

## Pacific Ocean tropical tuna - purse seine (US Pacific Tuna Group)

### FisheryProgress update

<b>Action 1. Healthy Stock Status - EPO Yellowfin</b>	
<b>Task:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and advocate for the further review of stock status, HCRs, and interim reference points by the IATTC scientific staff. June 2020 Update: Position statement to be provide to IATTC prior to the annual general meeting in August 2021</li> </ul>	
<b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. The position statement advocated precautionary harvest strategies for all tuna species under IATTC jurisdiction:</p> <p>“We encourage IATTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) to expedite the process of adopting precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures, including biological reference points, harvest control rules, increased observer coverage, national management measures and monitoring efforts adequate to ensure harvest strategy objectives are being met for all tuna species under IATTC jurisdiction. As such, adopting a multi-year conservation measures and effective plan to reduce the fishing mortality of bigeye and yellowfin tunas is of high priority.”</p> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR’s.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>IATTC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>

*Note, the FIP coordinator has changed from Cary Gann to Tom Evans at Key Traceability. Additionally, a scope extension is currently being carried out to include new Principle 3 Management Authorities and to streamline the existing workplan.*

<b>Action 2. Harvest Strategies - EPO Skipjack</b>	
<p><b>Task:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby and advocate for the IATTC to perform a stock assessment for EPO skipjack, establish target reference points and review the HCRs so specific management actions can be triggered as needed</li> </ul>	
<p><b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b></p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. See attached document. The position statement advocated for an update in the skipjack stock assessment as follows:</p> <p>“We support the IATTC staff and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) recommendation to establish a triennial cycle of assessment and management for tropical tuna fisheries and call for an update in the skipjack tuna stock assessment to generate adequate information on the state of its condition.”</p> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR’s.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>IATTC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>

**Action 3. Harvest Strategies - EPO Yellowfin and Bigeye**

**Task:**

- Support the setting of science-based catch or effort limits for the purse seine fishery and other gear types. June 2020 update: This will be part of our advocacy efforts at the IATTC annual meetings in November.
- Support the adoption by the IATTC of management measures that clearly identify the shares of the catch and/or effort that should go to the different gear types. June 2020 update: This will be part of our advocacy efforts at the IATTC meeting.
- Encourage research and analysis by the IATTC scientific staff that can lead to scientifically-sound management and harvest strategy tools, if needed, which may include closure days and limits on the number of FADs deployed and FAD sets.
- Support analysis and research by the IATTC staff to support the management objective of reducing the catch of juveniles.
- Participate in research that can lead to more selective fishing (lower catches of juvenile yellowfin and bigeye. June 2020 update: Planned for 2021.
- Support and advocate that the IATTC conduct a review of the harvest strategy, HCRs and reference points for Yellowfin and Bigeye

**January 2022 Evidence/ Update:**

The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. The position statement advocates for precautionary harvest strategies that address many of the Tasks described above including a review of the harvest strategy, HCRs and reference points for Yellowfin and Bigeye.

The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.

**Evidence:**

- **IATTC Position Statement**
- **Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program**

**Action 4. Harvest Control Rules - EPO Skipjack, Yellowfin and Bigeye**

**Task:**

- Support the IATTC in their efforts to adopt Skipjack HCRs and to improve and better understand the HCRs for Yellowfin and Bigeye that trigger practical measures.
- Encourage analysis and research by the IATTC staff that will lead to scientifically-sound recommendations for HCRs and tools including closure days, number of FADs deployed, number of FAD sets and area closures.
- Support the adoption of management measures that clearly define the shares of catch and/or effort that should be allocated to different gear types.
- Promote and encourage attendance and participation in harvest strategy capacity building workshops.

**January 2022 Evidence/ Update:**

The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021.

The position statement advocates for adopting precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures, including biological reference points, harvest control rules, increased observer coverage, national management measures and monitoring efforts adequate to ensure harvest strategy objectives are being met for all tuna species under IATTC jurisdiction

The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.

**Evidence:**

- **IATTC Position Statement**
- **Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program**

<b>Action 5. Stock Status Assessment of all EPO Species</b>	
<b>Task:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and advocate for the IATTC scientific staff to develop alternative methods to better assess the EPO tuna stocks, particularly Skipjack due to its uncertainties.</li> </ul>	
<b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b>	<p>See action section for June 2020 update including updated methods to determine stock status for EPO species.</p> <p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the IATTC Commission meeting beginning August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. The position statement supported the IATTC staff and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) recommendation to establish a triennial cycle of assessment and management for tropical tuna fisheries, and call for an update in the skipjack tuna stock assessment to generate adequate information on the state of its condition.</p> <p>An updated interim EPO skipjack stock assessment is to be presented at the next IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee meeting in 2022</p> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>IATTC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>

<b>Action 6. Harvest Strategies - WCPO Skipjack</b>	
<b>Task:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby and advocate that the WCPFC adopt a robust Skipjack harvest strategy with reference points that can trigger specific management actions.</li> </ul>	
<b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines.</li> <li>Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack.</li> <li>Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.</li> <li>Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery.</li> </ul> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WCPFC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>

