

Aligned Guidance for Well-Managed FAD Fisheries

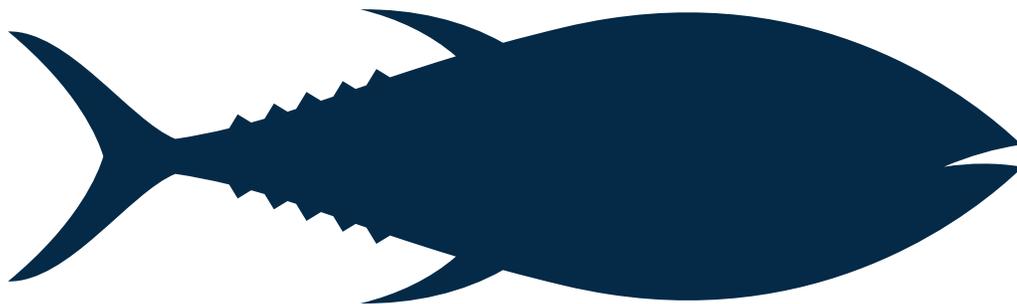


The Purpose of These Practices

Leading NGOs focused on global tuna stock sustainability agree that fishing on fish aggregating devices (FADs) requires improved management, monitoring, compliance and transparency. The following practices and recommendations are designed to inform and guide tuna RFMOs, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified fisheries with conditions, and commercial processing and harvesting sectors across the supply chain in developing and/or reforming regulations, policies and regimes to ensure FAD fishing is effectively managed.

The groups endorsing this document believe these practices can and must be implemented now* and will result in substantial benefits to tuna stocks and their ecosystems.

**Defined as achievable in the next 12-18 months.*



Management Practices

- Require all FADs to be marked in accordance with the FAO Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear for all new FAD deployments to ensure that a drifting FAD is tracked for its entire lifetime.
- Adopt and implement science-based limits on drifting FAD management measures (limits, deployments and/or drifting FAD sets) that are consistent with management objectives for tropical tunas.
- Require activation of operational buoys, as defined by the joint tuna RFMO FAD 2019 meeting, occur exclusively onboard prior to deployment and develop clear rules for deactivation of FAD buoys at sea.
- Require development of a fully transparent FAD recovery and retrieval policy that reduces marine debris and stranding, including through the use of arrangements to alert coastal countries of derelict FADs.
- Ensure FAD management measures also apply to all vessels engaged in supply and tender activities.
- Identify on RFMO Records of Fishing Vessels what activities supply and tender vessels are engaged in, whether they are working as bait boats, servicing FADs, or engaging in fishing.
- Support, when science-based advice is available, the adoption of effective and enforceable drifting FAD closures, including time and spatial closures, that will mitigate impacts of drifting FAD fishing on target tuna stocks.
- Using provided drifting FAD track data, promote research to determine deployment areas that are highly likely to result in stranding on sensitive habitats and to identify areas of high incidence of stranding events and positional data on stranded FADs to enable targeted recovery.
- Develop and implement FAD ownership rules and definitions to ensure FAD accountability is maintained through the end of their lifetime.

Monitoring Practices

- Ensure 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic), including for vessels engaged in supply and tender activities.

Data Reporting Practices

- Require near-real time reporting of electronic data on drifting FAD use (buoy tracks and echo-sounders estimates of biomass) and reporting of anchored and drifting FAD use in an agreed standardized format to RFMO and fishery authorities. Ensure independent verification and public reporting of these metrics by the RFMO.
- Require catch and effort data reporting by set type with clear definitions (free swimming school, natural log, drifting FAD, anchored FAD, dolphin association, whale shark, dead whale), & comply with all other flag state & RFMO reporting requirements.
- Require that CPCs report to the RFMOs data on the number and use of supply vessels, including identifying which purse seine vessels each support, and the number of FADs being deployed and serviced by such vessels.
- Record and provide to RFMOs, and fishery authorities, data on FAD activity (deployments, visits, sets and loss) and FAD structure through FAD logbooks.
- Record and provide to RFMOs and fishery authorities, data on FAD buoys brand and model, and encourage RFMO science bodies to monitor effort creep from improved fishing efficiency given the changes in FAD design and satellite buoy technology.

Bycatch Mitigation Practices

- Require the use of only non-entangling FAD designs without netting or mesh shade cloth material in their construction that ensures no entanglement risk at any stage in their lifecycle and promote the use of simpler/smaller FAD structures.
- Require fishing companies to apply science-based safe handling and release practices for marine turtles, sharks, rays, and marine mammals and to test new tools/technology for the safe release of by-catch with special emphasis on vulnerable species.
- Require avoidance measures for silky sharks (such as targeted drifting FADs with large tuna aggregations and avoiding hotspots) and conduct ongoing research to develop and implement further avoidance measures on this and other non-target species (including sea turtles) impacted by FAD fishing.
- Require the use of biodegradable materials in the construction of FADs to minimize use of synthetic/plastic materials in FAD construction and establish a timeline by the end of 2021 for transitioning to 100% biodegradable.
- Prohibit intentional setting on whale sharks & cetaceans.
- Task RFMO scientific committees to define science-based mortality limits for ETP species and ETP reduction targets for FADs based on risk assessments that consider the collective impacts of all fishing gears and apply the precautionary principle.

