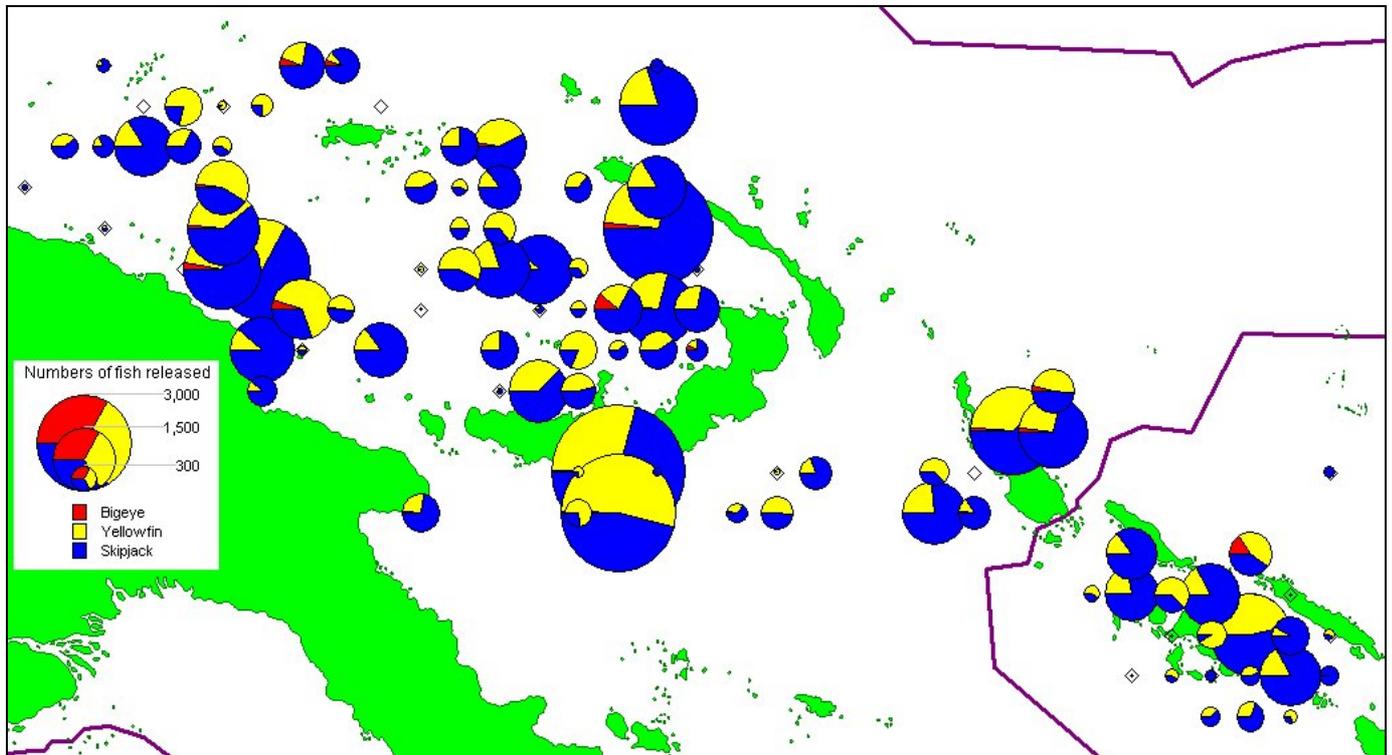


PACIFIC TUNA TAGGING PROGRAMME
MONTHLY TAGGING SUMMARY – JANUARY 2008



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 (PNG-NFA), 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.

SOLOMON ISLANDS CRUISE 2

The second tagging cruise in the exclusive economic zone of the Solomon Islands commences on 21st February 2008 for 10 weeks. The tagging will include both conventional and archival tagging of yellowfin, bigeye and skipjack tuna.

