PNA COVID-19 Purse Seine Dashboard

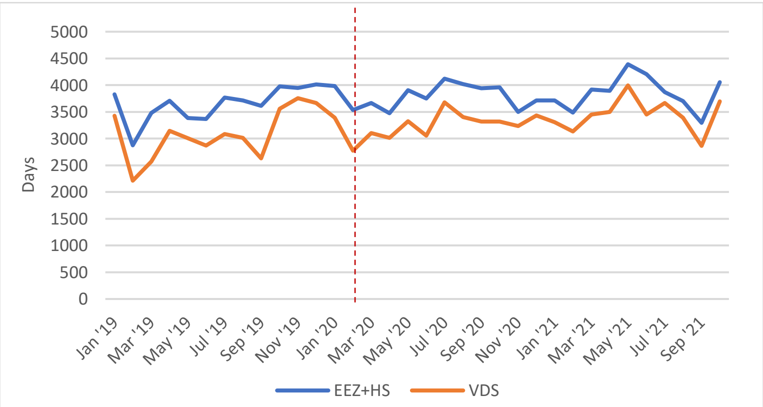
November 2021

Key trends:

- Preliminary figures indicate that both overall purse seine fishing days and VDS usage rose in October, with the preliminary VDS figure of 3696 days the highest October monthly total since at least 2014. Fishing intensity (fishing days/calendar day) also rose by around 19%. Note that October figures may be adjusted as NFDs are processed.
- Total purse seine catch (EEZs+HS) rose in October, up around 57% on the September catch, albeit remained at low levels relative to much of 2019-2021. Catches of SKJ rose by around 60% on the September figures, coinciding with the end of the FAD closure. Fishing was broadly concentrated in the west with catch and effort highest in PNG. KI catch and effort was the lowest since at least Jan ’19.
- Based on preliminary figures, overall catch rates rose in October although remained low relative to much of the 2019-2021 period. SKJ catch rates rebounded somewhat, although remained relatively low.
- Transhipment volumes rose in October, up by around 12% on September volumes. Transhipments in PNG ports accounted for over half of all volume. Transhipment volumes rose in FSM but fell in Majuro.
- Bangkok SKJ prices averaged $1500 in October, up from $1300 in September, according to Thai Union figures. Singapore MGO price rose in October, exceeding pre-pandemic levels, but has since fallen slightly in November.
- Daily new COVID case numbers continued to fall across most key southeast Asian processing centres, although Vietnam is currently experiencing a second peak.

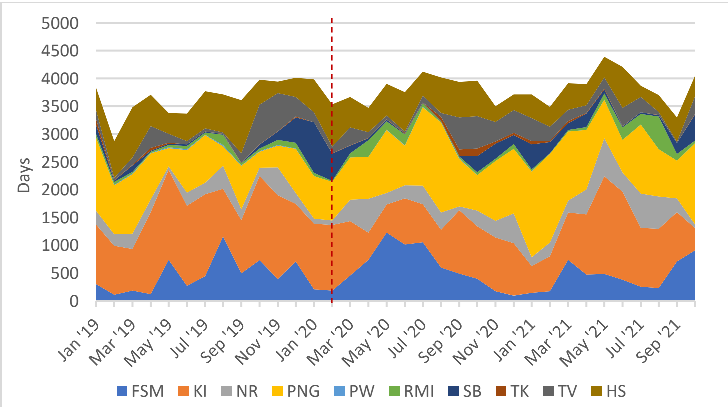
Fishing effort

Overall effort (PNA EEZs+HS)



- Both overall fishing effort (EEZ+HS) and usage of VDS days rose in Oct, coinciding with the end of the FAD closure. Fishing intensity (fishing days/calendar day) also rose by around 19%. Oct’s preliminary VDS usage was the highest Oct monthly total since at least 2014.

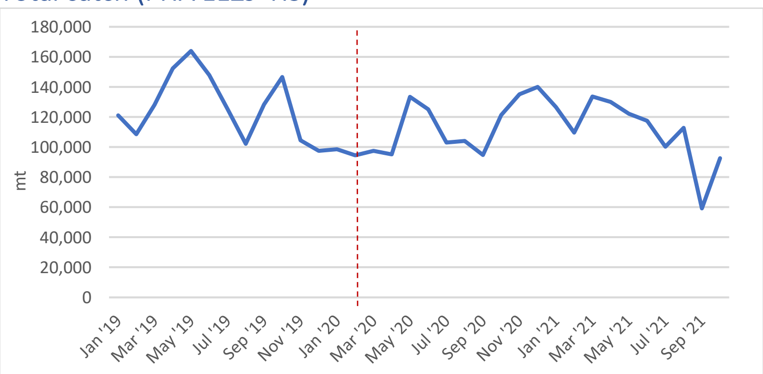
Distribution of effort (EEZs)



- Effort broadly shifted westwards in Oct, with highest levels of effort in PNG (>double the Sept figure). Effort also rose in FSM, SB and TV. Effort fell in KI, NR and RMI. Effort in KI was the lowest since at least Jan ’19. Preliminary figures indicate effort remains high in PNG in November.

