

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
AD-HOC PERMANENT WORKING GROUP ON FADS
8TH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)
07-08 June 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE WORKING GROUP

Consistent with its terms of reference established in Resolution C-19-01, Annex III, **the Ad Hoc Permanent Working Group on FADs**, in reporting to the Scientific Advisory Committee on the results of its 8th meeting, and in the framework of the process of coordination with that Committee and with the scientific staff in the identification and review of feasible FAD management measures, as a preliminary step prior to the presentation of recommendations to the Commission, **wishes to recommend that:**

1. On biodegradable FADs

- 1.1. The investigation of new more durable materials for the construction of biodegradable FADs be continued, taking into account their economic viability and availability.
- 1.2. The current FAD designs be modified to reduce the amount and the fraction of synthetic materials used in their construction, before requirements of Resolution C-23-04 enter into force.
- 1.3. The process of data collection on prototypes of biodegradable FADs be improved, to help in the analysis of the efficiency, duration, and correct classification by category of biodegradable FADs.
- 1.4. The exchange of information obtained in biodegradable FADs trials among scientists, companies, managers from different fleets, CPCs and RFMOs be promoted, to advance in unison and faster in the objectives of the Commission.
- 1.5. The scientific staff analyse the potential effect of the transition towards the implementation of 100% biodegradable FADs on possible changes in the fleet fishing strategies.
- 1.6. Fishing companies in cooperation with IATTC and relevant scientific institutions prepare guides and workshops for the correct handling and use of biodegradable FADs for fishers with the objective to minimize the wear and breakdown of this type of FADs.
- 1.7. Given the low amount of deployed experimental FADs that are visited, that fleets continue deploying experimental biodegradable FADs on a greater scale, and in a systematic manner, to meet the requirements of the Resolution C-23-04, taking into account the limits established in C-21-04.
- 1.8. The scientific staff study the working lifespan of conventional and biodegradable FADs to evaluate the real needs of the fleet and the possible effects of the implementation of biodegradable FADs in the fishing operation.
- 1.9. The scientific staff conduct studies on the working lifetime of conventional and biodegradable FADs at the Pacific Ocean scale, promoting to that end the collaboration among researchers who work in both regions of the Pacific.

2. On data collection

- 2.1. The IATTC scientific staff analyse in more detail the information of buoy data, such as activations and deactivations, and propose adjustments to the format of the data provided to improve the utility of the data to achieve the conservation objectives of the Commission.
- 2.2. The IATTC staff provide feedback to CPCs, representatives of their relevant fleets and buoy service providers that are incorrectly providing buoy data so that the issue can be corrected as early as possible and in general terms pedagogy in the information reporting promoted.
- 2.3. IATTC organize workshops with CPCs, fishing companies, captains, crew and buoy providers to present the correct reporting protocols for buoy data and to clarify the differences between deactivated FADs reported as “signal loss” which may in fact be “temporarily during closure periods; and that these workshops be used also to collect first-hand and direct information on the dynamics of the fishery.
- 2.4. Regarding the need to submit buoy files per ship, the IATTC consider revising Annex IV of Resolution C-21-04 to specify that the files be generated preferably by vessel.

3. On FAD fishery indicators

- 3.1. Fishing companies and buoy providers, to the extent possible, make available to the IATTC and CPCs the historical acoustic buoy information to avoid losing data received by original users, including both trajectories and biomass information, of enormous value for science, and in particular stock assessment.
- 3.2. To the extent possible, data from all buoy providers be incorporated in studies of estimation of indices of abundance, in order to increase the number of observations incorporating a larger number of vessels, FADs and fishing strategies.

3. On the impact of FADs

1. IATTC staff continue to analyse stranding events and activation/deactivation data to develop future options for at-sea recovery of FADs.
 1. The Commission adopt the data form in Appendix 4 in [FAD-07 INF-A](#) to facilitate reporting on FAD recoveries as described in paragraph 4 of Resolution C-23-03 and the harmonization with the data of the WCPFC to facilitate Pacific-wide collaboration.
3. Vessel owners be encouraged to participate in FAD retrieval programs.
4. Cooperation of coastal communities be promoted in projects to identify, report to IATTC and recover stranded FADs.
5. The utilization of appropriate technologies be considered, such as those described in document FAD-08-08, or similar others, for the development of sensors transmitting the FAD buoys’ serial number and other applications related with other fishing activities that require remote and automatic data collection.