIGEYE > 100 nmi.