

Original: English

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

*(Proposal by the European Union, the United States and Gabon)*

*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;

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

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the reporting and monitoring, control, and surveillance measures for fishing activities carried out in association with FADs contained in Recommendation 14-01;

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

*RECOGNIZING* that in response to an SCRS recommendation the Commission created in 2014 an ad hoc working group on FADs, composed of scientists, fishery managers, fishing industry administrators and other stakeholders, which was established by Recommendation 14-13 and held its first meeting in 2015;

*ACKNOWLEDGING* the benefits of collaboration among the ICCAT ad hoc Working Group on FADs and other tuna RFMOs' FAD Working Groups to harmonise progress in addressing FAD issues that are common to all tuna RFMOs;

*TAKING INTO ACCOUNT* the discussions and the preliminary conclusions of the 2015 meeting of the ICCAT ad hoc Working Group on FADs;

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, including by estimating the past and current number of and 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, including to quantify the effort associated with 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 overall fishing mortality in ICCAT tropical tuna fisheries;
  - d) Assess the developments in FAD-related technology, including with regard to:

- Technological improvement in relation to 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 and common standards for FAD management, including components of FAD management plans, the regulation of deployment limits, characteristics and use of FADs, such as marking and activities of support vessels 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.
- f) Identify and assess options for and timing of recovery of FADs in order to ensure a proper management of the marine environment.
2. The second meeting of this Working Group shall take place in 2016 in association with the Yellowfin Tuna Data Preparatory Meeting.
  3. 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.
  4. The ICCAT Commission, at its annual meeting in 2016, will review the progress and outcomes of the ad hoc FAD Working Group, identify priority tasks, and assess the need to continue the Working Group.
  5. The ad hoc Working Group will be chaired by the Chair of Panel 1 and the Chair of the SCRS. The chairs of the Working Group should coordinate to establish procedures to ensure a full and open exchange among all participants.
  6. The structure of the meetings will include an open forum/dialogue among scientists, fisheries managers, industry representatives and other interested stakeholders. Recommendations to the Commission shall be developed through sessions of the ad hoc Working Group, which should ensure a balanced presence and active participation of scientists and managers.
  7. The ICCAT Secretariat should work with the Secretariats of other tuna RFMOs in which FAD Working Groups have been established to promote the cooperation between these groups, including through the organization of a joint session in 2016 with the interested tuna RFMOs.
  8. This Recommendation repeals and replaces [Rec. 14-03].