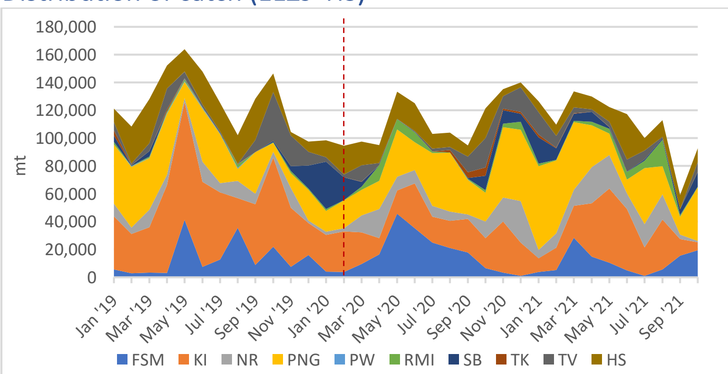
Catch

Total catch (PNA EEZs+HS)



- Total catch (EEZ+HS) rose in Oct (92,684t), coinciding with the end of the FAD closure. Oct catch was up around 57% on the Sept catch, albeit remained below catch levels for much of 2020/21. Much of the increase was driven by higher catches of SKJ, which rose by around 60% (38,704t to 62,028t).

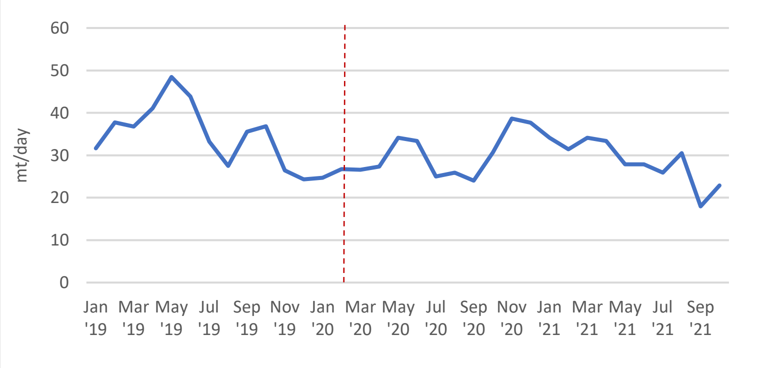
Distribution of catch (EEZs+HS)



- Catches were concentrated in the west in Oct with PNG’s catch (38,457t), increasing by around 300% on the Sept figure. Catch also rose in FSM and SB. Catch fell in RMI, NR and KI, with the KI catch the lowest monthly total since at least Jan ’19.

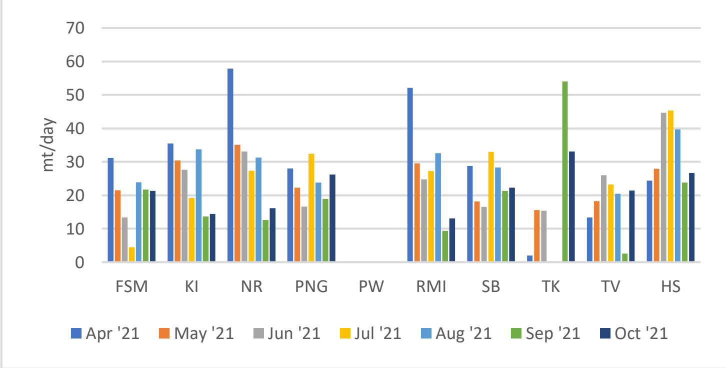
Catch rates

Overall (PNA EEZs+HS)



