

IOTC-2021-WGFAD02-INF01

RESOLUTION 15/09
ON A FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES (FADS) WORKING GROUP

Keywords: Fish aggregating device (FAD); working group on FADs; drifting FADs; anchored FADs; purse seine.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

BEARING IN MIND that the Agreement for the implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (UNFSA) encourages coastal States and fishing States on the high seas to collect and share, in a timely manner, complete and accurate data concerning fishing activities on, inter alia, vessel position, catch of target and non-target species and fishing effort;

MINDFUL of the call upon States, either individually, collectively or through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 67/79 on Sustainable fisheries to collect the necessary data in order to evaluate and closely monitor the use of large-scale fish aggregating devices and others, as appropriate, and their effects on tuna resources and tuna behaviour and associated and dependent species, to improve management procedures to monitor the number, type and use of such devices and to mitigate possible negative effects on the ecosystem, including on juveniles and the incidental bycatch of non-target species, particularly sharks and marine turtles;

NOTING that the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing provides that States should compile fishery-related and other supporting scientific data relating to fish stocks covered by subregional or regional fisheries management organisations and provide them in a timely manner to the organisation;

RECOGNISING that all gears deployed to target resources under the competence of IOTC should be managed to ensure the sustainability of fishing operations;

AWARE that the Commission is committed to adopt conservation measures to reduce juvenile Bigeye tuna and Yellowfin tuna mortalities from fishing effort on Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs);

AWARE that the availability of adequate information is fundamental to carrying out the objectives of the IOTC Agreement laid down in its Article V;

NOTING that the IOTC Scientific Committee advised the Commission to conduct an investigation of the feasibility and impacts of a temporary FAD closure as well as other measures in the context of Indian Ocean fisheries and stocks;

NOTING that the IOTC Scientific Committee recommended that an ad hoc working group on FADs, drifting and anchored, be created to assess the consequences of the increasing number and technological developments of FADs in tuna fisheries and their ecosystems, in order to inform and advise on future FAD-related management options;

NOTING that ICCAT and WCPFC have already approved at their 2014 sessions the establishment of FAD working groups, and that the SC agreed that at least the ICCAT and IOTC working groups on FADs work jointly whenever possible.

ADOPTS, in accordance with the provisions of Article IX, paragraph 1 of the IOTC Agreement, the following:

1. An ad hoc working group on FADs (**Annex I**), drifting and anchored, is created to assess the consequences of the increasing number and technological developments of FADs in tuna fisheries and their ecosystems, in order to inform and advise on future FAD-related management options. This ad hoc working group would be of multi-sectorial nature, involving various stakeholders such as scientists, fishery managers, fishing industry representatives, administrators and fishers. The working group shall deliver its findings in time for the 2017 IOTC Scientific Committee to examine them.



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2. The IOTC Secretariat should liaise with the ICCAT Secretariat to determine if their FAD working group could work in conjunction with the IOTC working group.

Annex I

Terms of reference for an ad hoc working group on fish aggregating devices (FADs)

- 1) The objectives of the ad hoc working group on Fish Aggregating devices (FADs) would be the following:
 - To collect and compile information about past and present numbers of buoys and FADs, changes in FAD-related technology and activities of supply vessels;
 - To review the requirements of collection of data on FADs established in [Resolution 15/08](#) [superseded by [Resolution 17/08](#)] in order to assess the necessity for revision;
 - To assess the effect of FAD's density and spatial distribution on the behaviour, distribution and species composition of the tuna schools;
 - To assess the developments in FAD-related technology notably with regards to:
 - changes in catchability due to technological improvement;
 - using FAD and buoys marking and identification as a tool for monitoring, tracking and control of FADs;
 - reducing FAD's ecological impacts through improved design, such as non-entangling FADs and biodegradable material.
 - To evaluate ways to improve the use of information related to FADs in the process of stock assessment, particularly in the standardisation of catch per unit effort, and in ecological risk assessment for non-target species;
 - Through an active exchange of views, to identify management options, including the regulation of deployment limits and characteristics of FADs, and activities of support vessels;
 - To assess the consequences of these management options, in conjunction with other fleets fishing mortality components, on IOTC-managed species and on the pelagic ecosystems.
- 2) All types of FADs, anchored or drifting, would be considered in the ad hoc working group.
- 3) As several coastal states with limited capacities are primarily concerned by anchored FADs, the IOTC Secretariat should ensure that special provisions be made for those countries in terms of compiling and assimilating the data as required for the ad hoc working group. This support could be included in the data collection tasks of the IOTC Secretariat.
- 4) The IOTC Secretariat should consider using the meeting participation fund (MPF) to facilitate the participation of scientists from IOTC coastal states who would contribute significantly in the FAD working group.
- 5) The access to data used for the FAD working group will follow the confidentiality policy and procedures presented in [Resolution 12/02](#) (or any subsequent superseding Resolution).
- 6) The ad hoc Working Group should be composed by scientists, fisheries managers, fishing industry Representatives, administrators and other interested stakeholders.
- 7) The ad hoc Working Group on FAD would not happen more than once a year, and shall report on its work to the WPTT and WPEB annual sessions.
- 8) The IOTC, at its annual session, will review the progress and outcomes of the FAD working group and will decide on the necessity for its continuation.