

COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DEL ATÚN TROPICAL
INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

WORKING GROUP ON BYCATCH

4TH MEETING

KOBE (JAPAN)
14-16 JANUARY 2004

DOCUMENT BYC-4-08

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTION
ON BYCATCH ([C-03-08](#))**

During the 4th meeting of the Permanent Working Group on Compliance, held in Antigua, Guatemala, in June 2003, the Commission staff presented two proposed amendments to the bycatch resolution to strengthen the measures for protecting sea turtles which interact with the purse-seine fishery. Due to insufficient time at the meeting to consider these proposals properly, it was agreed to address them at the next meeting of the Working Group on Bycatch. The two proposals are delineated below.

Agenda Item 8. (a) (i) – Short-term conservation measures for sea turtles – release and safe handling - purse-seine

The current requirement in paragraph 3.d.iii of the [Consolidated Resolution on Bycatch](#) calls upon governments to “encourage the release, when practicable, of sea turtles entangled in FADs”. The issue with the wording is that it does not establish a binding requirement to release entangled sea turtles, and also that the words “when practicable” offer a loophole in that it can easily be claimed that it is not practicable to release a turtle. As noted in the report on compliance presented at the meeting in June (Document COM-4-00), the staff considers that, in nearly all cases when a sea turtle is observed entangled in a FAD, it would be good practice for a crew member to release the turtle. The fishing vessel is usually stopped, checking the FAD or preparing to set, when the observation is made, and it would be relatively easy and nearly always practicable to deploy a crew member on a suitable platform to release the turtle.

The proposal presented in Antigua was to make it mandatory to release sea turtles entangled in FADs. The appropriate amendment of the *Consolidated Resolution on Bycatch* would be to replace paragraph 3.d.iii with:

“d. iii. Require fishermen on purse-seine vessels to release all sea turtles they encounter which are entangled in Fish-Aggregating Devices (FADs).”

Agenda Item 8. (b) (i) – Short-term conservation measures for sea turtles – improved fishing gear and techniques - purse-seine

As pointed out in Document COM-4-00, the best approach for turtle conservation would be a resolution prohibiting the use of netting with FADs, which should virtually eliminate the entanglement of sea turtles in floating objects.

The proposal presented in Antigua was to add a new paragraph 3.d.v to the resolution, as follows:

“v. Prohibit (i) the use of nets, webbing, or similar materials which could entangle sea turtles, in the construction of any FAD deployed in the eastern Pacific Ocean, and (ii) the attachment of any such materials to a FAD.”