TAG RECOVERY OFFICER

To help manage the recovery of tags and further facilitate the payment of rewards for tag returns, SPC recently advertised for a tagging technician to work with our recovery agents across the western Pacific. We are pleased to announce that Mr Brian Kumasi has accepted the position and will commence in mid-February. Brian was a fisheries officer with the PNG-NFA prior to this appointment with key responsibilities for implementing the PTPP in the exclusive economic zone of Papua New Guinea. Consequently he comes to this position with extensive knowledge about the program and will already be familiar to many of fisheries managers and fishers.



Brian at the tagging cradle onboard Soltai6

TAG RELEASES

Field work for Phase 1 (PNG) was completed in May 2007. A one month cruise was recently completed in the Solomon Islands (27 October-23 November), and the results are now revised as 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 2007 – 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 PTTP

	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

January 2008 was a relative quiet month for tag returns (Figure 1), with 478 conventional tags, and 1 sonic tag. This brings the total number of tag returns to **9,170**, with an overall recovery rate of **12.6%** (Table 2) for conventional tags, 12.5% for archival tags (Table 3) and 9.5% for sonic tags (Table 4).

Table 2. Conventional tag recoveries, as at 31 January 2008.

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
January 2008 recoveries	336	141	1	478
Total to 31 January 2008	5703 (11.9%)	3238 (13.4%)	229 (27.7%)	9170 (12.6%)

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

Table 3. Archival tag recoveries, as at 31 January 2008.

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
January 2008 recoveries	-	-	-	0
Total to 31 January 2008	1 (50%)	25 (10.5%)	11 (20%)	37 (12.5%)

Table 4. Sonic tag recoveries, as at 31 January 2008.

	Skipjack	Yellowfin	Bigeye	Total
January 2008 recoveries	1	-	-	1
Total to 31 January 2008	3 (4.3%)	11 (8.1%)	7 (38.9%)	21 (9.5%)

The January 2008 recoveries were dominated by the Solomon Islands purse-seiners (NFD and Global Investment) and by Frabelle company in PNG.

