

**INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**  
**2<sup>ND</sup> AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON FADs**  
**Mexico City, Mexico**  
**July 2017**

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP**  
**DURING THE 62<sup>ND</sup> MEETING OF THE IATTC**

The Group held its second meeting in two parts during 2017. The first part was held on 7 May 2017 in La Jolla, California, and the second, on 21 July in Mexico City. The main topics covered in this report are the following:

1. New regulatory framework of the Group
2. Actions carried out by the Group, and
3. Workplan 2017-2018.

**1. New regulatory framework of the group**

The Commission amended Resolution C-15-03 *on the collection and analyses of data on fish-aggregating devices* in June 2016 during its 90<sup>th</sup> meeting. The amendments were set out in Resolution C-16-01, which incorporates new aspects such as the permanent nature of the Working Group and the possibility of presenting its reports to both the SAC and the Commission, in addition to tasking it with linking its work with that of other similar working groups established in other RFMOs (primarily the WCPFC) and to modify its terms of reference.

The terms of reference of the Group include the following new responsibilities:

- Develop formats for the submission of data and definitions of terms related to FADs fishing (e.g. biodegradable FADs, non-entangling FADs, etc.).
- Identify priority areas for research.
- Prepare annual reports for the SAC.
- Identify and review possible FADs management measures in coordination with the scientific staff and the Scientific Advisory Committee, and make recommendations to the Commission, as appropriate.

**2. Carried out actions**

**Work with other RFMOs.** Information on FADs generated by other RFMOs is regularly posted on the BASECAMP site; several members of the Group participated in the joint meeting on FADs held in May 2017 in Madrid, Spain.

**Report to the SAC.** Recommendations were submitted to the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SAC held in La Jolla, California, which can be consulted on the Commission's website [FAD-02\(1\) – Conclusions and recommendations](#). These recommendations were the result of the work at the first part of the meeting held in May 2017 and were reviewed and approved by the SAC.

**Data collection form.** A [Fish-aggregating device form](#) was developed, which is available on the Commission's website.

**Definitions related to FADs.** Work was done on definitions, which can be found on the BASECAMP site of the Group. Guidance from the Commission is requested regarding the mandate and scope of the definitions. There are different positions within the Group: some think the definitions should be limited to the terms or concepts included in the Resolution, while others believe that other terms—such as active FADs among others—should also be addressed.

**Research plan.** A research plan has been designed, which includes the following three priority areas:

- a) The impact of FADs on target tuna species (skipjack, bigeye and yellowfin). The scientific staff of the IATTC has almost already resumed the proposed projects.
- b) The impact of FADs on biodiversity. In this area, an attempt is made to estimate the bycatch and discards by species, as well as to identify hot spots.
- c) The impact of FADs on the ecosystem. In this area, it is intended to work with biodegradable FADs, which is already taking place in a project funded by the European Union. Likewise, an attempt is being made to develop a pilot project of FAD retrieval in sensitive areas, which would be addressed as a FAD recovery feasibility study. Costs in excess of a reasonable amount are not expected (around 50 thousand dollars).

**Identification of potential management measures for FADs.** The Group is already working on this and, in general terms, has identified 4 goals in the regulation of FADs:

- Reduce FAD fishing efforts in purse-seine vessels.
- Minimize the mortality of small yellowfin and bigeye tuna.
- Reduce bycatch of non-target species.
- Reduce other impacts on the ecosystem.

In order to develop or reach a possible conclusion on the tools or measures that will enable the achievement of the aforementioned goals, a questionnaire was designed and implemented, with the participation of 21 persons, including people related to fishery management, science, NGOs and industry. The preliminary results of the questionnaire identify mainly the following measures in order of preference, combining aspects of control, acceptance, applicability and effectiveness.

- Apply temporal closures
- Limit fishing capacity
- Establish fixed time-area closures
- Develop release practices
- Use non-entangling FADs
- Limit the number of FAD sets

### **3. 2017-2018 work plan**

Work will be done in the following areas and activities:

- Work with other RFMOs.
- Report on the development of similar work in other RFMOs.
- Participate in joint tuna RFMO meetings on FADs.

- Data collection
  - Evaluate the implementation of the new FADs inventory and activities format.
  - Develop a common database for the management of information on FADs.
  - Organize training workshops that help vessel captains and crew to properly fill out these formats.
  
- Research
  - Prepare work plans and budgets for priority FADs research projects, and identify possible sources of alternative funding.
  
- Management
  - Analyze pros and cons of the different potential management measures that have been identified.
  - Continue the work of developing definitions of terms related to FADs.

Finally, the Group would continue its work through the BASECAMP site focusing on five areas: data collection, research, management, cooperation with other RFMOs and general coordination. The Group would have two face-to-face meetings during 2018: one in May before the SAC meeting and another one in July or August before the IATTC annual meeting.