Ghana pole and line FIP

ETP species interaction analysis

Version 1.0

March 2024

Project ref: 0080

Prepared by

Key Traceability Ltd.

Key Traceability Ltd.
+44 7505 122728
info@keytraceability.com
England Registered Company 09730288
70 Londesborough Road, Portsmouth, PO4 0EX

Introduction

The Ghana pole-and-line tuna FIP was initiated in 2018 and targets skipjack, bigeye, and yellowfin tuna. The fishery operates in the high seas of the eastern Atlantic Ocean and within the EEZs of the following coastal states: Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, and Togo. Pole and Line fishing is highly selective, and the volume of tuna unfit for canneries is marginal.

In September 2023, the FIP received comprehensive observer data from the Ghana Fisheries Commission (GFC) from the trips made by the pole and line vessels within the FIP between 2018 and 2022. This data includes both target and non-target species and FAD operations. The received observer data has been collated and the catch composition has been analysed.

Pole and line fisheries operate in such a way that they have very little bycatch risk. However, incidents still occur, and fishers must be aware of their responsibility to ensure that best-practice release techniques are used to promote the post-release survival of the animal. The GTA has a published ETP Management Strategy which outlines best practice mitigation and release practices for sharks, turtles, cetaceans and birds. This report has been written to verify the low impact of the fishery on ETP species and that best practice release measures are being adhered to onboard the Ghanaian pole and line vessels.

Commented [EW1]: Might need to bulk this section out to say why you are conducting this review. Link to how PL fisheries operate and in that way they have very little bycatch risk. However, incidents still occur and it is important that fishers are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that best practice release techniques are used to promote post-release survival of the animal. (This then links nicely to the findings about the number of animals released alive).

Commented [EW2R1]: The FIP has an ETP management strategy that describes how the vessels and crew must adhere to best practice handling techniques to ensure animals are released alive, so could mention that too. This report is used to verify these practices...

Results

Analysis has been conducted to assess and demonstrate the low impact of the fishery on ETP species and the survival rate of ETP species the fishery interacts with.

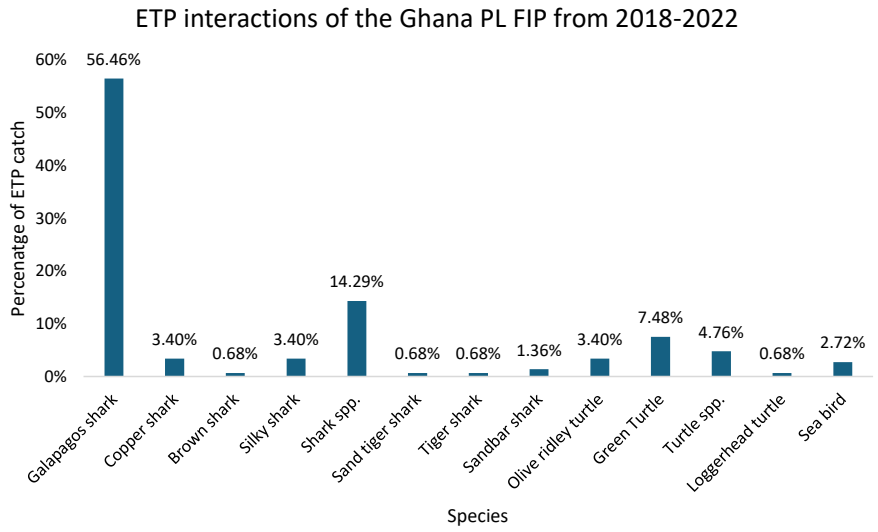

Figure 1: ETP interactions of the Ghana pole and line FIP from 2018 – 2022.

As displayed in Figure 1, from 2018 to 2022 the total catch of ETP species was low, with Galapagos sharks (56.46%), various sharks nei (14.29%), copper sharks (3.4%) and silky sharks (3.4%) accounting for the largest proportions of ETP catch.

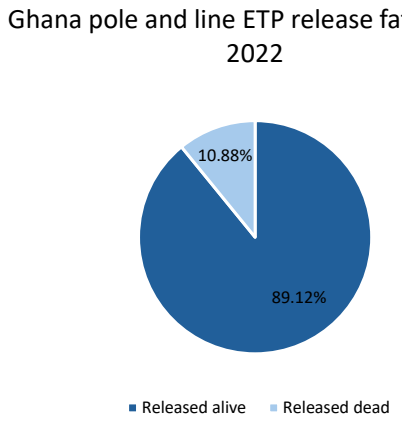

Figure 2: Release fate of ETP species from 2018 – 2022.

Of the total ETP species encountered by the fishery, 89% were released alive with only 11% of ETP individuals released dead. This further demonstrates that the mitigation and release practices outlined in the GTA ETP management strategy are being adhered to.

Table 1: ETP interactions of Ghana pole and line vessels from 2018-2022

Common name	Scientific name	Total	Released alive	Released dead	Percentage of total catch
Galapagos shark	*Carcharhinus galapagensis*	83	81	2	0.018%
Copper shark	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*	5	5	0	0.001%
Brown shark	*Carcharhinus plumbeus*	1	1	0	<0.001%
Silky shark	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	5	2	3	0.001%
Shark spp.		21	16	5	0.005%
Sand tiger shark	*Carcharias taurus*	1	1	0	<0.001%
Tiger shark	*Galeocerdo cuvier*	1	1	0	<0.001%
Sandbar shark	*Carcharhinus plumbeus*	2	2	0	<0.001%
Olive ridley turtle	*Lepidochelys olivacea*	5	5	0	0.001%
Green Turtle	*Chelonia mydas*	11	8	3	0.002%
Turtle spp.		7	5	2	0.002%
Loggerhead turtle	*Caretta caretta*	1	1	0	<0.001%
Sea bird		4	3	1	<0.001%
	Total	**147**	**131**	**16**	

Total ETP	
Released alive	89.12%
Released dead	10.88%
Of total catch	
ETP species	0.03%

Of the total catch recorded of target, primary, secondary and ETP species, it was observed that ETP species interactions are very low within the Ghanaian pole and line fishery and account for 0.03% of the total catch.

Conclusion

In summary, the catch composition produced demonstrates the low interaction rates of the Ghana pole and line fishery due to the selective nature of the fishing gear. Furthermore, the high survival rate of ETP species the fishery does impact demonstrates that the best practice handling and release measures outlined in the GTA ETP management strategies are being implemented effectively and adhered to.

Despite pole and line fisheries being highly selective, this report demonstrates the need for comprehensive observer data to be collected so that the ETP interactions, even if they are infrequent, are recorded and the post-release fate of the animal is known. This report demonstrates the high survival rate of ETP species that the fishery interacts with.

The FIP will continue to conduct catch composition analysis when the next batch of observer data is submitted to continue to verify that ETP mitigation, handling and release measures are being adhered to and review the ETP management strategy if required.