

Pathways for industry-research partnerships in Pacific tuna

Who are we?

The Pacific Community (SPC) provides scientific and technical expertise to support its members and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. This science, and that of its partners, directly contributes to the sustainable management of tuna stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean.



Photo: SPC

How to contact us?

To discuss industry-research partnerships in any of the areas outlined in this publication, don't hesitate to contact us via:
TunaResearchPartnerships@spc.int



Photo: Francisco Blaha

The Pacific Community (SPC) is looking to strengthen its partnerships with the tuna industry in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). These partnerships provide a simple, low-cost way for industry to further engage in ensuring that the key tuna stocks in the WCPO remain in a healthy state and do not become overfished or experience over-fishing. Industry collaboration on tuna research is fundamental to help SPC to carry on its crucial work providing high-quality science, advice, and support to sustainable management of the tuna resources in the WCPO, for the benefit of all stakeholders.

How can industry support tuna science?

Buoy-sharing for tuna tagging

During the WCPO FAD closure (currently July to September), SPC releases 5000–10,000 tagged tuna each year to provide necessary data input for the region's stock assessments.

To maximise the efficiency of the limited time available for tagging research cruises, access to industry-deployed echosounder buoys is a critical part of locating tuna aggregations suitable for tagging.

How to support

Share real-time echosounder buoy data located in the zone where the scientific team is operating via your buoy provider, ceasing one week prior to the re-opening of the FAD fishery with all data provided being subsequently deleted.

The benefits

Directly support the gathering of data used in stock assessments.

SPC aids with echosounder buoy transmission costs.

Tag recapture information

Fish tagging requires accurate information about the date and location of recaptured tagged fish.

How to support

Encourage your crew to look for tagged fish - promotional material is available at: tagging.spc.int

Send recovered tag information to port tag recovery officers, or directly to us at: tagging@spc.int

The benefits

Rewards of up to USD 270 and lottery entries for every tag found.

Receive information on the origins of the fish you catch.

Tuna biological sampling

SPC takes biological samples from four tonnes of fish in the WCPO every year to monitor the ecosystems which support them and the impacts of fishing.

How to support

Contribute up to 100 kg of caught tuna per year from your fleet or processing facility.

SPC can facilitate sampling, with little to no disruption to your day-to-day operations.

The benefits

Opportunities for local staff to be trained and compensated for tasks such as sampling, storing, and packing.

Become a direct contributor to the Pacific Marine Specimen Bank

www.spc.int/ofp/PacificSpecimenBank

FADs and fishing technology

Historical FAD buoy data and fisher's knowledge are key to understanding changes in fishing practices, evaluating the accuracy of echosounder estimates, and mitigating FAD loss and ecosystem impacts.

Non-entangling and biodegradable FAD designs need to be developed and adapted to real fishing practices and oceanography.

How to support

Contact your buoy manufacturer to share historical buoy data with SPC (echosounder or position only).

Contact us to join the WCPFC biodegradable and non-entangling FAD trial, or discuss past fishing strategies and technology changes.

The benefits

Be proactive and collaborate on common research projects such as FAD recovery programs.

Develop new FAD designs adapted to your fishing practices and management measures.

"Because of our relationship with SPC and the importance of their stock assessments, we're able to share [echo-sounder buoy information] in real time with the tagging expedition."

William Gibbons-Fly

American Tuna Boat Association
Tuna tagging helps Pacific islands face uncertain future, *The Economist*, Oct 2020



Photo: SPC



Photo: SPC

