



Pacific Tuna Tagging Project Steering Committee

WCPFC SC22 2026

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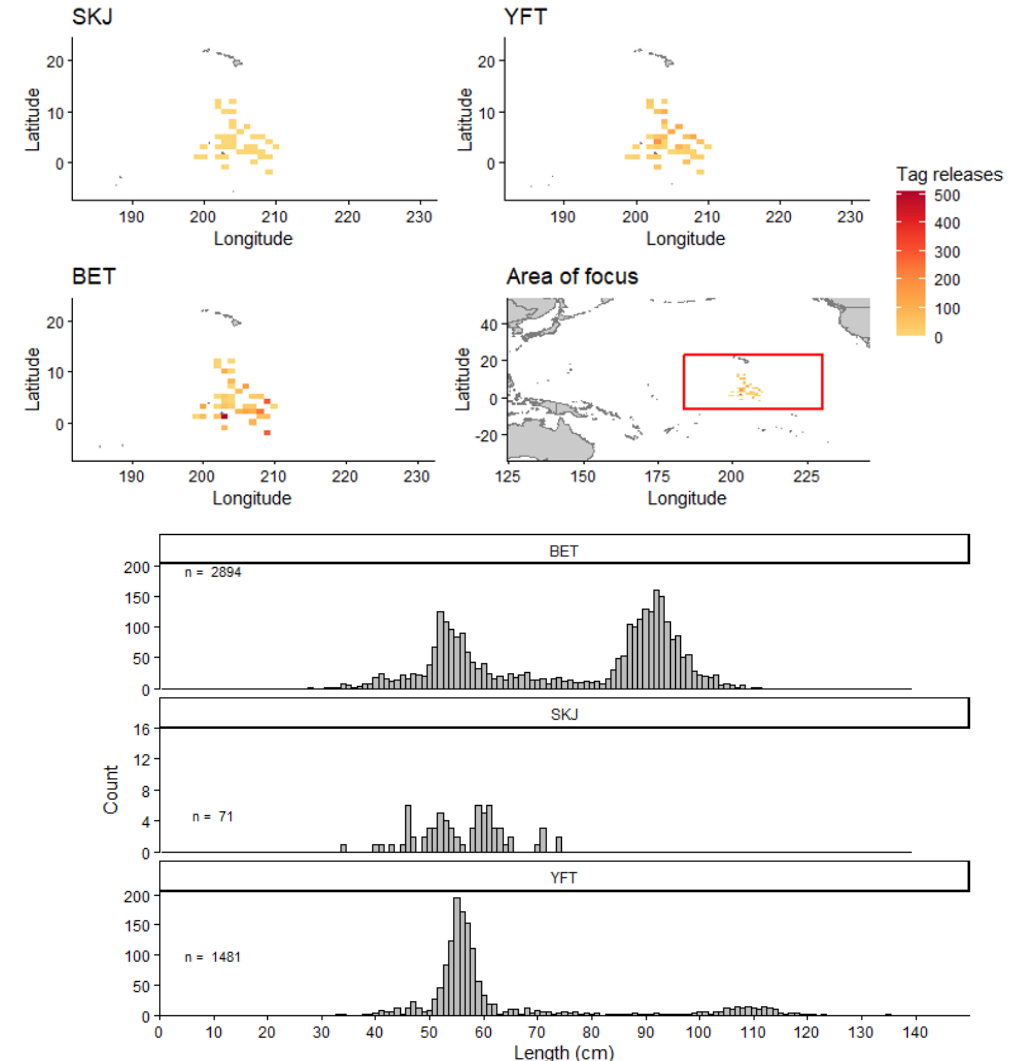
6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 Invitation for updates from regional partners
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7. ADOPTION OF REPORT

