



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

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Date: 20 April 2021
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**SPC's Notification of the Third Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme Cruise Planning
Advisory Committee Meeting**

Dear All,

Further to Circular 2021-02 (*SPC's Notification of the Second Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme Cruise Planning Advisory Committee*), and as requested by the Pacific Community (SPC), I wish to advise that the 3rd meeting of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme Cruise Planning Advisory Committee will be held from **11:00 to 12:00 (Pohnpei time) on Wednesday, 28 April 2021** (instead of 27 April as originally scheduled) to decide the best cruise option for this year. The meeting will be online using Microsoft Teams. The meeting agenda and background information are attached to this Circular.

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

The Third PTPP Advisory Committee Virtual Meeting

11:00 – 12:00 (Pohnpei time)

Wednesday, 28 April 2021

Standing Agenda

1. Welcome, Preliminaries
2. 2021 CP15 cruise planning
3. Choices of objectives for the cruise
4. Cruise Implementation: Vessel and crew availability
5. Cruise Implementation: formalities and permitting
7. PS fishery drifting FAD access
8. Tag Recovery
9. Other Business

Pre-meeting background

Tuna tagging activity of the WCPFC-PTTP* scheduling currently assumes a biennial program that alternates 2 main cruise types targeting different species and area and using different platform and fishing gears.

- Western Pacific (WP) type cruises are implemented onboard pole and line tuna vessels with range of action limited to areas where adequate live bait supply could be captured. This is mostly achievable west of 165E longitude within limited distances** around large islands that possess productive coastal ecosystems (rivers, mangroves). The fishing gear is effective on tuna schools exhibiting surface activities in the equatorial zone (Latitudes between 10 N and 10 S) and captures essentially skipjack tuna of all sizes (between 70 and 80% of the catches) and a lower proportion of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye.
- Central Pacific (CP) type cruises are using long range longline tuna vessels that could be equipped with a variety of fishing gears allowing efficient and safe capture of tuna associated with Fishing Aggregation Devices (FAD). Although less efficient than pole and line for capturing large quantities of tuna in optimized condition for their release, the CP cruise could operate without live bait supply and could target bigeye tuna species that scarcely appears in pole and line catches.

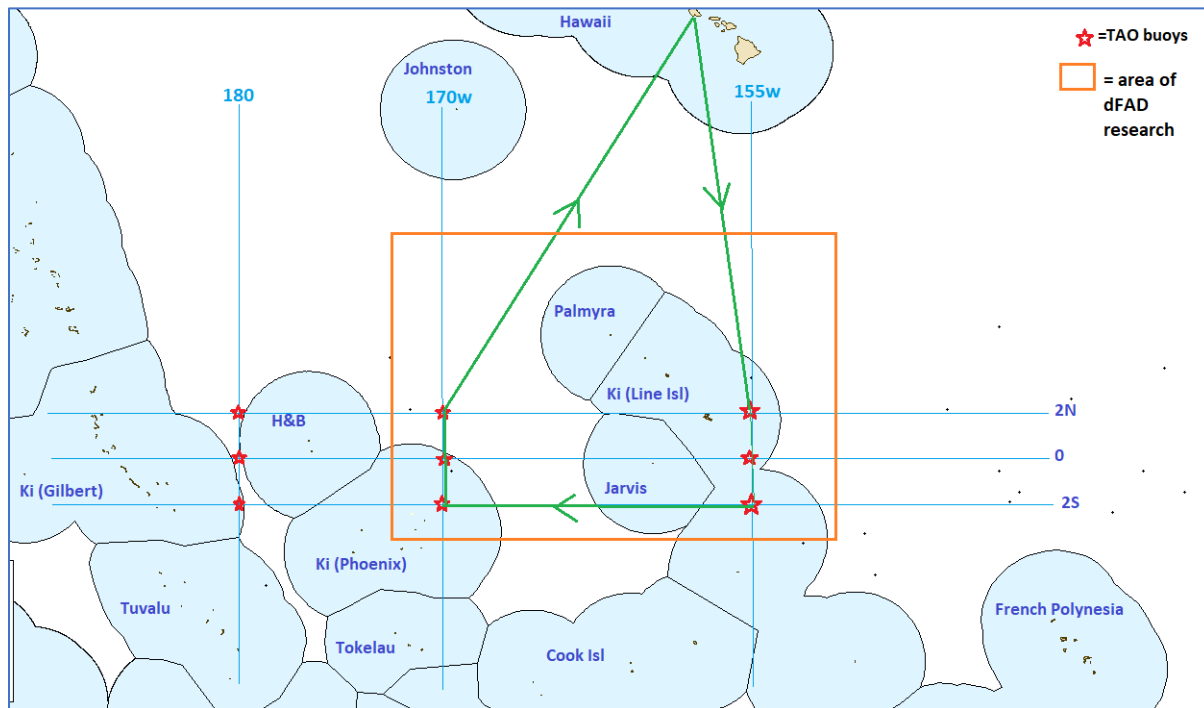
* tagging programs are part as the ongoing WCPFC science work since 2016.

** Operational distances depend on the boat live bait tank capacities and on bait species survival when kept inside those tanks; survival most often less than one week for the fragile species found in the WP.

2021 tuna tagging cruise

Following the conclusions of the last 16 February advisory committee meeting, the Covid19 global situation is not allowing the possibility of implementing a WP type cruise and a Central Pacific tagging project (CP15) is now under active preparation.

CP15 will consist of a 40 day cruise out of Honolulu and the research area will approximately be located between the Line and the Phoenix Islands EEZ (see Picture 1)



Picture 1: CP15 provisional research area

The CP15 objectives are (in priority order and depending of scientific crew availability)

1. Conventional tag releases of bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna associated with TAO moorings and dFADs
2. Archival tag releases of bigeye tuna and, fishing permitting, skipjack tuna in association with dFADs
3. Biological sampling, including genetic material, of all tuna species and bycatch for complement the Pacific tissue bank.
4. SrCl injection on tagged tuna for further growth rate validation.
5. Sonic tag release in dFAD associated tuna to study fish movements between FADs

Risk Management within C19 conditions:

All persons onboard the chartered vessel will be C19 vaccinated and the vessel will not enter/touch any island during the cruise.