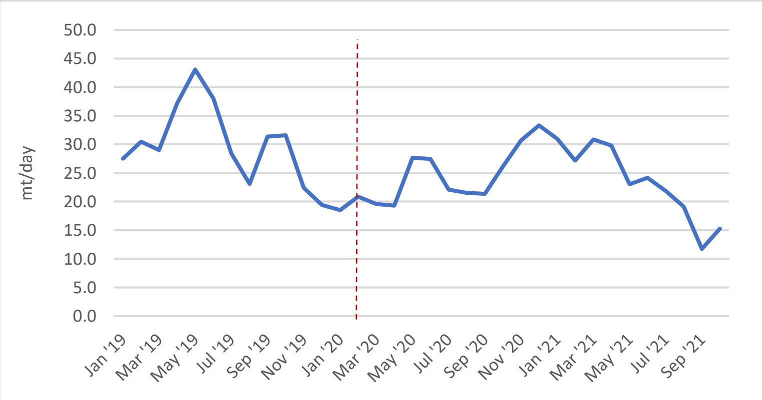
- Overall catch rates rose in Oct, although remained low relative to much of the 2019-2021 period. These figures are preliminary and may be adjusted slightly as NFDs are processed and additional e-reporting is received.

Catch rate by zone (EEZs)



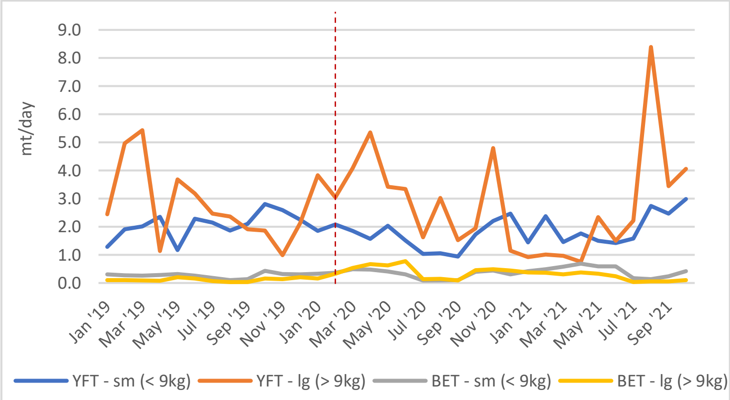
- Preliminary figures indicate that catch rates were relatively stable across the region, although returned to more normal levels in TV after a low month in Sept. Catch rates remained relatively low in the eastern EEZs, with the exception of TK (although this was based on very low levels of effort).

Skipjack



- SKJ catch rate rose in Oct, although remained at relatvely low levels. The Oct SKJ catch rate was the second lowest since at least Jan '19.

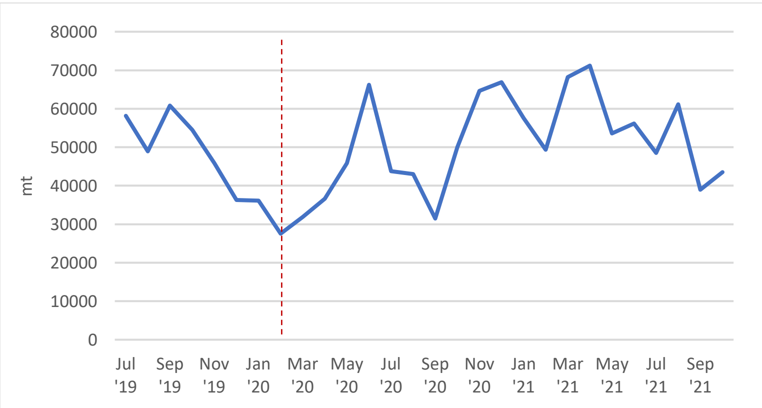
Other species



- Amongst the other purse seine species/size categories, catch rates of large YFT rose in Oct remaining at relatively high levels. Catch rates of small YFT and BET rose, coinciding with end of the FAD closure.

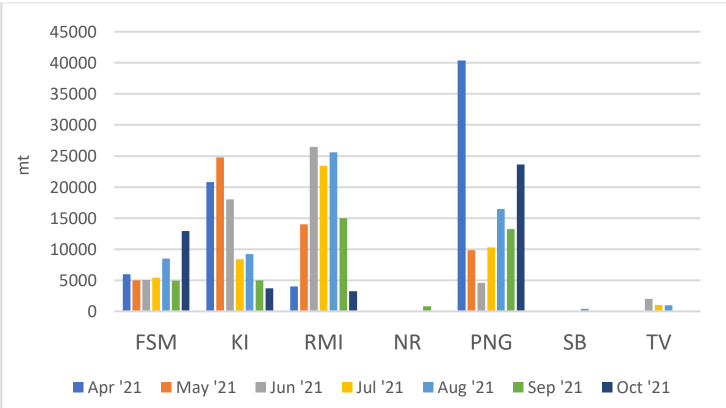
Transhipment

Volume



- Transhipment volumes in PNA ports rose in Oct, up by around 12% on Sept volumes (from 38,962t to 43,497t).