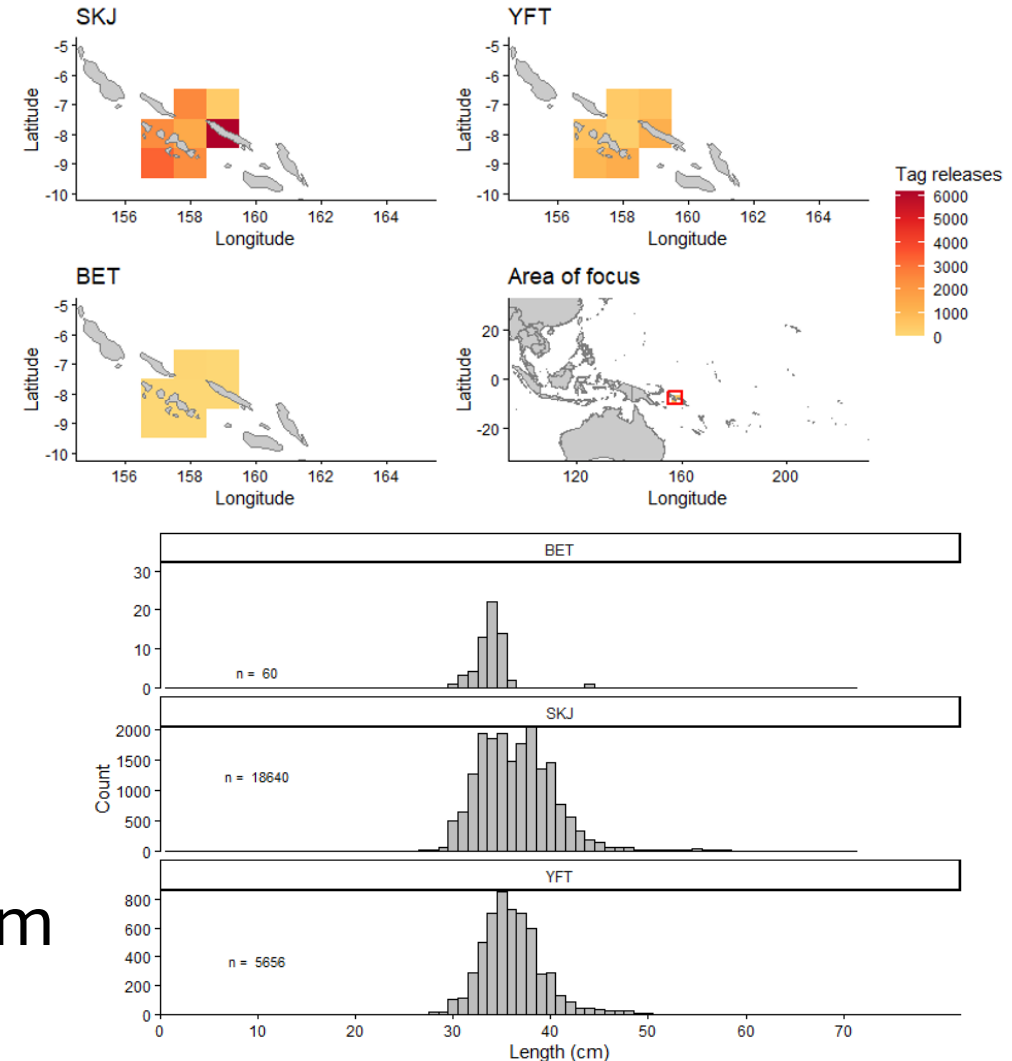
2.1 Field Operations: 2025-26 Activities

- June-Aug 2025 Central Pacific 17 Cruise
- 4,459 tuna tagged during 45-days
 - 65% Bigeye
 - 33% Yellowfin
 - 2% Skipjack
- Majority on industry-shared dFADs in equatorial zone 0-10N
- Mode bigeye tuna length was 92cm FL
- Biological samples collected to support ageing, reproductive biology, heavy metal pollutants and genomics



2.1 Field Operations: 2025-26 Activities

- Feb-March 2026 Western Pacific 7 Series
- 24,356 tuna tagged during 21 days
 - 67% skipjack
 - 32% yellowfin
 - <1% bigeye
- Solomon Islands-based
- Establish renovated vessel capacity and new baitgrounds for future tagging
- Biological sampling supporting ageing, genomics and epigenetic ageing, ecosystem indicators