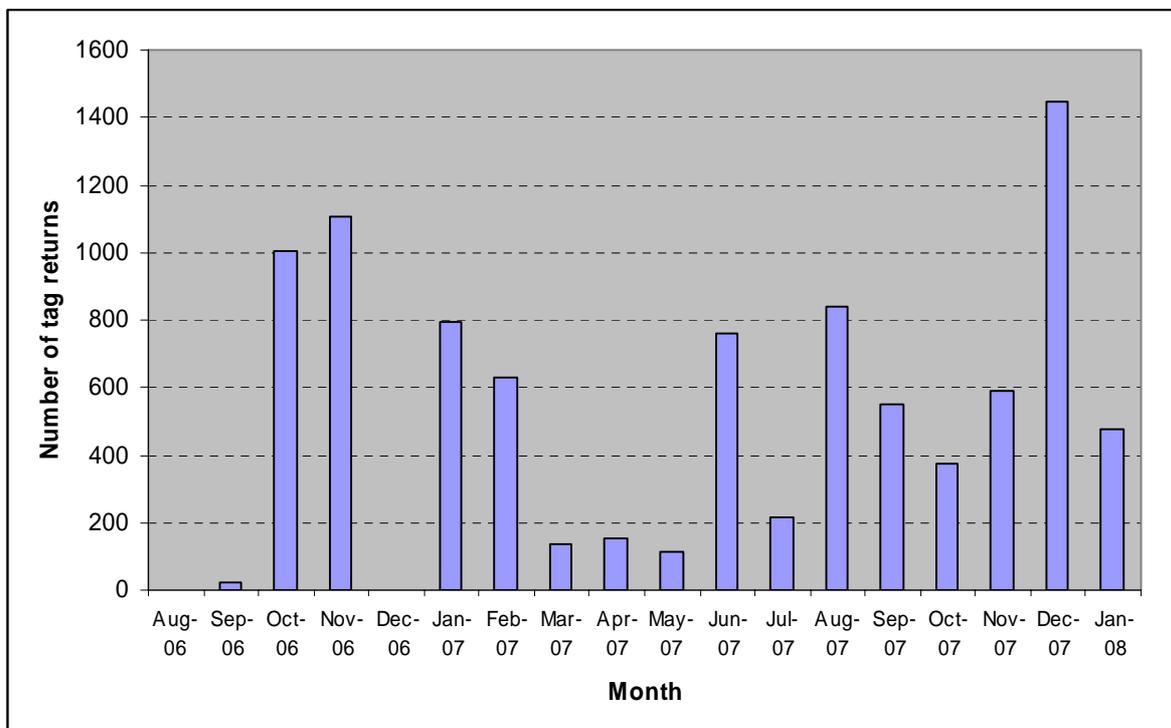


Figure 1. Number of tag returns by month.

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

Tag return source	January 2008 returns	Total returns
American Samoa	0	13
China	0	1
FSM	0	1
IATTC	0	103
Indonesia	0	69
IOTC	0	2
Japan	1	227
Korea	0	115
Other	0	6
Philippines (direct)	0	265
Philippines (Frabelle)	0	162
PNG (Frabelle)	127	590
PNG (NFA)	0	87
PNG (other)	1	31
PNG (RD)	0	5022
PNG (SSTC)	0	145
Solomon Islands (Soltai)	0	128
Solomon Islands (Other)	0	20
Solomon Islands (Global Investment)	253	658
Solomon Islands (NFD)	81	925
Tagging vessel	0	23
Thailand	15	877
TOTAL	478	9170

Overall, tag recoveries continue to be dominated by PNG flagged or affiliated vessels fishing primarily in the Bismarck Sea, where many 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, China).

Table 6. Number of tag recoveries by vessel flag.

Flag	January 2008 returns	Total returns
Non identified	0	407
China	0	26
FSM	1	6
Indonesia	0	71
Japan	2	242
Kiribati	0	10
Korea	1	141
Marshall Islands	0	10
New Zealand	0	2
Panama	0	8
PNG	55	5479
Philippines	76	842
Solomon Islands	81	1073
Seychelles	0	1
Taiwan	8	231
United States	0	5
Vanuatu	254	616
TOTAL	478	9170

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.

