

FAD MANAGEMENT POLICY ISSF CM 3.7

(ISSF Conservation Measure 3.7)

Ghana Tuna Association, an environmentally responsible organization, hereby publicly states that starting on April 1, 2024 ([1]), the following best practices for FAD management, identified in ISSF Technical Report 2019-11, "Recommended Best Practices for FAD management in Tropical Tuna Purse Seine Fisheries", shall be implemented:

- a) Comply with flag state and RFMO reporting requirements for fisheries statistics by set type.

We commit to:

Filling out completely and accurately the logbooks, including FAD logbook information, by set type required by the flag state and submitting them by electronic reporting to the required authority and/or tRFMO.

Maintaining, as has been the case since 2015, 100% observer coverage, even if not required by the tRFMO, on all fishing trips through the use of a combination of human observers and voluntary Electronic Monitoring (EM). For EM, best-practice minimum standards developed by ISSF, or those developed by the tRFMO, will be followed.

Collecting data on the number of active FADs and FAD activity (deployments, visits, sets and loss) as required by tRFMO and submitting them to the required authority and tRFMO.

- b) Voluntarily report additional FAD buoy data for use by RFMO science bodies.

We commit to:

Report FAD buoy daily position data to the scientific institution AZTI with a maximum time lag of 90 days, and request that these data be made available to the relevant tRFMO for scientific purposes. The data submitted must include the vessel name and IMO number (if available). When possible, deployments should be identified in the data submission. In cases where data is being reported to scientific institutions or the flag State, we shall request that these data be made available to the relevant tRFMO for scientific purposes.

Provide FAD buoy echo-sounder acoustic biomass data to the scientific institution AZTI with a maximum time lag of 90 days, and request that these data be made available to the relevant tRFMO for scientific purposes. The data submitted must include the vessel name and IMO number (if available)

- c) Support science-based limits on the overall number of FADs used per vessel and/or FAD sets made.

We commit to:

Abiding by the limit of active number of FADs adopted by tRFMOs.

Deploying only FADs with satellite tracking buoys.

Managing the activation and deactivation of buoys taking into account the corresponding tRFMO's measures.

Abiding by the time area closure (including FAD area closures) established by the corresponding RFMO.

- d) Use only non-entangling FADs to reduce ghost fishing.

We commit to:

Only deploying or redeploying FADs that are completely non-entangling (i.e., without any netting), even when is not a requirement of the tRFMO, according to the ISSF Guide for Non-Entangling FADs ([2]).

Not deploying any "high entanglement risk" FAD according to the ISSF Guide for Non-Entangling FADs (i.e., those using large open netting either in the raft or in the underneath part of the FADs: >2.5 inches or 7 cm mesh).

Retrieving from the water and modifying the design of "high entanglement risk" FADs according to the ISSF Guide for Non-Entangling FADs that are reused by the fleet, to make them non-entangling as per the ISSF classification ([3]).

e) Mitigate other environmental impacts due to FAD loss including through the use of biodegradable FADs and FAD recovery policies

We commit to:

Studying the feasibility of using FADs with only biodegradable material in their construction except the floatation structure of the raft. The association and its members are looking to start implementing BioFAD in its fishing activities.

Participating in tests of locally-sourced biodegradable materials in collaboration with AZTI, ISSF or any other scientific institution.

Studying the feasibility of deploying simpler and smaller FADs.

Participating in trials of biodegradable FAD designs and tests with the participation of tRFMO science bodies and/or CPCs or ISSF scientist.

Endorsing risk and feasibility research programs aimed to determine deployment areas that are highly likely to result in stranding, in countries where FAD recovery policies could be put in place.

Participating in cooperative efforts, such as the FAD-Watch in the Seychelles, to remove stranded FADs, in the case the fleet operates in the determined area(s).

Gradually replacing FAD components with biodegradable materials as soon as such are proven efficient.

Not disposing of any FAD component at sea, unless it is proven biodegradable: should a FAD be mended and/or any component replaced, the remainder material must be reused or disposed at port

Whenever possible, use supply vessels to recover FADs that might be in risk of sinking or stranding.

Promoting the use of bio-based material to make FADs.

Promoting a definition of BIODEGRADABLE materials applicable to marine environment.

f) For silky sharks (the main bycatch issue in FAD sets) implement further mitigation efforts.

We commit to:

Applying Best Practices for safe handling and release of sharks and rays brought onboard.

Participating/supporting studies to evaluate the contribution of purse seine fisheries to catches of silky sharks, and the impact of implementation of the Good Practices on post-release survival.

Participating in projects aiming to develop and test new tools to release sharks and mobulids in tuna purse seiners that maximize their survival and are practical to use onboard.

President

GHANA TUNA ASSOCIATION

This policy was adopted on APRIL 27, 2024