



**TO ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS, COOPERATING NON-MEMBERS,
PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES, AND OBSERVERS**

**Circular No.: 2021/02
Date: 22 January 2021
No. pages: 07**

**SPC's Notification of the Second Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme Cruise Planning
Advisory Committee Meeting**

Dear All,

Further to Circular 2020-91 (SPC's Notification of Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme Cruise Planning Advisory Committee) and as requested by SPC, I wish to advise that the 2nd meeting of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme Cruise Planning Advisory Committee will be held from **11:00 am to 12:30 pm (Pohnpei time) on Tuesday 16 February 2021** (instead of 2 February as suggested in the 1st meeting) to clearly decide the best cruise option for this year. The meeting will be online using Microsoft Teams. The report of the 1st Advisory Committee meeting is enclosed for reference.

Should you have any query concerning the said meeting or wish to attend the meeting, please contact Bruno Leroy of SPC-OFP at BrunoL@spc.int.

Yours sincerely,

**Feleti Penitala Teo, OBE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

PTTP ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Pacific Community Headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia

2021 Cruise Planning

27 October 2020

10:00-11:00

Virtual: Microsoft Teams

Participation: Brad Philip, Berry Muller, Ludwig Kumoru, David Itano, SungKwon Soh, Elaine Garvilles, Hide Kiyofuji, Joe Scutt Phillips, Bruno Leroy, Simon Nicol

1. The meeting was unfortunately not able to link to Ren-Fen Wu during the meeting who was stuck in the meeting lobby.

Welcome and Preliminaries

2. The Chair Simon Nicol welcomes all participants and presented the Standing Agenda (Annex 1) and Terms of Reference for the committee (Annex 2)

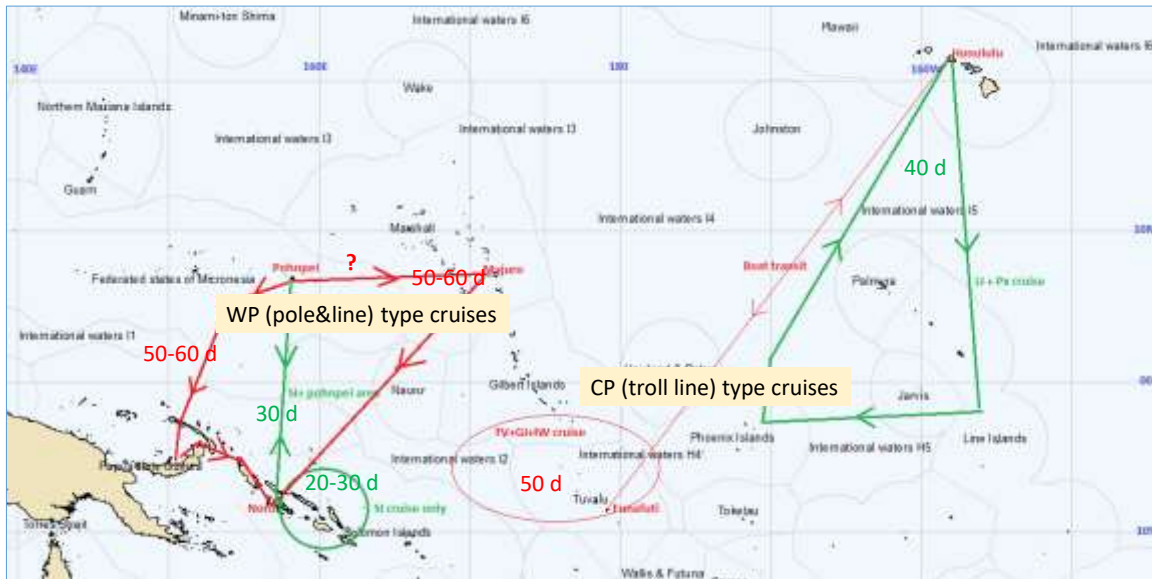
Current PTTP Resources & Tagging Cruise Plan Options

3. Bruno Leroy outlined the current options for PTTP cruises in 2021. He noted that planning at this stage has been complicated by uncertainties associated with COVID-19 travel restrictions. Options being considered are:

Area	Maximum days	Vessel	Species	Comment
SB only	30	Pole and Line	SKJ, YFT	COVID implications
SB & FM	30	Pole and Line	SKJ, YFT	COVID implications
SB, FM & PNG	60	Pole and Line	SKJ, YFT	COVID implications
SB, FM & MI	60	Pole and Line	SKJ, YFT	COVID implications
KI & IW	40	Dangler	BET, YFT	NO COVID implications
TV & surroundings	50	Dangler	BET, YFT	COVID implications
TV, KI, IW	80	Dangler	BET, YFT	COVID implications

Without the travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19, in 2021 it may be possible to implement up to 2 cruise options with the available budget. One of these cruises would be chosen from the 2 shorter Pole & Line (WP cruises) options, and the other would be a 40 days Dangler option (CP cruise). These short duration cruise options are displayed in green in the above table and in the below map. number of days to implement those options in red would impose the restriction of a single cruise for the year.