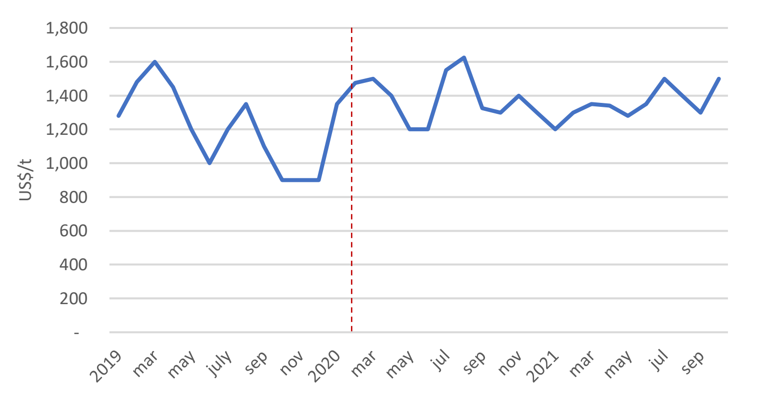
Location



- Transhipment volumes were highest in PNG, accounting for around 54% of total volume. Volumes in FSM were the highest since June '20, while volumes were low in RMI and KI.

Prices

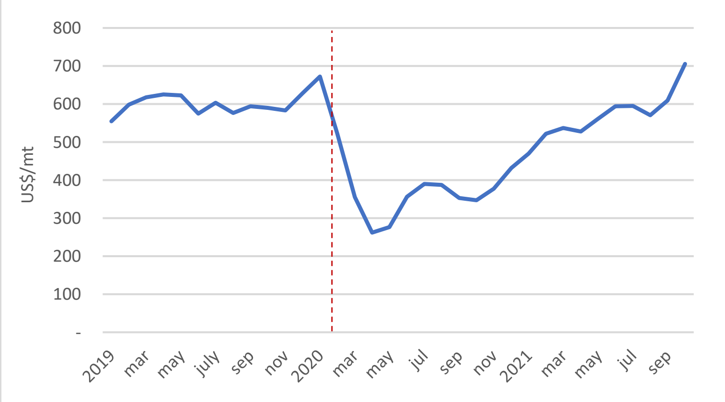
SKJ Price



https://investor.thaiunion.com/raw_material.html

- Thai Union report that Bangkok SKJ prices averaged around $1500 in Oct, up from $1300 in Sept. Atuna report that Manta price rose slightly from $1550 in Sept to $1600 in Oct.

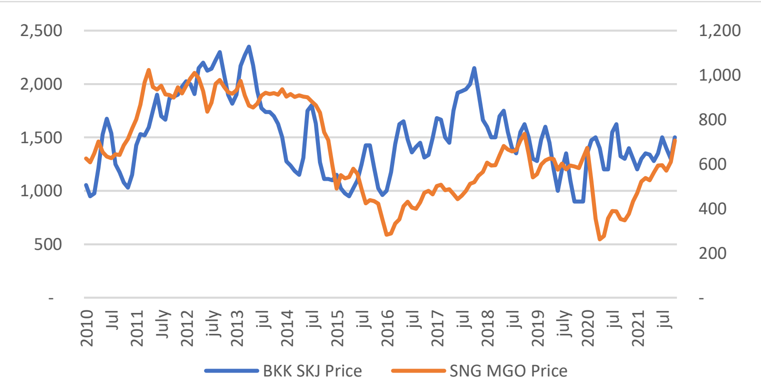
Fuel price



https://shipandbunker.com/prices/apac/sea/sg-sin-singapore#MGO

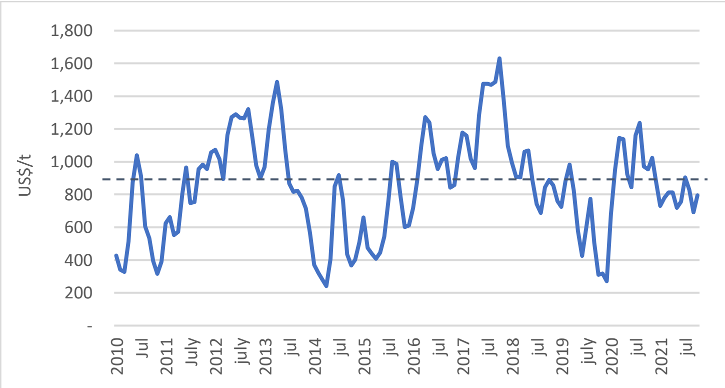
- Singapore MGO price rose sharply in Oct, averaging US$706/mt and up from US$610/mt in Sep. Price has fallen slightly since then, sitting at $691/mt on 16th Nov.

