

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

83RD MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA)

25-29 June 2012

PROPOSAL IATTC-83 D-1

SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

A MANAGEMENT PLAN TO REGULATE FISHING EFFORT ON FISH-AGGREGATING DEVICES IN THE PURSE-SEINE FISHERY OF THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Goal: in order to ensure sustainability of fishing operations for stocks under the IATTC competence, all gears deployed to target these resources should be managed. This Resolution is intended to contribute to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources, and in particular of highly migratory stocks, in the IATTC Convention Area by establishing a Fishing Aggregating Devices (FADs) Management Plan.

More specifically the Resolution foresees the development and implementation of a pilot research project and data collection on FADs (already foresaw in Resolution C-11-01) and but, more important, the submission of Management Plans by CPCs that fish with FADs in the IATTC Convention Area. The Management Plans shall cover, amongst other, objectives, scope, institutional arrangements, FADs requirements and strategies to limit the capture of small bigeye and yellowfin tuna usually associated with fishing on FADs.

New elements: this draft Resolution was already submitted to IATTC in 2011 jointly with Colombia. For 2012 it incorporates a new element addressing small bigeye and yellowfin tuna usually associated with the use of FADs.

Rationale: FADs are increasingly used by purse seiner fleets to increase the efficiency of their catches. While FAD fishing can be an efficient method for catching large schools of tuna, industrial-scale FAD fisheries can have significant adverse impacts on tunas (notably on small tunas) and other species (notably by-catches of seabirds and turtles). Overall, information on FAD use is not widely available because information on their exact numbers and locations is considered proprietary by industrial fishing vessel operators and fleets. This is the reason why, with the view of starting a serious management approach to FADs, the first essential element is to have a complete picture of the FADs and FADs utilization made by IATTC CPCs using them.

The FADs Management Plans obligations, should be seen as a first step of an IATTC regulatory approach which, on the basis of the gathered information should be developed by the IATTC scientific staff in strict coordination with the IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee.

Background: IATTC has adopted some conservation and management measures aimed at FADs. In 1999 IATTC recommended to limit the transshipment of catches from vessels associated with FAD fishing as well as commissioning a research on FADs and catches. Additionally IATTC Resolution C-11-01 on *Tuna conservation* required IATTC to start a voluntary pilot research programme with interested parties on FAD information gathering. The current proposal builds and develops the existing regime in order to make it more comprehensive and ambitious in line with similar decisions adopted in other RFMOs.

DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN TO REGULATE FISHING EFFORT ON FISH-AGGREGATING DEVICES IN THE PURSE-SEINE FISHERY OF THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

Reaffirming its commitment to the application of the precautionary approach, which establishes that a lack of scientific information must not be used as a pretext for not taking management measures for the fisheries resources of the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Aware that tunas aggregate naturally under floating objects adrift in the ocean;

Recalling that the regulation of fishing effort is one of the most efficient conservation measures for maintaining tuna stocks at sustainable levels;

Attentive to the provisions of IATTC Resolution C-99-07 on measures related to the regulation of fish-aggregating devices (FADs);

Taking into account Resolution C-04-05 on bycatch, especially with regard to catches of juvenile tunas and bycatches of non-target species;

Reiterating the need to reduce bycatches of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye tunas in the purse-seine fishery of the EPO;

Concerned about the difficulties there have been in quantifying purse-seine fishing effort on FADs;

Taking into account IATTC Resolution C-11-01 on a multiannual program for the conservation of tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in 2011-2013;

Concerned about the effect on the average length of the catches of the three main tuna species, mainly bigeye tuna, caught with purse seines on FADs (Document SAC 02-13);

Noting the substantial increase in the number of purse-seine sets made on FADs since 1993, increasing the catches of juvenile tuna and fishing mortality in general for the EPO, the impact of this fishing method being currently much greater than that of the longline fishery for bigeye tuna (Document SAC-02-07);

Conscious of the need to address, as a matter of priority, the elimination and reduction to the lowest possible level illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities;

AGREES TO:

1. Ask the Director to carry out the pilot research project and data collection on FADs that are used to aggregate tunas in the EPO, in accordance with paragraph 14 of Resolution C-11-01. For the purposes of this Resolution, the term Fish Aggregation Device (FAD) means drifting or anchored floating or submerged objects deployed by vessels for the purpose of aggregating target tuna species for purse seine or ring-net fishing operations.
2. CPCs that fish with FADs in the area of the EPO shall submit a FAD Management Plan by 1 January 2013 that may include the information included in Annex I of this Resolution. The Management Plan shall include strategies to limit the capture of small bigeye and yellowfin tuna associated with fishing on FADs.
3. The information collected in the framework of the pilot research project and the management plans submitted by the CPCs shall be made available to the Scientific Advisory Committee for analysis.
4. In 2014 the scientific staff of the IATTC, in coordination with the Scientific Advisory Committee, shall present the results of its analyses of the information collected, and on the basis of these results shall formulate opportune recommendations for regulating the management of the affected stocks.

Annex 1

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF FAD MANAGEMENT PLANS

To support obligations in respect of FADs in Resolution IATTC-12-XX, the FAD Management Plan (FADMP) for a CPC purse-seine fleet to be submitted to the Commission shall include:

- An objective
- Scope:
Description of its application with respect to:
 - Vessel-types and support and tender vessels,
 - FAD types [anchored (AFAD) AND drifting (DFAD)],
 - maximum FAD numbers permitted to be deployed [per purse seine or ring net vessel per FAD type],
 - reporting procedures for AFAD and DFAD deployment,
 - catch reporting from FAD sets (consistent with the IOTC's Standards for the provision of and Effort Data),
 - minimum distance between AFADs,
 - incidental by-catch reduction and utilization policy,
 - consideration of interaction with other gear types,
 - plans for monitoring and retrieval of lost FADs,
 - statement or policy on "FAD ownership".
- Institutional arrangements for management of the FAD Management Plans:
 - Institutional responsibilities,
 - application processes for FAD deployment approval,
 - Obligations of vessel owners and masters in respect of FAD deployment and use,
 - FAD replacement policy,
 - reporting obligations,
 - observer acceptance obligations,
 - relationship to Catch Retention Plans,
 - conflict resolution policy in respect of FADs.
- FAD construction specifications and requirements
 - FAD design characteristics (a description),
 - FAD markings and identifiers,
 - Lighting requirements,
 - radar reflectors,
 - visible distance,
 - radio buoys [requirement for serial numbers],
 - satellite transceivers [requirement for serial numbers].
- Strategies to limit the capture of small bigeye and yellowfin tuna associated with fishing on FADs.
- Applicable areas
 - Details of any closed areas or periods e.g. territorial waters, shipping lanes, proximity to artisanal fisheries, etc.
- Applicable period for the FAD-MP
- Means for monitoring and reviewing implementation of the FAD-MP.
- Means for reporting to the Commission