

PACIFIC TUNA TAGGING PROJECT PHASE 2

CRUISE REPORT No. 2

18th July – 14th August 2008

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes activities of the second cruise of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Project (PTTP) Phase 2 during a 28 day period in FSM waters, from departure from Pohnpei following the full moon break on July 18th, fishing westwards towards Yap, then arrival in Palau (one day transit without bait) for the full moon break on August 14th.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FISHING ACTIVITY

Following the full moon break, several days good fishing were experienced on free schools near Pohnpei (Pakin atoll), either side of a final trip was made to equatorial waters (2^oN) where reasonable catches were made from free schools and the TAO buoy at 2^o N. The trip westwards from Pohnpei towards Chuuk via Oroluk was hampered by bad weather, which continued after a brief port call in Chuuk (Moen) for personnel changes; very few fish were caught for one week, with continuing bad weather and minimal fish sightings until the arrival of the vessel in the Yap outer islands. After an excursion south to the TAO buoy at 5^oN 147^oE, good fishing was found on mostly free schools near Woleai atoll, and on a current line near Eauripik; little more was seen on the trip into Yap other than fish with a floating log. Several days successful fishing were possible around Yap, with bait caught in Tomil Harbour, before clearing FSM and heading for Palau via Ngulu atoll. A floating raft house was fished with success on the run into Koror.

The track of the cruise, based on school and noon positions, is found below as **Figure 1** and a summary of general movements during the cruise and daily tag release numbers follows as **Table 1**. A compilation of the daily log extracts, detailing daily activities, is provided as **Appendix 1**.

TAG RELEASES

Of the 28 days of charter, all but one were spent on FSM waters, and that one on the way into Palau. Of these 28 days, 20.5 days were spent fishing, two days steaming without bait (one in Palau waters), and 5.5 days in port. Apart from one week of bad weather and low fish sightings, the majority of fishing days were productive, but with 8 zero catch days, the highest since the project began, and one day with less than 10 fish. In total, **5,712** tuna were tagged with conventional tags, at an average of 279 fish per fishing day, and 6 archival tags deployed; on two days, more than 800 fish were tagged and released but the first time on a PTTP cruise, no 1000 plus fishing days were experienced.

Releases of conventional tags comprised 3,544 skipjack (62.0%), 2,103 yellowfin (37%) and 59 bigeye (1.0%). The “yellowfin plus bigeye” proportion of the catch, at 38.0%, was maintained as a result of much fishing occurring on associated schools, with free schools generally having less than 5% yellowfin. Yellowfin comprised over 50% of the catch on eight fishing days, when fishing drifting FADs and/or anchored buoys. Bigeye were taken in small numbers throughout the cruise, but never more than 15 in a day.

The Cruise 1 releases are summarized by school in **Table 3**, while **Figure 2** below shows the distribution of the releases in FSM waters by 0.5 degree square, by species.

Figure 1. Track during PTTP Phase 2 Cruise 2, 18th July – 14th August 2008, showing the positions of schools fished

