SELECTIVE SORTING GRIDS FOR IMPROVED BEST HANDLING AND RELEASE PRACTICES OF LARGE MOBULID RAYS IN TROPICAL TUNA PURSE SEINERS

Murua, J., Ferarios, J.M., Grande, M., Moreno, G., Cronin, M.R., Murua, H.,, Cuevas, N., Santiago, J.

BHRP FOR MOBULID RAYS

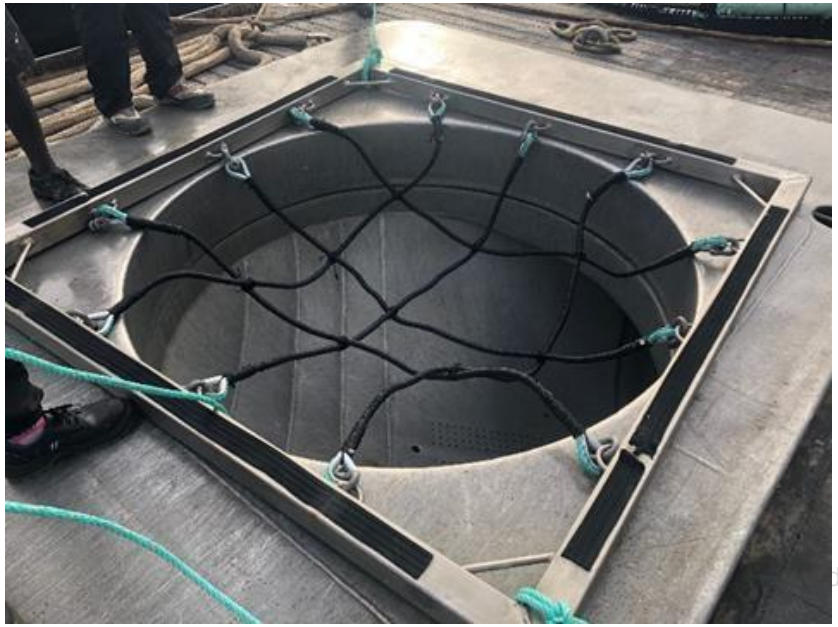
- Best handling and release practices for mobulid rays are described in resolution C-15-04, mainly prohibiting poor practices (e.g., hooks, gaffs) and recommend Poisson et al. methods (2012) such as releasing with the brail from the water or using canvas/cargo nets from the deck. Also, ramps are mentioned.

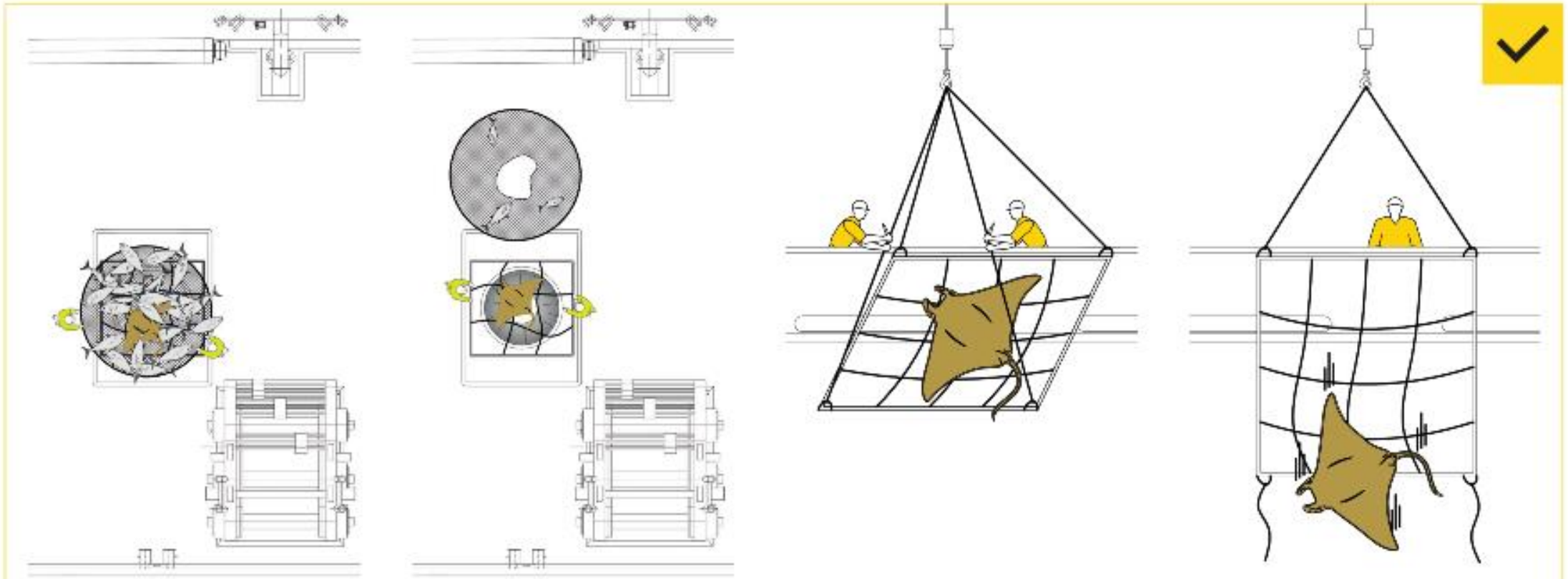
- However, problems exist with the solutions proposed. Many PS vessels cannot reach out with their brail out of the net. Ramps would need to be extremely wide to accommodate for the mobulid size (e.g., up to 8 m wingspan) and the door on the in starboard is only 1.5 m wide at max.

