

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

85TH MEETING

Veracruz, Veracruz (Mexico)

10-14 June 2013

RESOLUTION C-13-04

COLLECTION AND ANALYSES OF DATA ON FISH- AGGREGATING DEVICES

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC):

Taking into account the best available scientific information on the status of the bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack stocks;

Committed to the long-term conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Understanding that all fishing gears, including fish aggregating devices (FADs), have an effect on the stocks and the pelagic ecosystem in the EPO and that such effects should be fully understood by members of the Commission;

Attentive to the provisions of IATTC Resolution C-99-07 on measures related to the regulation of FADs;

Agreeing that to accurately provide the scientific advice necessary to effectively manage tuna fisheries in the EPO it is necessary for the scientific staff of the IATTC to have access to and analyze the relevant data regarding such fisheries and gears and for Commission members to put in place measures as needed to collect such information in their fisheries;

Acknowledging that observers currently collect data on FADs in the EPO that has been examined by the IATTC staff (Document SAC 02-13) and that the Commission has adopted measures for further research on FADs; the significant effect that FADs may have on bigeye tuna spawning biomass, according to IATTC estimates (Document SAC-03-06), that skipjack tuna is captured by FADs and in unassociated schools in the EPO (Document SAC-03-03), and according to IATTC estimates, its exploitation rate has been increasing in recent years (Document SAC-03-07);

Recognizing that these measures need to be expanded and improved upon to ensure that the effects of the use of FADs on highly migratory fish stocks along with non-target, associated and dependent species, are fully understood and that the Commission can receive the best available scientific advice concerning mitigation of any negative effects;

Committed to ensuring that such scientific advice is taken into account in the development of the Commission's conservation and management measures concerning fishing for tunas;

Noting that based on recent scientific analysis of the development of improved FAD designs, in particular non-entangling FADs, both drifting and anchored, helps reducing the incidence of entanglement of sharks, marine turtles and other species;

Further noting that whale sharks are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including from fishing, and noting the ecological and economic value these species can bring to the EPO; and

Concerned about the potential effects of purse-seine operations on the status of whale sharks when delib-

erately or accidentally set upon;

AGREES:

1. For the purposes of this Resolution, the term “Fish-Aggregating Device” (FAD) means anchored, drifting, floating or submerged objects deployed and/or tracked by vessels, including through the use of radio and/or satellite buoys, for the purpose of aggregating target tuna species for purse seine fishing operations.

Section 1. FAD Data Collection

2. Beginning 1 January 2015, CPCs shall require the owners and operators of all purse-seine vessels flying their flag, when fishing on FADs, to collect and report the information contained in Annex I. The data may be collected through a dedicated logbook, modifications to regional logsheets, or other domestic reporting procedures.
3. CPCs shall provide a summary of the data collected for the previous calendar year, pursuant to Paragraph 2, to the Director. CPCs shall submit the data to the Director no later than 30 days prior to each regular meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee.
4. No later than the IATTC annual meeting in 2016, the scientific staff of the IATTC, in coordination with the Scientific Advisory Committee, shall present to the Commission the results of its analyses of the information collected pursuant to Paragraph 2, and shall identify additional elements for data collection, as well as specific reporting formats, necessary to evaluate the effects of the use of FADs on the ecosystem of the EPO fishery. The analyses shall also incorporate information from data on FADs collected by observers through the *Flotsam Information Record*.
5. In addition, no later than the IATTC annual meeting in 2016, the scientific staff of the IATTC, in coordination with the Scientific Advisory Committee, shall present to the Commission initial recommendations based on information collected, based on this resolution and through other mechanisms, for the management of FADs, including possible effects of FADs in the tuna fishery in the EPO. The Commission shall consider adopting management measures based on those recommendations, including a region wide FAD management plan, and which may include, inter-alia, recommendations regarding FAD deployments and FAD sets, the use of biodegradable materials in new and improved FADs and the gradual phasing out of FAD designs that do not mitigate the entanglement of sharks, marine turtles and other species.
6. The scientific staff of the IATTC, in coordination with the Scientific Advisory Committee, shall also formulate recommendations for regulating the management of the stocks for presentation to the Commission, on the basis of the results of its analyses of the collected FAD information. Such recommendations shall include methods for limiting the capture of small bigeye and yellowfin tuna associated with fishing on FADs.
7. In 2016, compliance with the FAD reporting requirements of this Resolution will be comprehensively reviewed by the *Committee for the Review of the Implementation of Measures adopted by the Commission* and presented to the Commission.
8. Data collected pursuant to this resolution shall be treated under the rules established in the IATTC Resolution on Confidentiality.