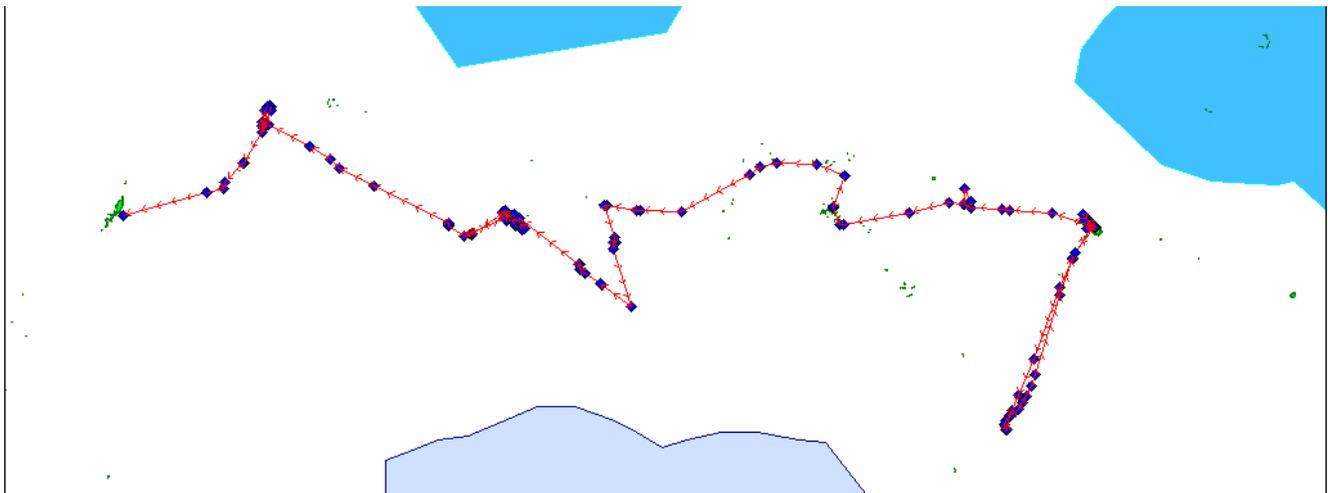
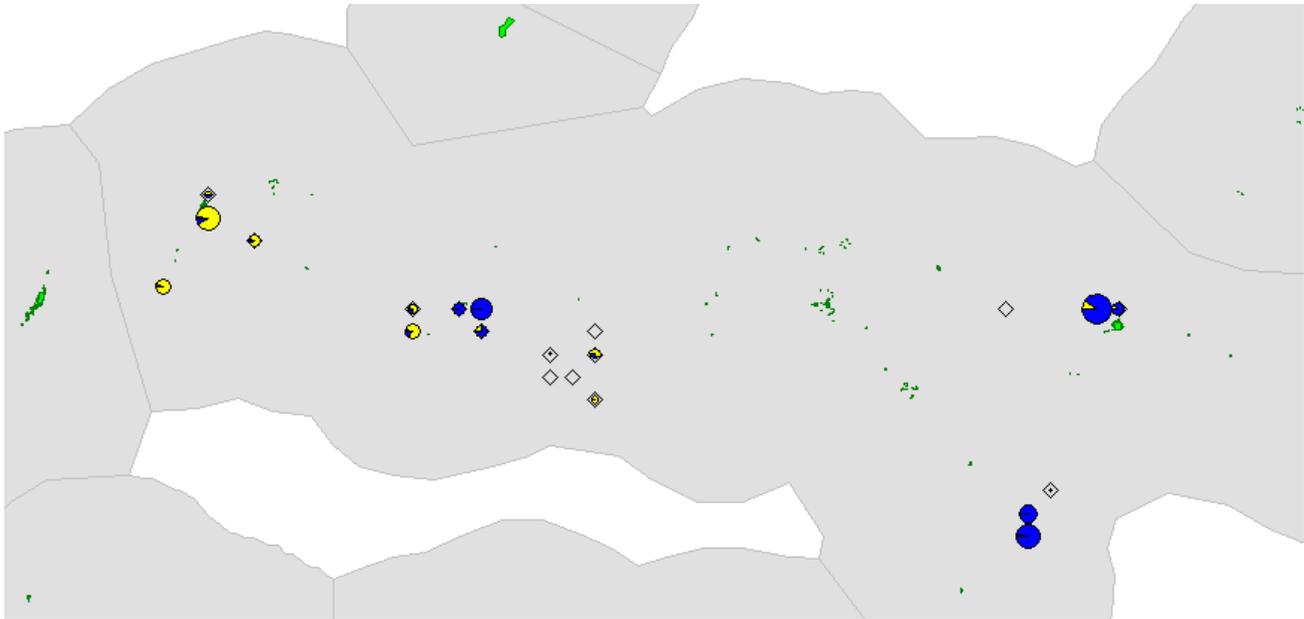


Table 1. Summary of Cruise 2 activity, with number of tagged fish released per day

Dates	Activity	Tag releases
July 18 th	Fishing near Pohnpei (Pakin)	448
July 19 th	In port (insufficient bait)	-
July 20 th	Fishing south towards TAO 2N	0
July 21 st	Fishing TAO 2N	407
July 22 nd	Fishing TAO 2N then fish towards Pohnpei	745
July 23 rd	Steaming without bait; baiting Pohnpei	-
July 24 th	Fishing near Pohnpei (Pakin); official reception	819
July 25 th	In port – fuel, provisioning	-
July 26 th	Fishing towards Oroluk	2
July 27 th	Fishing around Oroluk	0
July 28 th	Fishing towards Moen, Chuuk	0
July 29 th	Fishing SE corner Chuuk then in port Moen	0
July 30 th	In port, then fishing towards Murilo	0
July 31 st	Fishing towards Namonuito (Pisaras) then towards Satawal	0
August 1 st	Fishing Satawal then Lamotrek (baiting)	0
August 2 nd	Fishing south of Lamotrek towards TAO 5N	232
August 3 rd	Fishing TAO 5N then towards Woleai	179
August 4 th	Fishing around Woleai then baiting	199
August 5 th	Fishing around Woleai then baiting	694
August 6 th	Fishing around Woleai then baiting	90
August 7 th	Fishing towards Sorol via Euaripik	511
August 8 th	Fishing towards Yap (Colonia) via Sorol	225
August 9 th	In port Colonia, then baiting Tomil Harbour	-
August 10 th	Fishing around Yap	811
August 11 th	Fishing around Yap	21
August 12 th	Clearance and depart Yap for Ngulu, fishing then baiting	0
August 13 th	Fishing at 8N 137E buoy, then towards Palau	329
August 14 th	Arrival and clear in to Palau	-
TOTAL		5712

Figure 2. Distribution of releases in FSM waters by half degree square, by species, for PTTTP Phase 2 Cruise 2 (18/07 to 14/08/2008)



57% of the Cruise 1 releases were from unassociated (free) schools, with skipjack comprising 90% of these releases; 27% of releases were from logs or drifting FADs, with just 8% of releases from anchored FADs or buoys. Over 75% of the release from floating object-associated were yellowfin or bigeye. The remainder of releases (8%) were from a small number of seamount and current line-associated schools

With most releases from unassociated schools, typically with a high incidence of larger fish, only 36 % of releases of conventional tags were the smaller 11cm Z tags (2039), and 64% (3669) the 13cm P tags.