2.2 Field Operations: 2026-27 Workplan

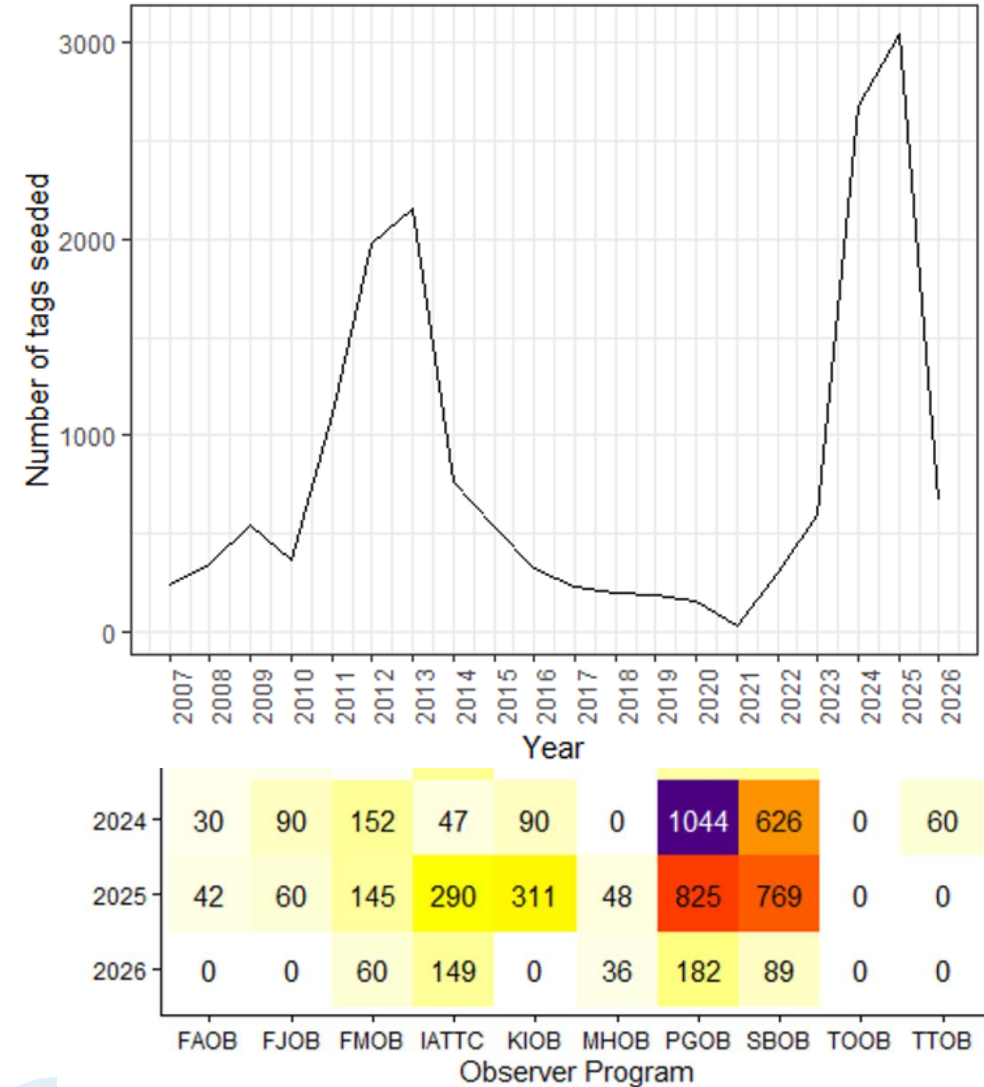
Year	Activities	Scientific Outputs
2026	Seasonal Pole & Line Tagging Cruises (~60 days in total) - Solomon Islands EEZ focused - primary focus SKJ - secondary YFT Test the performance and reliability of the refurbished FV Solomon Searcher for wider application in western Pacific Identify and establish new bait grounds for wider western Pacific skipjack tagging	Tagging data for WCPO tuna stock assessments and harvest strategy development (scientific services) Tagging data for SEAPODYM, improving movement estimation for stock assessment, harvest strategies and climate projections (scientific services, P62) External estimates of natural and fishing mortality, and abundance (scientific services, P123)
	Biological sampling of tuna and bycatch	Age-at-length parameters for WCPFC stock assessments (Science Services, P129) Independent estimates of movement (Science Services) Connectivity and stock structure (Science Services) Climate impacts on growth (P121) Ecosystem indicators (P121), climate impacts on tuna ecology and ecosystems (P62, P121)
	High-quality genetic sampling of tuna	Building of epigenetic clocks, genome deep sequencing, close-kin mark-recapture estimates (P100d, P123)
2027	Seasonal Pole & Line Tagging Cruises (~60 days in total) - Warm-pool focused (Solomon Is., Fed. States of Micronesia EEZ, eastern warm-pool) - primary focus SKJ - secondary YFT	Scientific Services, P62
	Archival tagging of yellowfin tuna	Independent estimates of movement Spatial variability in growth and bioenergetics
	Biological sampling of tuna and bycatch	Scientific Services, P62, P120, P121, P129
	High-quality genetic sampling of tuna	P100d, P123
	RFID Automated tag detection field trials	Improve reporting and reporting rate priors (Scientific Services)