Section 2. FAD Identification

9. No later than 1 January 2015, CPCs shall require the owners and operators of their applicable flagged purse seine fishing vessels to identify all FADs deployed or modified by such vessels in accordance with a Commission identification scheme.
10. The Director shall develop an identification scheme for consideration and adoption by the Commis-

sion in 2014, in coordination with CPCs during the intersessional period.

11. The Director should consider, at a minimum, including the following elements in the identification scheme:
 - a. All FADs shall have a unique identification number or electronic code taking into consideration confidentiality safeguards, with a specific numbering system and format to be adopted by the Commission.
 - b. The identification should be easy to apply to the FAD and should be applied in such a manner that it will permit its identification or electronic recognition taking into consideration confidentiality safeguards and should not become unreadable or disassociated from the FAD.

Section 3. Non-entangling FADs

12. To reduce the entanglement of sharks, marine turtles or any other species, the design and deployment of FADs should be based on the principles set out in Annex II.
13. If recommended by the scientific staff of the IATTC and the Scientific Advisory Committee, the Commission shall adopt measures for the use of non-entangling FADs.

Section 4. Whale Sharks

14. 14. CPCs shall prohibit their flag vessels from setting a purse seine on a school of tuna associated with a live whale shark, if the animal is sighted prior to the commencement of the set.
15. 15. CPCs shall require that, in the event that a whale shark is not deliberately encircled in the purse seine net, the master of the vessel shall:
 - a. ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure its safe release; and
 - b. report the incident to the relevant authority of the flag CPC, including the number of individuals, details of how and why the encirclement happened, where it occurred, steps taken to ensure safe release, and an assessment of the life status of the whale shark on release (including whether the animal was released alive but subsequently died).
16. 16. Paragraphs 14 and 15 shall enter into effect on 1 July 2014.

Annex I

CPCs are required to ensure their vessel owners and operators maintain and report to the appropriate national authorities:

- a) a) An inventory of the FADs present on the vessel specifying in particular for each FAD:
 - i. FAD identification (*e.g.*, FAD marking or beacon ID or any information allowing to identify the owner)
 - ii. FAD type (*e.g.*, drifting natural FAD, drifting artificial FAD),
 - iii. FAD design characteristics (dimension and material of the floating part and of the underwater hanging structure),
- b) b) For every FAD activity, the:
 - i. position,
 - ii. date,
 - iii. hour,
 - iv. FAD identification (*e.g.*, FAD Marking or beacon ID or any information allowing to identify the owner)
 - v. FAD type (*e.g.*, drifting natural FAD, drifting artificial FAD),

- vi. FAD design characteristics (dimension and material of the floating part and of the underwater hanging structure)
- vii. Type of the activity (set, deployment, hauling, retrieving, loss, intervention on electronic equipment, other (specified)).
- viii. If the activity is a set, the results of the set in terms of catch and by-catch.

Annex II

Principles for design and deployment of FADs

1. If a flat raft is used as a FAD, the surface structure should not be covered, or only covered with non-entangling material.
2. Any subsurface component of the FAD should be constructed in a manner designed to avoid entangling marine life.
3. To reduce the amount of synthetic marine debris, the use of natural or biodegradable materials (such as hessian canvas, hemp ropes, etc.) for drifting FADs should be promoted.