ARCHIVAL TAG SUMMARY

During Cruise 2, 6 medium-sized fish were tagged and released with MK 9 archival tags, all yellowfin (62-65 cm).

SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF TAGGED FISH

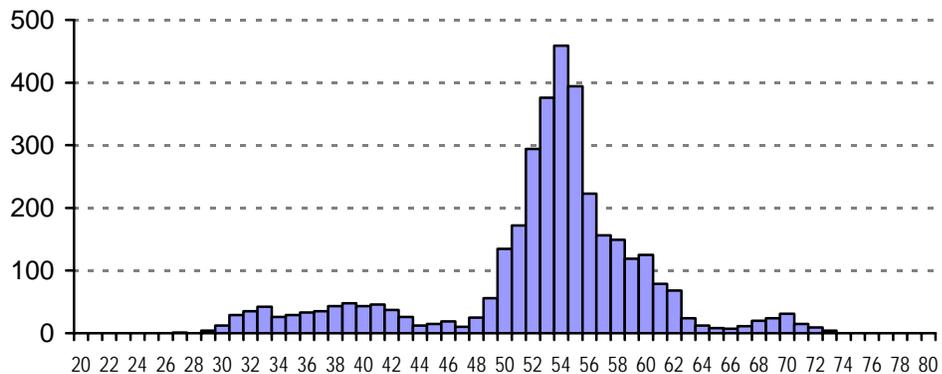
Figure 3 shows the size distribution of fish tagged during the cruise leg.

Skipjack were mostly large fish (> 50 cm) from free schools, with the smaller 30-40 cm fish mostly from associated schools.

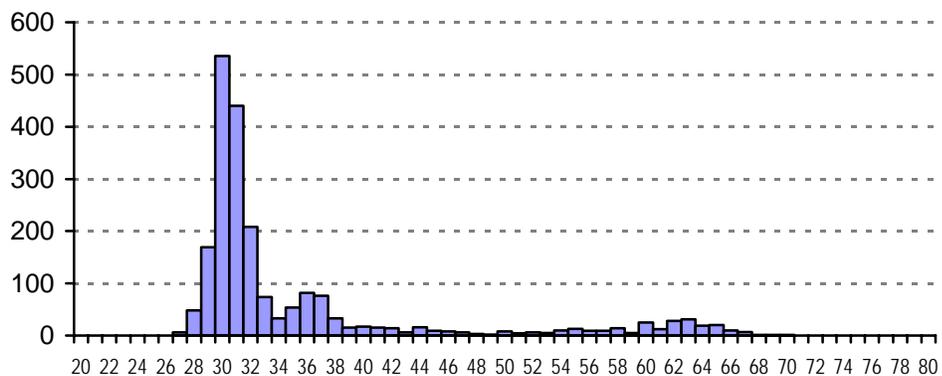
Yellowfin tagged during the cruise were mostly from associated schools, with a narrow mode of 30-32cm fish predominant; larger sized fish, up to 70 cm, were taken in small numbers from free schools. The small number of bigeye tagged were mostly less than 40 cm.

Figure 3. Size distribution of fish tagged during Cruise 2 (18/7 to 14/8/2008)

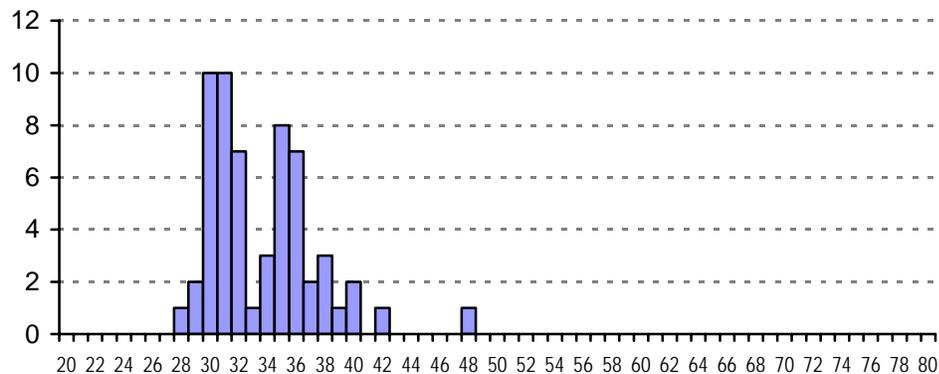
SKIPJACK n = 3543



YELLOWFIN n = 2109



BIGEYE n = 59



BAITING

Lights for baiting were set on 14 nights in 6 locations; one night's bait fishing was aborted due to strong winds (Oroluk) and another produced zero catch for the first time. The average bait catch per night was 115 buckets. Only two days during the cruise involved steaming with no bait, so bait was ultimately not a constraint.