<b>Action 7. Harvest Strategies - WCPO Yellowfin</b>	
<p><b>Task:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To advocate that the WCPFC adopt a robust Yellowfin Harvest Strategy that includes management actions and triggers when reference points are reached and is responsive to changes in stock status.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b></p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines.</li> <li>Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack.</li> <li>Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.</li> <li>Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery.</li> </ul> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WCPFC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>

<b>Action 8. Harvest Strategy - WCPO Bigeye</b>	
<p><b>Task:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate that the WCPFC adopt a Bigeye Harvest Strategy that includes management actions and triggers when reference points are reached and is responsive to changes in stock status</li> </ul>	
<p><b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b></p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines.</li> <li>Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack.</li> <li>Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.</li> <li>Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery.</li> </ul> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WCPFC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>



<b>Action 9. Harvest Control Rules - WCPO Skipjack</b>	
<p><b>Task:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate that the WCPFC staff obtain a stock assessment for skipjack to help adopt Harvest Control Rules that include management action responses for changes in stock status, and with reference points that trigger management actions.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b></p>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines.</li> <li>Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack.</li> <li>Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.</li> <li>Adopt a harvest control rule (HRC)/management procedure (MP) for the skipjack purse seine fishery.</li> </ul> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WCPFC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>



Pacific Ocean tropical tuna - purse seine (US Pacific Tuna Group) FIP – January 2022

<b>Action 10. Harvest Control Rules - WCPO Yellowfin</b>	
<b>Task:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To advocate that the WCPFC staff establish a better understanding of the effect of controlling exploitation to establish well-defined robust HCRs for Yellowfin and Bigeye and define the appropriate YF exploitation levels.</li> </ul>	
<b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines.</li> <li>Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack.</li> <li>Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.</li> </ul> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WCPFC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>

<b>Action 11. Harvest Control Rules -WCPO Bigeye</b>	
<b>Task:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To advocate that the WCPFC establish well defined HCRs for Bigeye with appropriate exploitation levels that address the decline in the biomass.</li> </ul>	
<b>January 2022 Evidence/ Update:</b>	<p>The FIP submitted a joint USPTG/WWF Position Statement to the commissioners and delegations attending the WCPFC Commission meeting held from December 1 – 7, 2021.</p> <p>The joint statement calls for the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and endorse further implementation of CMM 2014-06 to establish harvest strategies for key tuna species with proposed timelines.</li> <li>Establish precautionary target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas, and re-establish an agreed precautionary TRP for skipjack.</li> <li>Endorse the continued development and implementation of limit reference points (LRPs) and TRPs for proper management of all stocks, including sharks as a priority.</li> </ul> <p>The FIP was part of the Pacific Tuna Tagging Programme 2021, led by SPC, which saw 7866 tuna tagged in the central Pacific during the 39-day cruise on the FIP fleet vessels. This information will enable the region to make more informed decisions on stock status, harvest strategies and HCR's.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WCPFC Position Statement</b></li> <li><b>Email from SPC acknowledging and thanking the USPTG fleet for their support for the SPC Tuna Tagging Program</b></li> </ul>

**Action 12. ETP species outcome, management, and information**

**Task:**

- Highlight and document available NMFS and PIRO information on all ETP species interactions and fishing locations for the UoA fleet.
- Disaggregate species interactions data to clarify the types of encounters (sightings vs interactions, on board or in net), live release and species mortalities
- Develop a comprehensive list of ETP species’ DPSs and/or stocks that have interactions with the UoA, other MSC UoA’s and overlapping fisheries
- Identify and describe any changes in ETP species catches and interactions by the UoA fishery due to changes in fishing operation and fishing locations (for example: high seas fishing and fishing on the 150-degree line of EPO)
- Support and advocate for additional research on ETP species interactions by the tuna fishing fleets for all gear types
- Support and advocate for new and updated stock assessments of relevant ETP species with fishery interactions
- Develop a list and summary of relevant ETP species with national or international limits, protection, or management strategies
- Support and advocate for the development and implementation of robust bycatch and FAD management strategies that contribute to the recovery of ETP stocks.
- Develop, adopt, and implement a comprehensive ETP bycatch policy and best practices based on the best available science and ISSF guidance, including further mitigation efforts for Silky and Oceanic White Tip sharks.
- Active cooperation and information sharing on best practices with overlapping FIPs and MSC certified fisheries
- Develop an audit protocol for the ETP bycatch policy

**January 2022 Evidence/ Update:**

The FIP is adopting the FAD management plan and policy which follows ISSF guidance on best practices to reduce ETP bycatch

The USPTG vessels participated in a FAD Retrieval Feasibility study for the WCPO by releasing 10 years are archived echosounder FAD buoy locational data to the SPC. The study has identified potential “hot spots” for FAD beaching. This data is now being used to develop FAD retrieval strategies. A summary of the study was prepared by SPC and presented to the WCPFC Scientific Committee meetings held from August 11 – 19, 2021.

