

RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT TO ESTABLISH AN AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES (FADS)

RECOGNIZING the increasing use of FADs in ICCAT fisheries, notably for tropical tunas, and the impact this may have on the species composition and on the rates of by-catch;

REMINDING recommendations by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) to improve data collection for fisheries carried out in association with objects that could affect fish aggregation, including FADs, and to improve the ways to use this information in the process of stock assessments;

NOTING the need to assess the consequences of technological developments of FADs for future FAD-related management options;

RECOGNIZING that the SCRS recommended creating a temporary working group on FADs, which should be composed by scientists, fishery managers, fishing industry administrators and stakeholders;

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT)
RECOMMENDS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. An ad hoc Working Group is established with the following Terms of Reference:
 - a) Assess the use of FADs in Tropical Tuna fisheries in ICCAT, notably by estimating the past and current number of different types of buoys and FADs operating in ICCAT tropical tuna fisheries, and evaluate ways to improve the use of information related to FADs in the process of stock assessments, in particular to quantify the effort associated to this type of fishery;
 - b) In view of the identification of data gaps, review the information provided by CPCs pursuant to the FAD related provisions in the relevant ICCAT conservation and management measures;
 - c) Assess the relative contribution of FADs to the overall fishing mortality in ICCAT tropical tuna fisheries;
 - d) Assessing the developments in FAD-related technology, notably with regard to:
 - Technological improvement steps in relation with fishing mortality.
 - FAD and buoys marking and identification as a tool for monitoring, tracking and control of FADs.
 - Reducing FADs ecological impact through improved design, such as non-entangling FADs and biodegradable material.
 - e) Identify management options, including the regulation of deployment limits and characteristics of FADs, and evaluate their effect on ICCAT managed species and on the pelagic eco-systems, based on scientific advice and the precautionary approach. This should take into consideration all the fishing mortality components, the methods by which FAD fishing has increased a vessel's ability to catch fish, as well as socio-economic elements with the view to provide effective recommendations to the Commission for FAD management in tropical tuna fisheries.
2. The first meeting of this Working Group shall take place in 2015 in association with the Bigeye Tuna Data Preparatory Meeting.
3. The ad hoc Working Group should be composed by scientists, fisheries managers, industry representatives and other interested stakeholders.
4. The ad hoc Working Group shall report on its work with a view to recommend the adoption of appropriate measures at the latest at the 2016 ICCAT Commission Meeting.

5. The ad hoc Working Group will be chaired by the Chair of Panel 1 and the Chair of SCRS. The chairs of the Working Group should coordinate to establish procedures to ensure a full an open exchange among all participants.