- Even the application of using a cargo net/ canvas can be difficult with large mobulid rays due the need to first extract them from the brail by hand to deposit them on the canvas laying on the deck floor. Some individuals can be up to 2000 kg and manual extraction can be dangerous and significantly slow down release times.

MOBULID RAY SORTING GRIDS

- The mobulid sorting grid emerged from a captain's idea who had tested a rigid bamboo grid initially.
- Initial sorting grids were constructed with a robust metallic frame (2.5 m x 2.5 m x 8 cm; 80 kg) and a series of intertwined ropes to conform a grid that would allow tuna to pass through but retain on top large mobulids.
- First tests revealed that mobulid rays could be released in record times (e.g., 1-2 minutes) with out the need to manually extract them from the brail.





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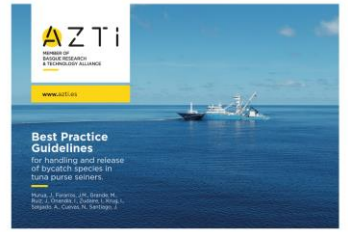
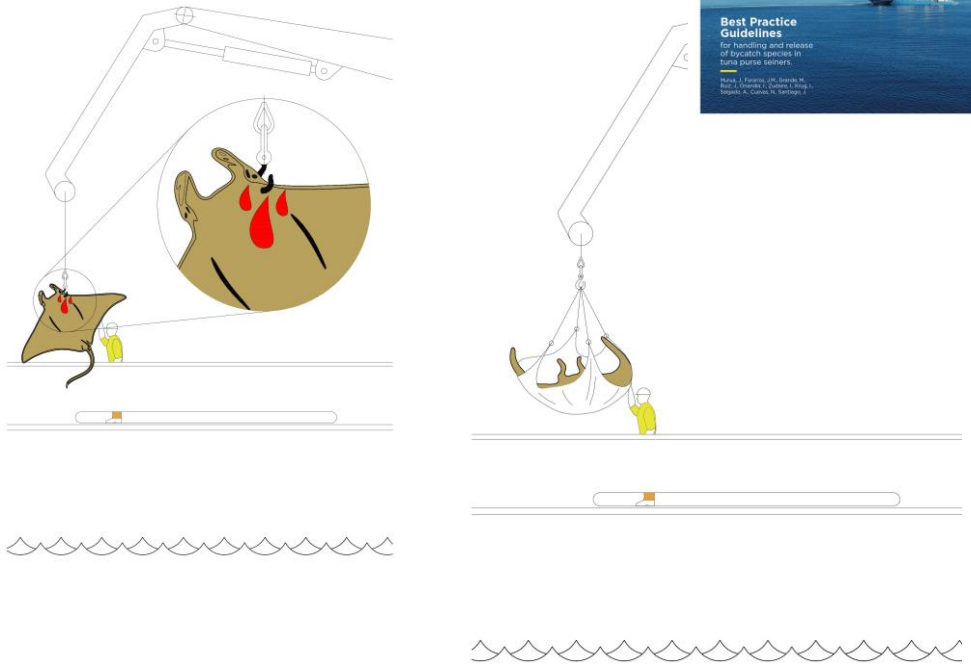
MOBULID RAY SORTING GRIDS

- Designs are becoming lighter (< 25 kg), practical (foldable during storage) and cheap (<800 USD).
- Sorting grids can be used both on the unloading hatch or on hoppers as well.
- Frames can be square or circular, which can fit in the unloading hatch groove.
- Sorting grids have been presented in various skippers' workshops with good overall acceptance by fishers. Several fleets are implementing their use voluntarily.



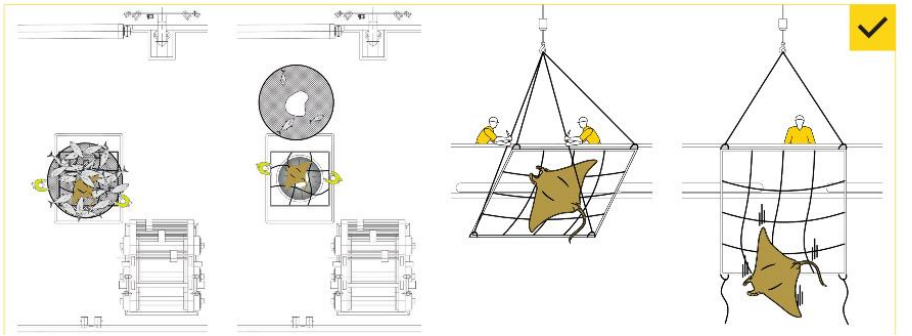

NEW GUIDELINES FOR MOBULID RELEASE





- The BHRP guidelines for vulnerable species produced by AZTI includes prohibited actions and release methods such as canvas/cargo net, but also the use of sorting grids as a best practice.

- **We suggest that mobulid ray handling and release guidelines (C-15-04 Annex I) are revised and sorting grids included in the resolution to promote their use.**



https://www.azti.es/productos/guia-de-buenas-practicas-de-manejo-y-liberacion-de-especies-asociadas-en-atuneros-de-cerco-congeladores/
https://www.azti.es/en/productos/best-practice-guidelines-for-handling-and-release-of-bycatch-species/

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