

Draft Recommendation by ICCAT to amend paragraph 31 of Recommendation 22-01

(proposal by Japan)

Explanatory note

Paragraph 31 of Rec. 22-01 stipulates that “With a view to establishing FAD set limits to keep the catches of juvenile tropical tunas at sustainable levels, in 2023 SCRS should inform the Commission about the maximum number of FAD sets which should be established per vessel or per CPC”. However, the response of the SCRS (Section 19.30 in the 2023 SCRS Report) is that the data provided on FADs is not sufficient to address the specific request. The SCRS also recommends that national scientists perform for vessels fishing on FADs an analysis of the per vessel catch rates of tropical tunas on FADs and present it to the SCRS for their evaluation.

It should be noted that the IATTC adopted an innovative measure in 2021 that the more bigeye a purse seiner catches, the longer closure period shall be applied to the vessel. Japan believes that this measure is fair and ICCAT should also pursue the possibility of introducing the same measure while keeping the option of setting FAD set limits. Coincidentally, an analysis of the per vessel catch rates of tropical tunas on FADs will enable the SCRS to conduct analysis on whether the catch levels of tropical tunas (juvenile bigeye and yellowfin) are similar among all the purse seiners or there are a limited number of vessels whose bigeye and yellowfin catches are much larger than other purse seiners. If the latter is the case, a certain additional measure should be considered on those vessels such as extended closure period or a smaller number of FADs to be deployed.

Proposed amendments

31. With a view to establishing FAD set limits to keep the catches of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin at sustainable levels, as well as knowing whether certain purse seiners are catching juvenile bigeye and yellowfin far more than others, national scientists of purse seine CPCs shall submit analyses of the per vessel catch rates of bigeye and yellowfin on FADs from 2019 to 2022 and present it to the SCRS for their evaluation in 2024. Also, CPCs with purse seine vessels shall report to the SCRS by 31 July 2024 the required historical FAD set data in the format required by SCRS (Task 2 catch and effort through Form ST03-T2CE) for a minimum of the last five years. CPCs that do not report these data in accordance with this paragraph shall be prohibited from setting on FADs until such data have been received by the SCRS.

In 2024 the SCRS should inform the Commission about the maximum number of FAD sets which should be established per vessel or per CPC and whether the catch levels of bigeye and yellowfin are similar among all the purse seiners or there are a limited number of purse seiners whose bigeye and yellowfin catches are much larger than those of other purse seiners.

In addition, each CPC with purse seine fishing vessels is encouraged not to increase its total fishing effort on FADs from its 2018 level. CPCs shall report the difference between the 2018 level and the 2023 level to the 2024 Commission meeting.