Pohnpei outer harbour proved to be a reliable baiting area, with reasonable quantities bait taken on most occasions, despite atypically clear skies in Pohnpei during the lunar second quarter. The vessel was successfully loaded prior to departure from Pohnpei, with this bait (anchovies and others) lasting for well over week with good survival – the last tank was finally used on the 10th day out.

Baiting was expected to be more difficult in the outer islands and small atolls of FSM on the trip west. This was exacerbated by bad weather for 5 days when passing Oroluk and the outer islands of Chuuk state. Baiting was aborted or not undertaken in several locations on the trip west because of strong winds in the unsheltered locations (Oroluk, Pissaras); however, good catches of blue sprats were made in Woleai atoll on three successive nights (avge 150 bkts/night) and promising signs had been observed in Lamotrek atoll where baiting was hampered on the night by the weather. Baiting in Yap (Tomil Harbour) also produced good quantities of anchovy on two nights close to full moon, but less on the final night, and bait survival, with a good proportion of weaker anchovy species, was poor. The final baiting of the cruise, in Ngulu atoll, produced less than one bucket of bait in two hauls.

Table 2. Summary of baitfishing activity during PTPP Phase 2 Cruise 2

Date	Location	Catch (bkts loaded, hauls)	Species
July 17 th	Pohnpei outer hbr	63 (3)	Anchovy (d), Hq
July 18 th	Pohnpei outer hbr	69 (4)	Anchovy (d), Hq
July 19 th	Pohnpei outer hbr	125 (4)	Anchovy (d),
July 23 rd	Pohnpei outer hbr	106(3)	Anchovy (d),
July 25 th	Pohnpei outer hbr	295 (2)	Anchovy (d), sprats, hh, Hq
July 27 th	Oroluk	No haul (wind)	
August 1 st	Lamotrek	45 (3)	Sprats (d)
August 4 th	Woleai	110 (4)	Sprats (d), sardine, atule
August 5 th	Woleai	184 (3)	Sprats (d)
August 6 th	Woleai	160 (4)	Sprats (d)
August 9 th	Yap (Tomil Hbr)	175 (3)	Anchovy (d, is, id), sardine, atule
August 10 th	Yap (Tomil Hbr)	132 (4)	Anchovy (d, is, id), sardine, atule
August 11 th	Yap (Tomil Hbr)	38 (4)	Anchovy (d, is, id), sardine, atule
August 12 th	Ngulu	< 1 (2)	
	TOTAL	1502 (43)	

CONCLUSIONS

A difficult cruise, with periods of bad weather and low fish availability; it was clear that fish availability was much lower above the 5⁰N line, where most of the baiting opportunities lie, but eventually good numbers of fish were tagged, with a relatively high proportion of yellowfin and some bigeye. Thanks to all who made this possible, including NORMA and Yap State Marine Resources. Great pleasure now to leave the vessel in the good hands of Cruise Leader Bruno Leroy for Cruise 3.