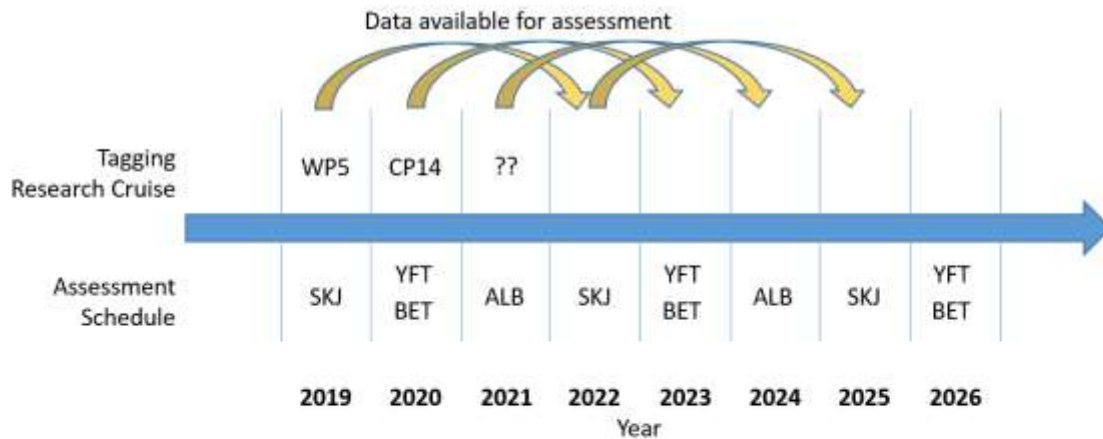
2021 tagging cruise possibilities



4. The Committee was informed that under the Scientific Committee agenda for PTPP cruises, a western Pacific cruise was planned for 2021. However, given the possible access restriction due to COVID-19, plans were also being prepared for a central Pacific cruise. The Committee was also advised that shortened western and central Pacific cruises could operate in 2021, potentially simultaneously, should logistics allow.

Objectives specific to the cruise

5. Joe Scutt Phillips provided a summary of the nominal cruise schedule for the PTPP with the nominal objectives (in terms of tags released by species). A summary is provided in the tables below.



Cruise Type	Typical Regions	Typical # SKJ	Typical # YFT	Typical # BET
Western Pacific	SB,PNG,FSM	10,000 /mon	3,000 /mon	300 /mon
Central Pacific	TV, KI	80 /mon	400 /mon	1000-3,000 /mon
???				

6. The Chair noted that as an advisory group we have the option to discuss this schedule in coming committee meetings to inform the PTPP SC on the appropriateness of this schedule.

Cruise Implementation: Vessel Availability

7. SPC noted that they will contact the National Fisheries Development in Solomon to confirm the availability of the Soltai vessels in 2021. SPC will also contact the owners of the Gutsy Lady 4 the preferred vessel for undertaking central Pacific cruises on its availability for 2021.

Cruise Implementation: formalities and permitting

8. To assist with preparing cruise plans under each of the options described above, SPC requested focal points for each of the countries. FSM and RMI focal points will be Brad Philip and Beau Bigler, respectively. Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Kiribati will need to be contacted separately to this Committee meeting to nominate a focal point. Ludwig Kumoru offered assistance from the PNA Office for facilitating communication with these contacts where practical.

9. It was recommended that SPC and particular countries also ascertain if any difficulty gaining access to bait-grounds is due to COVID-19 or due to other resource access reasons. If it is COVID-19 related, then it would be possible to prepare a COVID-19 safe plan.

Cruise Participation

10. Discussion deferred until the next meeting when there is likely greater clarity of which cruise options are possible

Tag Recovery Issues

11. Discussion deferred until the next meeting on 2 February 2021, when there is likely greater clarity of which cruise options are possible

Other Business

12. The Committee was advised of Japan's implementation of two skipjack tagging cruises in 2020-2021. The first has just completed operating in the region of 40N and 150E. Over 2000 skipjack were tagged, including many with PTTT tags provided by SPC

13. A second cruise will depart Japan in mid-December 2020 and return in mid-January 2021. The cruise will tag between Palau and Marshall Islands and target smaller size classes of skipjack for the purposes of assisting stock assessment and understanding connectivity between equatorial area and the EEZ of Japan.

14. Budgeting for Japanese tagging activities will not be confirmed before March 2021. SPC and Japan noted to keep each other informed on plans beyond the current Japan cruises to coordinate activities between Japan and the PTTT to the extent possible.

15. No other business was raised.

Annex 1. Standing Agenda

1. Welcome, Preliminaries and Non-Agenda Actions from last meeting
2. Current PTPP Resources & Tagging Cruise Plan Options
3. Objectives specific to the cruise
4. Cruise Implementation: Vessel Availability
5. Cruise Implementation: formalities and permitting
6. Cruise Participation
7. Tag Recovery Issues
8. Other Business

Annex 2. Terms of Reference WCPFC Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme Cruise Planning Advisory Committee

Purpose

This is a voluntary advisory committee established to assist SPC and WCPFC members with undertaking yearly PTTP Research Cruise planning and implementation. The committee role in this context is advisory only. Participants are expected to assist with setting cruise objectives (e.g. location, tagging targets, biological sampling targets), facilitating permits and access to bait grounds, and organising participation by national officers and observers.

Committee Process

The Advisory Committee will meet electronically.

The Advisory Committee will report annually to the PTTP Steering Committee.

Membership of the Committee is open to all members of WCPFC and invited experts.

The Advisory Committee will work within the annual mandate of the PTTP set by the PTTP Steering Committee and WCPFC Scientific Committee.