2.3 Field Operations: Recommendations

- Consider and endorse the PTPP Field operations work-plan
 - Continue to **maximise use of renovated pole & line** vessel
 - **Prioritise skipjack tagging** with experimental designs that support stock assessment, harvest strategy work, and improved SEAPODYM climate projections
 - Undertake **~60 days of tagging annually**, spread seasonally where feasible
 - **Secondary target yellowfin** to support monitoring strategy
 - **Revisit priorities annually** through Planning Advisory and Steering Committees
 - Leverage at-sea science platform to **support continued biosampling** of tuna and bycatch, alongside high-quality genetic samples

3.1 Recovery Network and Data: 2025-26 Activities

- Targeted trips to key locations to maintain network
 - Thailand canneries, Pago Pago, Noro, and PNG ports
- Training of observers, coordinators, briefers and debriefers in tagging activities
- Validation of 4000+ tag recaptures in preparation for 2026 stock assessments
- Continued, increased levels of tag seeding
- Regional capacity currently ~100 kits/year, exceeding 34 minimum identified



3.3 Recovery Network and Data: Workplan 2026-27

Year	Activities	Scientific Outputs
2026	Training of tag recovery officers and new data entry staff	Acquisition of high-quality tagging data (Scientific Services)
	Maintenance and expansion of tag recovery network Thailand	Continued and improved tag reporting (Scientific Services)
	Tag seeding	Well characterised reporting rates (Scientific Services) Mapping of product flow to inform tag recovery network and P114 Improving Cannery Receipt Data
	Data validation for 2026 YFT and BET stock assessments	Maximal data available for stock assessments (Scientific Services)
	Support tag recovery officers in IATTC ports	Maximal data available for stock assessments (Scientific Services)
2027	Maintenance and expansion of tag recovery in warm-pool region	Acquisition of high-quality tagging data (Scientific Services)
	Tag Seeding	
	Evaluation of RFID detection rate	Well characterised reporting rates (Scientific Services)
	Data validation for 2028 SKJ stock assessment	Maximal data available for stock assessments (Scientific Services)
	Continued training of tag recovery officers for data entry	
	Support tag recovery officers in IATTC ports	Maximal data available for stock assessments (Scientific Services)

3.3 Recovery Network and Data: Recommendations



- Note the **need for member participation and support in tag reporting** as both wild and seeded tags continue to be found throughout the fishery
- Note the **critical importance of effective tag seeding** for informing stock assessment, and support the increased deployment and fleet coverage of **tag seeding experiments through regional and national observer programmes**
- Consider and endorse the PTTP Recovery Network and Data work-plan
 - Promote **increased levels of tag seeding**
 - Continue to **invest in maintaining and improving the tag recovery network** associated with catches in the western Pacific region
 - Continue to **support tag recovery staff in the IATTC** convention area