TABLE 3. Tag releases (all tags) by school during PTPP Phase 2 Cruise 2

Project WTP Phase 2					Cruise		2 To	2	Vessel SOLTAI 105				SHK bite	
Event no	Tagged sch no.	Date	Lat	Lon	Sch type	Assoc.	Start	Stop	YFT	BET	SKJ	OTH		TOTAL
48	30	18-Jul-2008	0701.944N	15807.484E	2	1	0651	0713	0	0	126	0	126	4
49	31	18-Jul-2008	0715.998N	15753.774E	2	1	0930	0945	0	0	198	0	198	1
50	32	18-Jul-2008	0709.896N	15800.512E	2	1	1111	1126	37	0	87	0	124	2
52	33	21-Jul-2008	0230.831N	15611.476E	2	1	1448	1503	0	0	407	0	407	0
54	34	22-Jul-2008	0202.772N	15602.439E	1	3	0620	0712	10	4	309	0	323	3
56	35	22-Jul-2008	0224.734N	15609.967E	2	1	0959	1016	1	0	332	0	333	3
57	36	22-Jul-2008	0242.722N	15625.035E	2	1	1245	1253	0	0	68	0	68	0
59	37	22-Jul-2008	0307.327N	15638.498E	2	1	1611	1622	0	0	21	0	21	0
60	38	24-Jul-2008	0707.818N	15756.428E	1	1	1120	1217	101	0	718	0	819	0
61	39	26-Jul-2008	0724.853N	15555.252E	1	1	1327	1333	0	0	2	0	2	1
66	40	02-Aug-2008	0636.005N	14635.000E	1	2	1245	1300	1	0	0	0	1	0
67	41	02-Aug-2008	0635.600N	14631.000E	1	2	1610	1630	6	0	1	0	7	0
68	42	02-Aug-2008	0627.083N	14630.895E	1	4	1727	1756	152	1	71	0	224	13
69	43	03-Aug-2008	0502.656N	14656.999E	1	3	0602	0617	119	7	7	0	133	3
70	44	03-Aug-2008	0536.130N	14612.100E	1	2	1220	1228	5	0	0	0	5	0
71	45	03-Aug-2008	0556.126N	14543.000E	1	1	1612	1620	4	0	5	0	9	0
74	46	03-Aug-2008	0603.147N	14543.700E	1	4	1714	1749	30	0	2	0	32	2
76	47	04-Aug-2008	0655.320N	14418.585E	2	1	0900	0932	59	0	140	0	199	0
77	48	05-Aug-2008	0706.678N	14407.537E	2	1	0735	0742	0	0	79	0	79	1
78	49	05-Aug-2008	0709.154N	14406.300E	4	1	0802	0808	0	0	76	0	76	0
79	50	05-Aug-2008	0708.183N	14406.242E	2	1	0820	0838	0	0	96	0	96	1
80	51	05-Aug-2008	0710.334N	14359.235E	4	1	0935	0944	0	0	118	0	118	1
81	52	05-Aug-2008	0715.000N	14403.000E	4	1	1040	1102	0	0	325	0	325	1
88	53	06-Aug-2008	0708.098N	14355.805E	2	1	1255	1315	0	0	90	0	90	0
91	54	07-Aug-2008	0645.363N	14254.105E	3	7	1322	1430	292	6	62	0	360	1
93	55	07-Aug-2008	0700.712N	14231.800E	2	1	1742	1754	99	9	43	0	151	0
96	56	08-Aug-2008	0856.525N	13911.088E	1	2	1736	1840	191	10	24	0	225	0
98	57	10-Aug-2008	0955.055N	13812.009E	4	8	1149	1242	48	0	55	0	103	2
99	58	10-Aug-2008	0926.605N	13800.886E	1	2	1637	1752	628	7	73	0	708	2
101	59	11-Aug-2008	0954.150N	13809.200E	3	1	1105	1119	3	0	0	0	3	0
102	60	11-Aug-2008	0931.200N	13801.400E	1	2	1350	1403	11	1	6	0	18	0
104	61	13-Aug-2008	0755.049N	13705.392E	1	4	1409	1423	312	14	3	0	329	1
CRUISE 2 TOTALS									2109	59	3544	0	5712	42

APPENDIX 1

DAILY LOG EXTRACTS

July 24th

Third haul 0330 hrs for 18 bkts (total 106 bkts) then out through passage 0430 hrs headed for Ant; little seen in the area where fish sighted yesterday; numerous false alarms with YF schools, then finally came across area of birds and fish towards Pakin; good bite which lasted an hour before bait ran out; another big school also visible nearby; 819 tagged, of which ~ 101 YF, and 4 AT YF; 4th bonus achieved, guests very happy and headed for Pohnpei; alongside LuenThai wharf 1430 hrs and began preparing for cocktail; guests including 4 ambassadors (Australia, China, Japan, US) arrived for vessel tour, complete with rendition of Solomons anthem, then repaired to China Star restaurant for cocktail; very fine time had by all, excellent display prepared by THU, CYW and HEM - ultimately left with Commission as permanent fixture; finished most stocks in the resto before retiring after an excellent evening .. and a pretty good day. End of month 1, and 4 to go, but with close to 8,500 in the bag ...

July 25th

Busy day in port, as always - fuel from Mobil, despite best efforts to find cheaper source; managed to get all done and away, with Konrad Engelberger and colleague (Roseo Marquez) onboard, by 1630 hrs and proceeded to bait ground; good conditions, bait quick to gather; first haul 2100 hrs in midst of first movie on new crew screen; excellent haul with 235 bkts loaded, mostly prime anchovy; second haul on light boat 2200 hrs for 60 bkts; close to full tanks so headed for Oroluk and outside passage by 2330 hrs for the 160nm run to Oroluk

July 26th

Busy day in port, as always - fuel from Mobil, despite best efforts to find cheaper source; managed to get all done and away, with Konrad Engelberger and colleague (Roseo Marquez) onboard, by 1630 hrs and proceeded to bait ground; good conditions, bait quick to gather; first haul 2100 hrs in midst of first movie on new crew screen; excellent haul with 235 bkts loaded, mostly prime anchovy; second haul on light boat 2200 hrs for 60 bkts; close to full tanks so headed for Oroluk and outside passage by 2330 hrs for the 160nm run to Oroluk