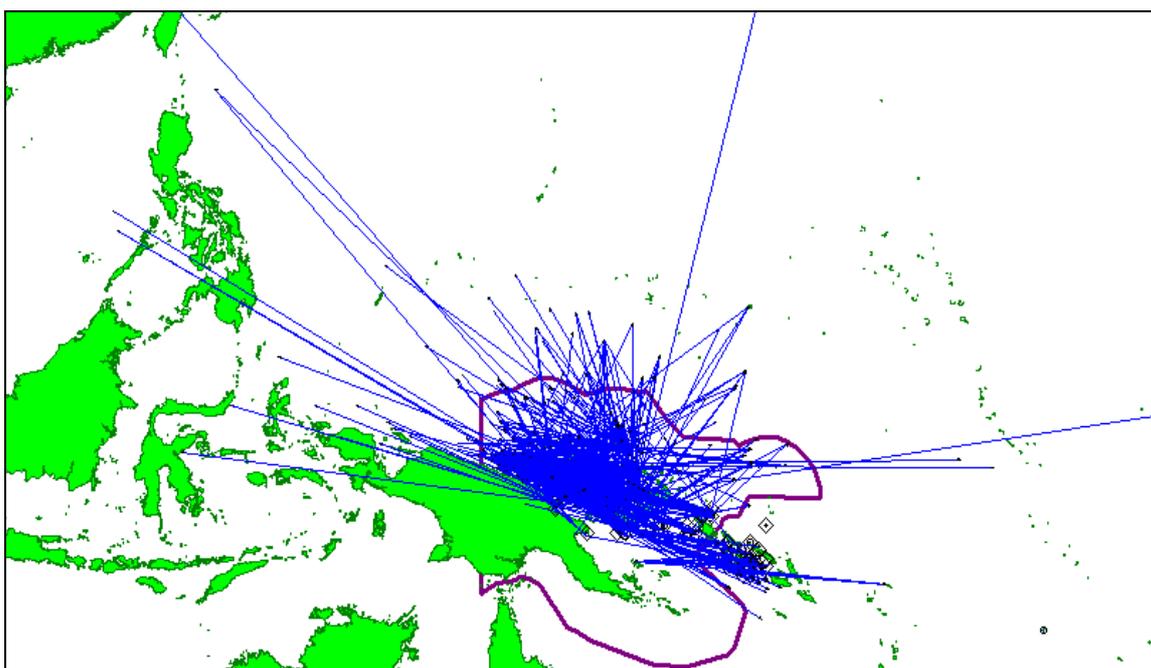


Figure 2. Displacements of tagged SKIPJACK >300 nmi.

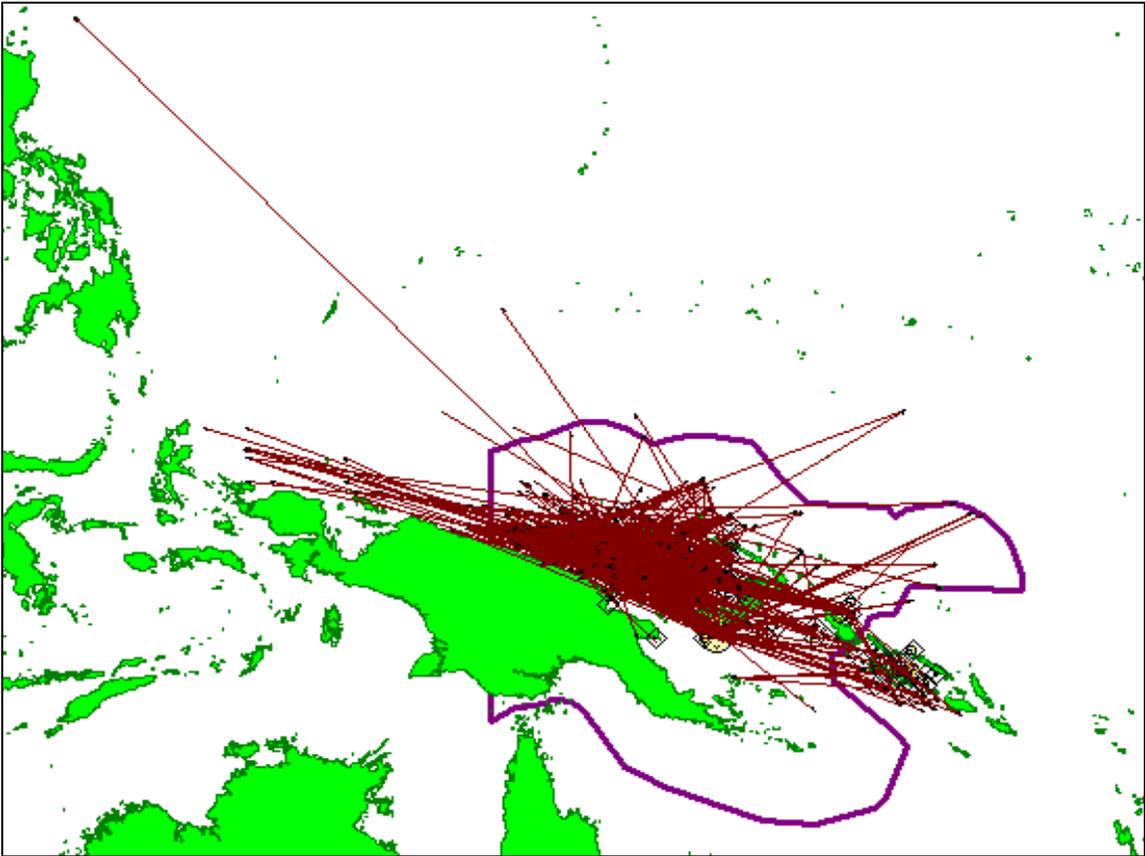


Figure 3. Displacements of tagged YELLOWFIN > 200 nmi.

