

FAD Management Program  
(Implementation of FAD Management Policy)

Recognizing the need to better understand and mitigate any potential negative impacts on sensitive marine ecosystems and species related to the use of Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) in tuna purse seine fishing operations, the US Pacific Tuna Group will implement the following program to align with the policy. Below are listed the commitments of the policy followed by actions taken to address those items updated May 25, 2023.

1. Comply with flag state and RMFO reporting requirements for fisheries statistics by set type
  - Currently all members of the US Pacific Tuna Group are required to report this data and compliance is enforced by the United States National Marine Fisheries Service.
2. Voluntarily report additional FAD buoy data as requested by RFMO science bodies to support approved and budgeted research activities.
  - This is currently a requirement in both the WCPFC and IATTC and all vessels are complying with this requirement. The individual vessels in the group have agreements with the satellite buoy providers to provide this information to the respective RFMO's.
3. Support science-based limits on the overall number of FADs used per vessel.
  - Member of the US Pacific Tuna Group have in the past and continue to be engaged with discussions on FADs/FAD set limits at both the RFMO and US government level. Currently there are ongoing discussion in both the IATTC as well as the WCPFC.
4. A transition to the use of only non-entangling FADs to reduce ghost fishing
  - This will become a requirement as of Jan. 1, 2024. The vessels up until this time have been implementing the use of lesser entangling (no open netting) which meets the standards set by the RFMOs and ISSF.
5. Mitigate other environmental impacts due to FAD loss including through the use of biodegradable FADs and FAD recovery policies.
  - Vessels participated in a research study collaborating with The Nature Conservancy, Satlink, Marine Instruments, and SPC looking at FAD trajectory tracking and recovery feasibility. The group will continue to look at future studies as they become available.

- The group remains committed to progressing research on biodegradable FADs. The group is currently participating in 2 research trials with ISSF and SPC. Future work will continue as more projects become available.
  - The group is cooperating with The Nature Conservancy to implement a FAD retrieval policy around Palmyra Atoll for any FADs at risk for beaching. Buoys that have been retrieved are to be repurposed through a program with Satlink to other programs and some vessels have already made transfers. This FAD retrieval trial study is being expanded to American Samoa as of this year.
  - The group has also determined that American Samoa is the primary buoy delivery point for the vessel group and has been cooperating with Purse Seine Samoa, Inc. to store recovered buoys and then allow vessels to retrieve the buoys. Most materials from Recovered FADs are repurposed onboard the retrieving vessels. This group will need to look at how to address this as there is a transition to non-entangling FADs as of Jan. 1, 2024
6. For silky sharks (the main bycatch issue in FAD sets) implement further mitigation efforts.
- All vessel captains must review best handling practices for sharks and manta rays to lessen the impacts on the bycatch. The group has coordinated training and release programs through ISSF for sharks and manta rays.

Future workplan:

- 1) Continue to cooperate with trusted partners such as TNC to further look at the viability of retrieval programs.

Signed:



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FIP Coordinator