July 27th

12nm from Oroluk at daylight - strong drift and rising easterly wind; steamed in towards Pioneer Pass and dropped dinghy with 4 souls and all the ant gear 0730 hrs before heading for N side to fish; conditions only fair - will be a wet trip to the island; searched most of the day under very difficult conditions - no fish seen, no bait thrown; inside through nice passage 1520 hrs; two good YF (78,84 cm) trolled just outside passage - too tired for AT; anchored near Oroluk 1600 hrs in 45m; light boat also; ant men returned 1720 hrs after successful day; lights set and waiting, with Boks/Wallabies game on show; problem with two lights and only one light until 2100 hrs; good showing at surface (sprats) and strong show deep (fusiliers ?), but strong wind unrelenting and no haul.

July 28th

12nm from Oroluk at daylight - strong drift and rising easterly wind; steamed in towards Pioneer Pass and dropped dinghy with 4 souls and all the ant gear 0730 hrs before heading for N side to fish; conditions only fair - will be a wet trip to the island; searched most of the day under very difficult conditions - no fish seen, no bait thrown; inside through nice passage 1520 hrs; two good YF (78,84 cm) trolled just outside passage - too tired for AT; anchored near Oroluk 1600 hrs in 45m; light boat also; ant men returned 1720 hrs after successful day; lights set and waiting, with Boks/Wallabies game on show; problem with two lights and only one light until 2100 hrs; good showing at surface (sprats) and strong show deep (fusiliers ?), but strong wind unrelenting and no haul.

July 29th

Slowed down at midnight, then drifting off Kuop atoll from 0420 hrs; late sunrise at this longitude on PNI time; started searching and fishing after 0700 hrs - chummed school very near reef at eastern end of Kuop - no surprisingly, MT - one poled but could have been more; wind freshening as headed north toward passage - nothing seen of any consequence - one probable large tuna lost on the troll; inside 1040 hrs and alongside without too many problems near noon; the full deal re procedures - Customs, Immigration, Quarantine etc - enervating; set watches back one hour to Oz/PNG time; Thomas managed to catch his flight, mainly because of the gift hour and took off 1500 hrs; opted to stay alongside since baiting not possible and Mr Bean in at 1000 hrs tomorrow; will have full security but wharf area looks secure.

July 30th

Provisioning, then BML collected early from airport, problems at bank (2 signatures), declined offer of water which came way too late after a litany of excuses over 24 hrs; ready to cast off at 1030 hrs, but not cleared until (finally) 1130 hrs; paid the usual exorbitant agent's fees, out through passage close to 1300 hrs and glad to be gone; steamed towards Murilo (70 nm) but no chance of making it; diverted 1700 hrs still 30nm off to drift in lee of Nomwin before midnight; late departure a shame since Paulino had made all necessary contacts by phone and radio, got approvals etc. Nothing seen all afternoon - one marlin lost on the jump late in the day; another fishless day ...

July 31st

Drifting in almost calm sea then head westwards 0600 hrs; squalls commenced 0730 hrs with 25/30 kts wind and rain; only began to ease off about 1030 hrs; one humpback marlin ~ 90 kgs trolled 0930 hrs; birds around but no schools; cleared to come into Pisasas (or anywhere else in Namonuito) but no shelter; inside wide pass 1330 hrs near Pisasas; no shelter (deep water too far from island) and beset with coral heads; opted to keep going so headed out and turned for Satawal/Lamotrek and goodbye to Chuuk state; one YF school 1600 hrs but not chummed; seas still moderate but following, wind ESE 15 kts; nothing else for the day - another skunk .. the smell is becoming overpowering !

August 1st

A new month, a new FSM state, a new beginning ! Good passage overnight - missed everything; sea moderated, but still rain; weather improved rapidly but no fish sighted; one large fish (prob YF) lost on the Alvey with all line out - 10/0 hook straightened; off Satawal 1245 hrs in good weather; managed to offload cargo and a marlin, once on the right side of the island, to some happy folks; reports that not much fish at present; nice deep planked canoes, but maybe not too much traditional tuna fishing anymore ? Headed off for Lamotrek; school of very small fish sighted en route but not chummed; inside over 10m sill 1820 hrs, and anchored in 40m plus at 1850 hrs; sprats slow to gather, but good showing for first haul at 1115 hrs in fresh northerly wind; many lost in transfer and just 25 bkts loaded; second haul on lightboat midnight for 5 bkts of mostly sprat.

