

INDIAN OCEAN TUNA COMMISSION (IOTC) SPECIAL SESSION FEBRUARY 3–5, 2023

This Position Statement outlines the areas the IOTC must act on at its special session on fish aggregating device (FAD) management — a session set last year due to inaction on this topic.

ISSF and our stakeholders called on the IOTC to strengthen FAD management in Indian Ocean tuna fisheries throughout 2022. The Commission did not address this ask, however. IOTC must adopt enhanced FAD management provisions in line with recommended, science-based best practices at its upcoming Special Session to avoid further lack of progress to strengthen the management of FADs in the Indian Ocean.

The need for FAD improvements is clear, and IOTC must continue to improve its monitoring and management of FADs to ensure the sustainability of the Indian Ocean tropical tuna purse seine fishery and associated marine ecosystem.

Action Needed

- Develop and implement science-based limits on FAD deployments and/or FAD sets, consistent with management objectives for tropical tunas.
- Allow the IOTC Scientific Committee to use submitted FAD tracking data for scientific purposes. These data are currently used only for FAD limit compliance purposes.
- Require the use of biodegradable materials in the construction of FADs to minimize use of synthetic/plastic materials in FAD construction. Establish a timeline for transitioning to 100% biodegradable.
- Develop and adopt FAD marking guidelines, including requiring the marking of the buoy and the FAD structure.
- Develop and adopt FAD tracking and recovery policies, as called for in Res.19/02, that consider utilizing supply vessels in FAD recovery efforts.
- Adopt clearer rules for FAD ownership and activation, as well as for deactivation of FAD buoys.

Background

FAD sets account for nearly 35% of tropical tuna catches and 45% of skipjack catches in the Indian Ocean. The collection of data on FAD type and usage, as well as the catch associated with a FAD set, supports improved understanding of fishing capacity, FAD impacts on IOTC stocks, and the development of science-based FAD management measures. Supply vessels increase the availability of FADs to fishing vessels, but they can also become a tool for FAD recovery programs.

We need a concerted effort in the Indian Ocean to better monitor FAD usage and to support the adoption of science-based, FAD-related management measures. Shark and non-target species bycatch and other ecosystem impacts — such as marine debris and FAD beaching — must also be reduced. Using non-entangling and biodegradable FAD designs is a critical step to achieving that.



iss-foundation.org

3706 Butler Street, Suite 316
Pittsburgh, PA 15201
United States

Phone: + 1 703 226 8101
E-mail: info@iss-foundation.org