BKK SKJ Price vs Fuel price



- The BKK SKJ price and Singapore MGO price index lines 'met' in Oct for the first time since the start of the pandemic. This was largely driven by the sharp increase in fuel price, despite the increase in SKJ price.

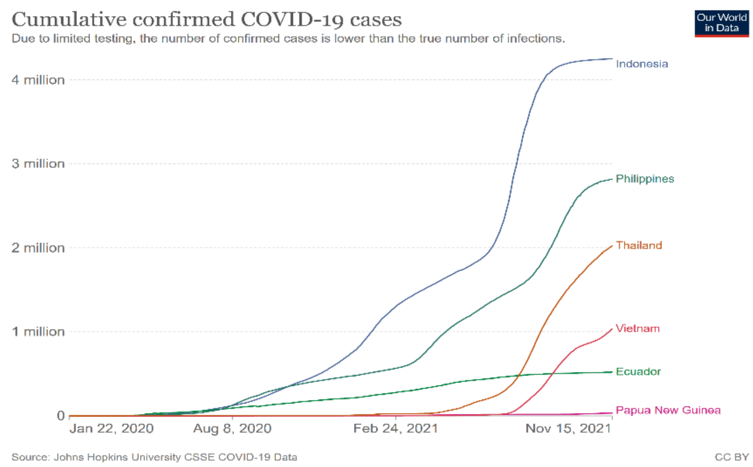
Price differential (BKK SKJ – Fuel)



- The price differential between BKK SKJ price and Singapore MGO rose slightly to $795 in Oct, but remains below the 10 year average of around $880.

COVID-19 in processing countries

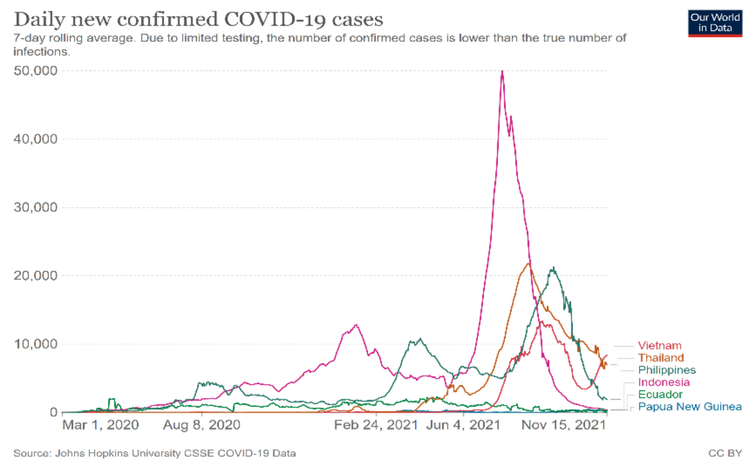
Total cases



https://ourworldindata.org/covid-cases

- Total case numbers in Indonesia and the Philippines have begun to plateau after large spikes in mid-2021. Case numbers in PNG are expected to be a substantial under-estimate given limited testing.