August 2nd

Final haul 0530 hrs for 10 bkts, 45 total - just on dawn and loaded in daylight; decided to head for TAO 5N 147E after deciding against searching around Elato and Olimarau; NNE wind and rain, swinging round to ESE with more rain; nothing seen AM but found a large log with modest signs along a current line 1300 hrs - no biting (1 YF tagged) and heaps of RR/trigger/trevally, so tied up for several hours and tried again - similar result but 7 fish on a nearby log (6 YF); continued heading south and found a log with radio buoy attached 1730 hrs - hard initially to get past the vermin but eventually 224 tagged (152 YF, 1 BE, 1 SJ) on several passes; two tanks used and mostly small fish (YF ~ 30 cm), but some larger SJ and good to see fish again; one tag recovery and many shark bites; kept steaming south (one longliner sighted) and will be at TAO 5N at ~ 0400 hrs; another longliner (no details) sighted 2300 hrs.

August 3rd

Arrived at TAO 5N position 0350 hrs and drifted; not good signs but began chumming before 0600 hrs; modest bite, several passes but never much there; opted to head towards Woleai via lolanthe shoal with 2 plus tanks left (though not full); good weather with light westerly early; 133 tagged (119 YF, 7 BE, 7 SJ); sea flattened out, wind dropped, mer d'huile, doldrums by 1100 hrs; marlin close to 100 kgs trolled 0845 hrs but no sightings all morning; spys on shifts in hot conditions; started seeing debris early afternoon; one log for 5 fish, one free school for 9 YF, two others for no catch (mostly RR) including one large log - possibly a bit precipitate in leaving, with good signs; half-sunk Phils payao 1715 hrs for 32 fish; believed bait to be finished - another drifting FAD nearby; alas, one tank left but not employed; steamed overnight to drift near Ulloa Reef before dawn; 179 for the day - somewhat disappointing given good weather and just enough bait.

August 4th

Drifting from 0415 hrs between Ulloa Reef and Ifalik Island; fishing from 0600 hrs, circling Ulloa reef; one school of YF chummed 0830 hrs without success; another free school 0900 hrs much more productive, on two passes; YF came in during second bite - 199 tagged (59 YF), including one AT YF: bait finished but maintained watch on the way in and bird flocks numerous; will probably pay to fish around here tomorrow if good bait tonight; inside beautiful Woleai east harbour 1315 hrs; ashore to meet with chief and get approval for baiting; will take some folks out tomorrow as observers; gave the usual marlin and some fish as custom offering; many stayed ashore for the traditional experience (tuba, no shirts) and others even went on betel hunting expedition; all good stuff, good BBQ, good morale despite the rigours of the last week, and raring to go tomorrow; good show early, first haul with various spectators 2130 hrs; 56 bkts of mostly blue sprats but some large sardine; second haul on light boat 2230 hrs - 25 bkts but more sardine and atule - some scooped and some eaten on the spot.

August 5th

Third haul 0300 hrs for 25 bkts (large sardines scooped out), final on light boat 0415 hrs for 5 bkts, total 111 bkts of blue sprats and some large sardines; headed out 0440 hrs for Ulloa reef; large area of school fish on the way and began tagging 0730 hrs - 694, all tagged in various aggregations before bait almost finished by 1100 hrs; whale alongside at one stage (minke?); quiet at midday but in and anchored near Woleai main village 1500 hrs; with permission for baiting in larger western lagoon, relocated 1700 hrs and anchored 1800 hrs after scouting the area and pass, and setting the lightboat; 3 observers from the area onboard, as per prior arrangement, by 1830 hrs; bait slow to gather at surface - first haul 2130 hrs for 72 bkts, second on lightboat for 60 bkts; plan is to leave at 0300 hrs and head direct to Ulloa reef, to increase prospect of higher YF percentage.

August 6th

Third haul 52 bkts for 184 total of good blue sprats; up anchor and headed for Ulloa Reef 0300 hrs, passing by south at 0630 hrs; very little seen early - sightings started 0830 hrs; at least 7 schools chummed throughout the day, with fish often briefly at the stern but no biting; often larger YF in the school; some success at 1255 hrs with 90 large SJ (4-6 kgs) tagged from one school; stiff SW wind came up for a few hours then dropped; inside east lagoon 1630 hrs then drifting whilst farewells taken with chief and others; returned to west lagoon for baiting; set light boat then anchored 0650 hrs; bait slow to gather under bright moon; moonset 2230 hrs, then first haul 2330 hrs for 34 bkts plus plenty of large fish (carangids, barracudas) scooped.

August 7th

Second haul on light boat 1245 hrs for 105 bkts; third haul 0400 hrs for 19 bkts and final haul on light boat 0500 hrs for just 2 bkts, total 160 bkts; up anchor heading for Eauripik 0550 hrs; weather perfect; nothing until close to the island (8 nm) - chummed one flighty school of SJ four times for no result; second school same; 1320 hrs came across a strong current line with flotsam etc - school with whales when first sighted, and a Filipino drum payao nearby; good rippers of

small YF and SJ - 360 tagged, with some YF < 30 cm and the odd larger fish; little else during the afternoon until late when several schools chummed before getting a good one with mixed smallish SJ and YF - 151 tagged with some BE; other schools of mostly very small SJ (< 30 cm) as darkness approached, but other schools around - just ran out of time; finished fishing 1845 hrs, with 511 for the day, the 10,000 for FSM breached and closing on the 2,000 for the monthly bonus; steaming overnight in fine weather - should be close to Sorol by 0900 hrs; satphone down so no comms for most of the day.