The USPTG vessel are also participating in a FAD retrieval pilot for Palmyra Atoll, managed by The Nature Conservancy. The USPTG has authorized FAD buoy service providers to release both locational and echosounder data to the FAD retrieval program manager. This data is being used to track FAD as they drift through the Palmyra MPA and facilitate the retrieval of FADs before they become beached on the atoll. Echosounder data is being used to study aggregation of biomass as the FADs drift through the MPA The pilot program may serve as a

	<p>model for other Pacific Island nations in their efforts to reduce the impacts of FADs on sensitive marine ecosystems and habitats. A progress report for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the program is included as evidence.</p> <p>The FIP created posters for commonly encountered species to aid in skipper ID to be placed on vessels.</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>FAD Management Plan</b></li><li>• <b>FAD Management Policy</b></li><li>• <b>FAD Retrieval Feasibility study</b></li><li>• <b>FAD retrieval pilot progress report</b></li><li>• <b>Commonly Encountered Species Posters</b></li></ul>
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**Action 13. Habitats and Ecosystem Outcomes, Management, and Information**

**Task:**

- Across the two RFMOs support and advocate for the continued collection of data to better understand and detect any increase in risk level from FADs on VME’s and sensitive habitats. USPTG is participating in direct research by providing FAD buoy data.
- Design a logbook and data collection system to quantify the number of lost or abandoned FADs, their fate and location. Data to include an estimate of the number of FADs that are transferred or retrieved. Logbook to be developed by first half of 2021.
- Participate in voluntary programs to track FAD status and to retrieve lost, abandoned, or derelict FADs, at sea or on shore
- Support and advocate for IATTC to develop a 5-year strategic research plan to incorporate and prioritize several ecosystem components and improve the integration of existing research programs and catch trophic levels for the 3 purse-seine fishing methods
- Encourage the progress and priority of WCPFC’s current five-year strategic research plan and data collection to monitor and assess the WCPO’s pelagic ecosystems, and the evaluation of potential management options.
- Identify any existing quantitative studies on the available FAD management options and strategies to assess effectiveness
- Support and advocate for research on FAD impacts and the effectiveness of existing partial strategies including limits on the number of FADs deployed or FAD sets. Existing and proposed limits are arbitrary and should be based on the best available science
- Collaborate and share information on best practices for FAD management with overlapping FIPs and other FAD fisheries seeking MSC certification
- Develop and adopt a comprehensive and auditable FAD management plan and code of best practices for the UoA based on the best available science and guidance
- Develop and implement a formal FAD recovery, transfer and sharing strategy for the UoA fleet and other FAD fisheries in the Pacific.
- Conduct and coordinate research on the use of non-entangling and biodegradable materials in the construction of FADs

**January 2022 Evidence/ Update:**

The USPTG vessels participated in a FAD Retrieval Feasibility study for the WCPO by releasing 10 years are archived echosounder FAD buoy locational data to the SPC. The study has identified potential “hot spots” for FAD beaching. This data is now being used to develop FAD retrieval strategies. A summary of the study was prepared by SPC and presented to the WCPFC Scientific Committee meetings held from August 11 – 19, 2021.

The USPTG vessel are also participating in a FAD retrieval pilot for Palmyra Atoll, managed by The Nature Conservancy. The USPTP has authorized FAD buoy service providers to release both locational and echosounder data to the FAD retrieval program manager. This data is being used to track FAD as they drift through the Palmyra MPA and facilitate the retrieval of FADs before they become beached on the atoll. Echosounder data is being used to study aggregation of biomass as the FADs drift through the MPA The pilot program may serve as a

	<p>model for other Pacific Island nations in their efforts to reduce the impacts of FADs on sensitive marine ecosystems and habitats. A progress report for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the program is included as evidence.</p> <p>The USPTG developed a FAD logbook to track FAD deployment, retrievals, transfers and deactivations due the buoys being stolen, sunk or lost. The goal of the logbook is to determine the ultimate fate of buoys and quantify the number of buoys left to drift at sea, with the potential to eventually beach. A copy of the logbook is provided. All USPTG vessels will beginning using this logbook starting in 2022.</p> <p>The USPTG also participated in a WWF questionnaire on traditional, biodegradable and non-entangling FAD design. See provided evidence for an example of a response to the questionnaire.</p> <p>The USPTG is actively involved in the development of biodegradable FADs and has been awarded funding by the US National Marine Fishery Service to support BioFAD design, construction and testing in 2022. The project is being managed by the ISSF. The NMFS funding will be used for materials with the USPTG supplying the echosounder buoys as their in-kind contribution. The first step of the project to conduct BioFAD workshops with the vessel captains but this has been delayed due to Covid. Therefore, the project is now expected to commence in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2022. A copy of the BioFAD proposal is provided along with a letter of commitment from the USPTG for their in-kind contribution (echosounder buoys).</p> <p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>FAD Retrieval Feasibility study</b></li><li>• <b>FAD retrieval pilot progress report</b></li><li>• <b>FAD Logbook</b></li><li>• <b>WWF Questionnaire on FADs</b></li><li>• <b>BioFAD proposal</b></li></ul>
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