Daily confirmed cases

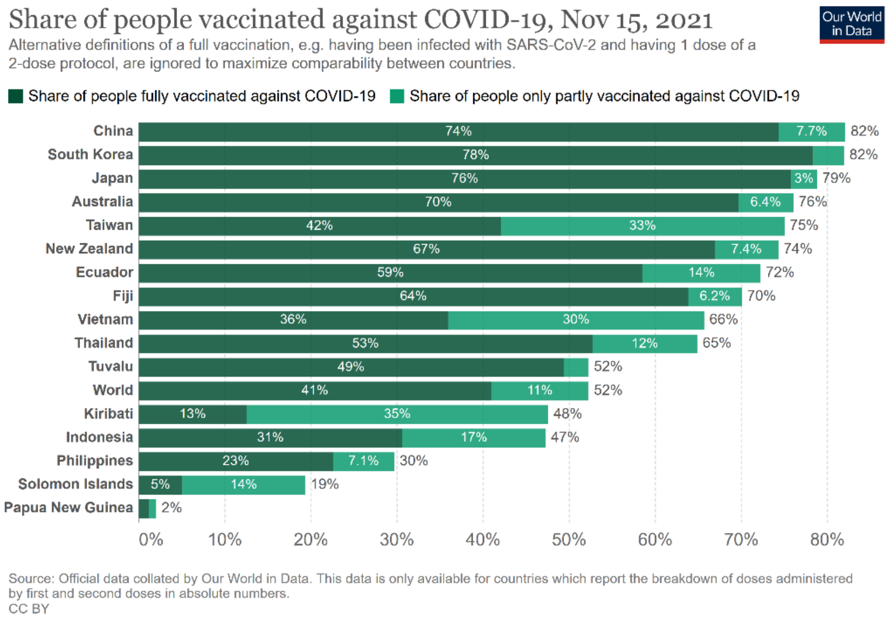


https://ourworldindata.org/covid-cases

- The surge in case numbers across the main SE Asian processing countries during July-Sept continues to decline, although Vietnam is currently experiencing a second peak. Ecuador's new daily case numbers remain low.

Other issues:

- As at Nov 14th, PNG is reported to have had a cumulative total of 32,953 confirmed COVID cases, Solomon Is 20, Palau 8, Marshall Is 4, Kiribati 2 and FSM 1[1]. Case numbers in PNG are thought to be an underestimate given testing rates have been low and anecdotal reports indicate the 'positive rate' (proportion of all tests returning a COVID positive result) remains high.
- Fiji is reported to have 52,397 cases, although daily case numbers have fallen substantially from a peak of ~1,200 cases per day in late July to fewer than 25/day in mid-Nov[2]. From 1 December, Fiji will open to all fully vaccinated travellers from Travel Partner Countries for quarantine free travel under certain conditions.
- Vaccination rates across major tuna producing and processing countries remain highly variable (note the rates in the graph below are percentages of the total population). According to WHO data, countries such as Nauru and Palau have achieved very high rates of full vaccination, while others such as Marshall Is report very high rates of vaccination of adults (80%+) in Majuro. Vaccination rates in PNG remain at relatvely low levels, while Kiribati and Solomon Is are improving[3]. Vaccination rates in Thailand and Vietnam are now above the world average, while rates in the Philippines and Indonesia remain below the world average.



- The Australian-based Lowy Institute released modelling in November which updates current vaccination status amongst Pacific countries as well as predicting vaccination rates in the coming months/years[4]. The analysis revealed a 'divided Pacific' with some countries such as Nauru, Niue, Palau, Fiji and Samoa already reaching very high vaccination rates, while others such as PNG are predicted to only reach 35% of the adult population being vaccinated by August 2026.
- Thai Union reported that as key markets, including Europe and North America, continued to emerge from COVID-19-enforced lockdowns and restrictions during the 3rd quarter customers have cut back on stockpiling shelf-stable products such as canned seafood[5]. Nevertheless, sales of frozen and chilled seafood have improved.
- Global freight costs remain at near record levels, although have fallen slightly in recent weeks. Atuna reports that many buyers/sellers are postponing orders to the extent possible[6]. Several global ports are introducing novel schemes, including financial penalties, to help reduce the backlog of containers[7].

Notes:

- Data on catch, effort, catch rates and transhipment is based on electronic reporting through iFIMS as at 16th November, 2021. Some data may change as more information is added over time. Figures for October 2021 should be considered preliminary.
- The EEZs+HS effort figures in the fishing effort graph do not include a VDS vessel size adjustment factor. The actual VDS usage figures are adjusted for vessel size. HS days may include some non-fishing time. HS effort figures are those for the eastern high seas and HSPs 4 and 5.
- A dashed-red line has been on many graphs at February 2020 to provide an indication of the time in which COVID-related restrictions were becoming more common globally and regionally.

[1] https://ourworldindata.org/covid-cases
[2] https://ourworldindata.org/covid-cases
[3] https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations
[4] https://pacificvaccination.lowyinstitute.org/
[5] https://www.thaiunion.com/en/newsroom/press-release/1479/thai-union-3q21-sales-growth-benefits-from-ongoing-business-diversification-as-the-world-returns-to-more-normalcy-following-the-global-pandemic-slowdown
[6] https://atuna.com/news/thai-processors-lose-a-quarter-of-business-in-the-americas
[7] https://atuna.com/news/us-largest-ports-want-to-reduce-pile-up-of-containers-with-fines