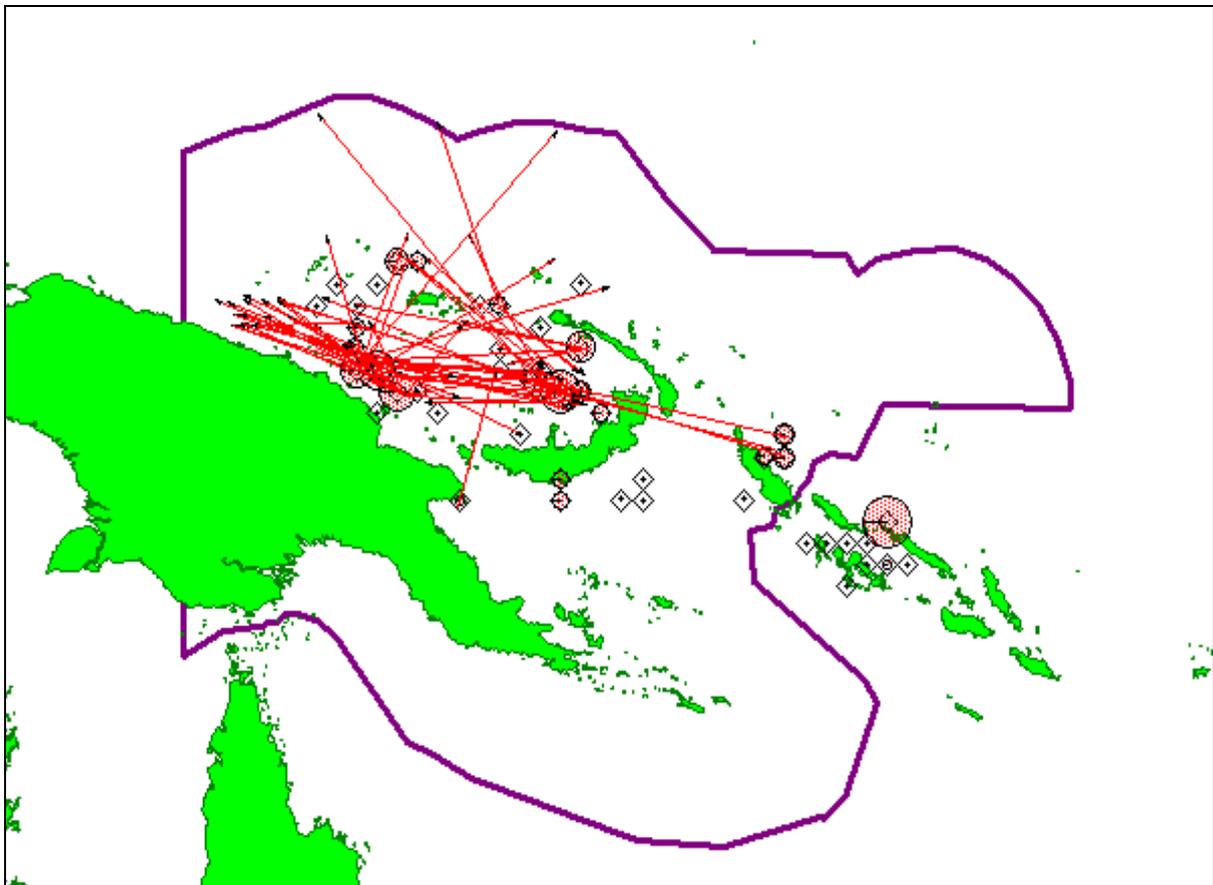


Figure 4. Displacements of tagged BIGEYE > 100 nmi.