

FAD Management Policy

US Pacific Tuna Group

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 (USPTG) has adopted this FAD Management Policy for all of the tuna purse seine vessels under its management and participating in the USPTG Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP), as listed in Exhibit A.

Starting on March 1, 2020 the USPTG requires onboard its vessels the use of the following best practices for FAD management as described in ISSF Technical Report 2019-11 "Recommended Best Practices for FAD Management in Tropical Tuna Purse Seine Fisheries":

1. Comply with flag state and RMFO 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 as required by the US Government authorities, WCPFC and IATTC, and submitting them to the required authority and/or tRFMO.
- Maintaining 100% observer coverage on all fishing trips through the regional observer program operated by the relevant tRFMO
- Collect data on the number of FADs and FAD activity (deployments, visits, sets and loss) as required by the tRFMOs, and submitting them to the required authority or tRFMO.

2. Voluntarily report additional FAD buoy data as requested by RFMO science bodies to support approved and budgeted research activities

We commit to:

- Participate in scientific programs by tRFMOs or other scientific institutions by providing daily positions and echo-sounder data for up to 100% of company owned FADs, depending on the requirements of the scientific program, with a time lag as needed to ensure confidentiality.

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

We commit to:

- Abide by the limit of active number of FADs adopted by the IATTC and WCPFC
- Deploying only FADs with satellite tracking buoys
- Allowing buoys to transmit/report at least once per day while they are in the water
- Abide by the FAD time area closure established by the WCPFC

4. A transition to the use of only non-entangling FADs to reduce ghost fishing

We commit to:

- Not deploying any “high entanglement risk” FADs 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)
- Removing from the water all encountered “high entanglement risk” FADs for either conversion to less entangling or non-entangling FADs, or disposal at port.
- A timely transition to the deployment of only FADs that are completely non-entangling (i.e., without any netting), even if it is not a requirement of the tRFMO.

5. 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 materials in their construction except for the flotation structure of the raft and the satellite buoy
- Studying the feasibility of deploying simpler and smaller FADs
- Participate in research to determine FAD deployment areas that have high risk of stranding by providing historical track data to the scientific body conducting the research program.
- The development and implementation of a FAD recovery policy and strategies.

6. 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 as described in Chapter 3 of the ISSF Skipper’s Guidebook.

This policy was adopted on March 1, 2020

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Exhibit A
US Pacific Tuna Group – List of Vessels

Western Pacific
Pacific Princess
Sea Encounter
Friesland
Captain Vincent Gann
Daniela
Isabella
Koorale
Evelina da Rosa
Daniellee Lynn
American Triumph
American Eagle
American Victory