4.1 Data Analysis: 2025-26 Activities

- PTPP Tagging data inputs to 2026 yellowfin and bigeye tuna assessments:
 - Guide decisions on region structures and external parameter estimation (SC22-2026-SA-IP01)
 - Preparation for direct integration into stock assessments (SA-WP03, SA-WP04)
 - Estimation of tag reporting rates, tagging-induced mortality, and tag mixing rates (SA-IP05, SA-IP04, SA-IP19)
- Updated tagging data files for estimation and validation of movement parameters in new SEAPODYM reference models for yellowfin and bigeye tuna (EB-WP03)
- Independent estimation of bigeye tuna natural mortality
- Datasets used in operating and estimation models, as well as monitoring, for harvest strategy work (MI-WP01, MI-WP05, MI-IP01)

4.2 Data Analysis: Workplan 2026-27

Year	Activities	Scientific Outputs
2026	Data preparation for 2026 YFT and BET stock assessments	High quality stock assessments (Scientific Services)
	Estimation of reporting rates, tagging condition effects, and tag mixing rates for 2026 YFT and BET stock assessments	High quality stock assessments (Scientific Services)
	Data preparation for estimation and validation of SEAPODYM YFT and BET reference model movement parameters	Improved SEAPODYM reference models for climate projection (P62)
	Independent estimation of BET natural mortality	Independent demographic parameter estimation (Scientific Services)
2027	Validation of independent natural mortality estimation through simulation testing	
	Data preparation and analysis for development of independent, spatiotemporal model for estimation of fishing mortality and abundance	Independent estimation of fishing mortality and abundance (P123)
	Analysis for potential of RFID tagging technology scale-up	Improved and well characterised reporting rates (Scientific Services)

4.3 Data Analysis: Recommendations

- Consider and endorse the data analysis workplan 2026-29:
 - Continue to **incorporate tagging data into stock assessment and harvest strategy** work
 - Continue to support exploration **independent estimates of mortality, abundance, and movement**
 - Continued and new **integration of tagging data into SEAPODYM** for improved climate projections
 - Explore the potential for **RFID technology to automatically detect tags** at recapture, and develop **options for scale-up**

5.1 Response to FAC19: PTTP Scientific Outputs

Paragraph 54 of the **FAC19 report recommended** that WCPFC22 *request the Scientific Services Provider examine **options to improve cost efficiency** in the tagging programme and to **report these options and their scientific implications** to SC22, FAC20 and WCPFC23.* FAC19 also recommended that the Scientific Committee *...**clearly flag projects that leverage significant co-funding** or in-kind contributions* (FAC19 report, Para 55).

5.1 Response to FAC19: PTTP Scientific Outputs

- **SPC-OFP have prepared a draft document ([SC22-SA-WP-02](#))** for consideration and submission by the PTTP Steering Committee at SC22
- We invite members of the steering committee to download a copy for review and make suggested comments/edits and return to SPC by **12 July** SC22 submission date
- Document includes **summary of PTTP core work, leveraged secondary work, costs and co-financing, and proposes an updated terms of reference** to reflect what the project is currently delivering

5.1 Response to FAC19: PTTP Scientific Outputs

- The PTTP continues to deliver fully against its core objective
- It also underwrites an at-sea sampling platform that supports a variety of secondary activities for WCPFC scientific work
- The cash contribution to the PTTP from WCPFC does not fund the project in isolation: both primary and secondary work mobilise significant cash and in-kind co-financing
- In the recent period, non-WCPFC sources met ~63% of the total cost of core activities only
- Over the lifetime of the project, non-WCPFC cash co-financing alone has met ~77% of the cost of core activities

5.1 Response to FAC19: PTTP Scientific Outputs

Average budget for PTTP (2022-2025)