August 8th

Steaming over night in good conditions towards Sorol; all bait in S3 died for unknown reasons, so just ~ 80 bkts left; close to Sorol 0800 hrs - nothing seen all morning; one larger marlin lost on troll (hook straightened); still no satphone; one small school that would normally be ignored chummed 1400 hrs but no interest; large log found 1730 hrs and 225 tagged in multiple passes - 10 BE, 191 YF, 24 SJ; bait finished and heading for Yap.

August 9th

Drifted off Yap harbour entrance from 0130 hrs; entered 0700 hrs and alongside Fisheries wharf 0730 hrs; people slow to arrive but gradually got sorted - EPA, Immigration and Customs, Quarantine etc; YFA (Mark Mathow) as agents and Marine Resources (Andy Tafileichig, John Tipmai) assisting; baiting approved, Paulino booked out at 0300 hrs Sunday morning (still need to pay for ticket) and up to 3 folks possibly coming onboard; will move to baiting ground (very near) at 1700 hrs; ticket purchase after CO opens at 1800 hrs; anchored 1720 hrs in harbour at recommended anchorage; clear skies and bright moon but no current; bait gathered slowly but consistently; first haul scheduled for after moonset (~ 0130 hrs)

August 10th

First haul 0145 hrs for 107 bkts of mostly gold anchovy - numerous Platax scooped out; second on light boat 0230 hrs for 9 bkts with much larger fish; third haul 0500 hrs for 60 bkts - much larger fish (atule, sardines, carangids) scooped out - total 176 bkts of good bait; out through passage 0700 hrs; little seen until close to Hall Bank - several schools chummed before one on seamount (which seems to be out of position on chart) yielded over 100 fish (YF, SJ) - classic seamount school with RR, MT and large scad - short bites only before the vermin took over; no school encountered on the way back to Yap but then found a good log close to the south west point of the island which resulted in 708 fish tagged with almost 90% YF; at anchor at 1920 hrs in Yap harbour; moon partly hidden with clouds. First haul at 2220 hrs resulted in 95 bkts with the same species as previous night. Second on light boat at 2320 hrs for 10 bkts.

August 11th

Third set of the night at 0400 hrs with 21 bkts and 4th set (light boat) at 0515 hrs for only 4 bkts with many sardines and other big species scooped out. Out of passage at 0610 hrs, heading north on the Yap east side to arrive asap at Hunter seamount. Checked a small log with birds on the way with no success. Arrived over mount top at 0930 hrs but no sign of surface activity; headed back to Yap. 5 miles later, one 200 +kg marlin lost (unhooked) only 50 meters from the boat after a 26 min battle; then found seamount associated schools 1 mile after the marlin but too many RR and MT to be efficiently fished; only 3 YF tagged. Searched the current line on the SW side of Yap; one school of small YF and SJ associated with a log but slow biting and just 18 fish tagged. Back in Yap harbour for baiting at 1800 hrs. First bait-net at 2100 hrs for 5 bkts only - echo-sounder looked more promising but net caught up and haul delayed. Second net (light boat) for 20 bkts.

August 12th

Third haul 0415 for 11 bkts, final on light boat 0510 hrs for 2 bkts; alongside the wharf in light rain at 0800 hrs; clearance at 0900 hrs. After last shopping and email (boat email still unavailable), clear out from FSM / leave Yap at 1100 hrs in direction of Ngulu atoll, with approval to bait - no

shelter so weather will need to be good or wind favourable; off northern pass 1800 hrs - no fish sighted on the way except for few birds and dolphins close to Ngulu; inside with great difficulty, dropped light boat and anchored 1840 hrs in 34m; light wind, some chop; no cloud, bright moon, no signs on sounder

August 13th

Zero catch in two hauls at 0400 hrs and 0500 hrs; up anchor at 0730 hrs and headed for TAO buoy at 5N 137E; nothing seen, intermittent rain and squalls; reached buoy position 1300 hrs, with marlin ~ 90 kgs caught while approaching; buoy not found but instead found a substantial rakit or payao guard house; fish below quick to bite - medium YF first then smaller YF when the very limited bait ran out; 329 tagged - 14 BE, 312 YF and 3 SJ, ; cleaning up and headed for Palau/Koror east entrance to wait for pilot; steaming overnight in good conditions.

August 14th

Good passage overnight; clocks put back one hour for Palau; drifting off Malakal Passage 0715 hrs; port contacted and awaiting pilot; expect to be alongside by 0900 hrs.