

Best Standards for Data Collection on FOBs: Towards a Science Based FOB fishery management

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Summary

Tropical tuna purse seiners operating globally have increased their use of Floating Objects (FOBs), including man-made drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (dFADs) and logs, usually equipped with satellite-linked echo-sounder buoys. The use of these FOBs has contributed to improving the fishing efficiency, but potential adverse effects on target and non-target species and the marine ecosystems have been also identified (i.e. alteration of tuna behaviour, increases in skipjack catches, reduction in yield per recruit, increase of bycatch, damages to sensitive coastal habitats and contribution to marine littering). In recent years tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (t-RFMOs) have adopted data reporting requirements and recommended arrangements for the use of high-resolution FOB data to assess those impacts. However, the standards adopted by t-RFMOs are different and levels of reporting are still low. This has hampered the work of scientific committees in evaluating the impacts of FOBs and deliver specific advice about FOB management. The aim of this work is to review current requirements and procedures and to propose standards for data collection and reporting on FOBs to t-RFMOs. The proposals included in this document are the result of a collaborative work between scientists and the fishing industry.