	WCPFC PTTP Budget	Cash Co-finance	In-kind Co-finance
Salary Time*	123,000 [†]		506,000
Cruise Charters	211,000	207,000	
Travel and per diems	64,000	0	
Tags and Equipment	69,000	0	
Tag Recovery and Seeding	9,000	207,000	
Consultants and tag recovery	118,000	0	
Training	0	253,000	
Communication	7,000	23,000	
SPC Management Fees	160,000	154,000	
Miscellaneous Operating Costs	30,000		
Total	791,000	844,000	506,000
Percentage	37%	39%	24%

5.1 Response to FAC19: PTTP Scientific Outputs

When considering options to reduce costs:

- Costs associated with maintenance of tag recovery network, tag seeding, training, custody and validation of data, and data preparation and analysis are considered fixed costs
- Only viable option is to reduce number of charter days, which are currently ~50% co-financed
- This reduction would degrade the quality of tagging data from core activities, and collection of tissues for secondary activities
- Major implications on WCPFC science areas of stock assessment, harvest strategies, climate projections and the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank
- Increased budgets implications for WCPFC projects 35b, 90, 100c, 120, 125, 128a, and 129

5.2 Proposed change to Terms of Reference

This paper also proposes an updated Terms of Reference

- Better reflects what the PTTP is already delivering during the previous ~5 years
- Does not change the scope of core PTTP activities
- Has no increased budget implications
- These Terms of Reference describe:
 1. Background and purpose
 2. Objectives
 3. Scope, scheduling and requirements of PTTP activities
 4. Secondary scientific outputs and the sampling platform
 5. Funding and co-financing
 6. Governance and review

5.2 Proposed change to Terms of Reference

2. Objectives

Tag: run cruises generating mark-recapture and electronic tagging data for stock assessments, harvest strategies and monitoring, SEAPODYM, and independent parameter estimation (skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye)

Recover: maintain the regional tag-recovery network (rewards, stakeholder engagement, training, tag seeding) to sustain high, well-characterised reporting rates

Curate: collect, validate and quality-control all tagging data, and prepare it for assessment and analysis

Estimate: support estimation of key parameters: movement, growth, habitat use, mixing, mortality, abundance, fishing effects

Share the platform: use cruises as a shared sampling capability (tissues, protocol development, at-sea experiments) for other WCPFC projects, where core tagging isn't compromised

Publish: contribute technical reports and peer-reviewed science on tropical tuna biology, ecology and fisheries

5.2 Proposed change to Terms of Reference

6. Governance

The **PTTP** is implemented by **SPC** on behalf of **WCPFC** and is **overseen by the PTTP Steering Committee**, which provides **scientific and strategic direction**, endorses the cruise plans, and **reviews objectives and outputs**. The PTTP Steering Committee will meet at least annually, and its report will be provided to the relevant WCPFC Scientific Committee meeting for endorsement. In addition, the mid-term PTTP Planning Advisory Committee will provide updates and the opportunity to comment on planned PTTP activities. The **steering committee will review these terms of reference periodically**, and not less than every 5 years, to **ensure the project's mandate remains aligned with WCPFC's scientific needs**.

5.3 Response to FAC19: Recommendations

We invite SC22 to:

- **note the technical value of the PTTP** in underpinning tuna **stock assessments**, the **management procedure** for WCPO skipjack tuna, **climate projections** and wider **WCPFC science** work
- respond to FAC's request noting that the **PTTP programme represents a planned interconnected body of work** that does not offer a menu of activities that can be scaled
- **endorse the updated Terms of Reference** for the project to reflect current scientific output of the project and WCPFC science needs
- **forward this paper and any desired commentary to FAC20 and WCPFC23**

6.1 Updates from regional partners

6.2 Administrative matters

- Draft report and recommendations from this steering committee will be circulated next week
- Please contact SPC with further comments or questions by **15th July** for integration into the final report to be submitted to SC22
- A draft copy of [SC22-SA-WP-02](#) Response to FAC19 is available on the SPC sharepoint (link in PTTP Steering Committee information) for consideration and comment
- Please contact SPC with additions, suggested changes, comments or edits to this draft by **12th July** for timely submission to SC22

6.3 Any other business