

The Marking of Fishing Gears

Francis Chopin

FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

The Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

- Inter-governmental forum where major international fisheries & aquaculture problems & issues are examined and recommendations addressed to Govs., RFBs, FAO and international community, periodically on a world-wide basis
- A forum in which global agreements and non-binding instruments negotiated



FAO Fisheries & Aquaculture Department

- The Fisheries and Aquaculture (FIA) acts as Secretariat to COFI
- FIA is responsible for all programmes & activities relating to the development of policies, guidelines and provision of technical services to FAO members in fisheries & aquaculture

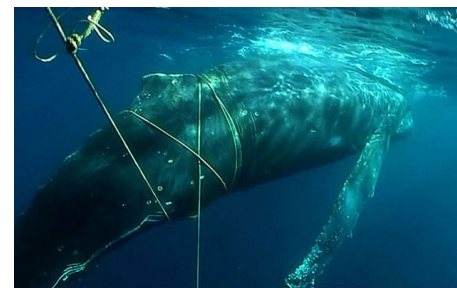


Marking of Fishing Gear – why?

- FAO Code of Conduct: Fishing gear should be marked in accordance with national legislation in order the owner of the gear can be identified.
- few Int. Regs, guidelines or common practices for the marking of fishing gear deployed outside of national jurisdictions
- Abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) is often impossible to identify as to fishery of origin
- COFI Members and others have noted the role of gear marking to assist in more effective resource management, reducing risks / hazards to navigation, reduce environmental impact
- International Regulations and Instruments: UNGA, UNFSA, MARPOL Annex V

ALDFG - examples

- Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (**ALDFG**) is a significant and dangerous component of marine litter:
 - Impact on ecosystem and wildlife
 - Loss of potential catches
 - Cost for fishing sector
 - Navigation and Safety hazard
- Causes of ALDFG include:
 - Extreme weather
 - Snagging on living and inert structures
 - Deliberate discarding / abandonment
- Disposal of synthetic fishing gear at sea is in contravention of **MARPOL Annex V**



Guidance to Expert Consultation

1. Review existing regulations, instruments and technologies
2. Clarify the purpose and necessity of a system for gear marking
3. Analyse the requirements and barriers that should be addressed
4. Develop minimum requirements for gear marking
5. Recommend next steps in developing Guidelines

Report available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5729e.pdf>

Key Results of Expert Consultation

Chair

USA

Experts (17)

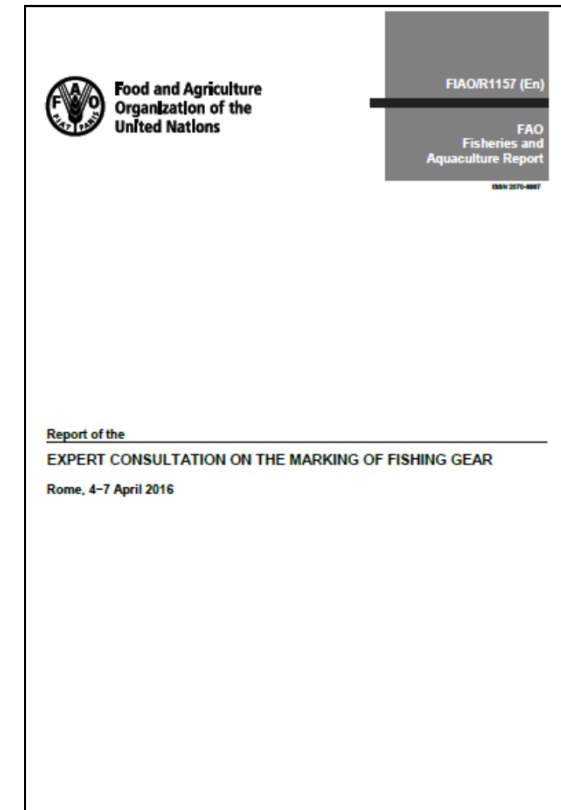
Canada, China, France, India, Iran, Japan,
Senegal, UAE, UK, USA, Antigua,
Uruguay, Norway, SPC, SPREP,

Resource Persons (4)

UNEP, WAP, UNIV. EFCA

FAO Secretariat

Legal, Fishing Industry, Operations



Main purpose of the Guidelines

The purpose of the Guidelines are to assist States, RFMO/As and the fishing sector in implementing the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries by applying a system for the marking of fishing gear.

The Guidelines are intended to be

1. A guidance tool applicable to all fisheries, all gear types
2. Not overly prescriptive
3. Minimum Criteria – States, RFMOs etc may wish to apply more stringent systems
4. In line with existing instruments (eg CCRF, MARPOL)
5. Based on a Risk Assessment, Needs, Cost effectiveness, Applicability

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To assist States and RFMO/As in developing and applying a system for the marking of fishing gear, that provide:

- i. practical means of locating and identifying the ownership of fishing gear;
- ii. guiding text on the development of appropriate marking systems;
- iii. a framework for undertaking risk assessment to identify the appropriateness or otherwise of implementing a system for marking fishing gear; and
- iv. as a basis for the preparation of recommendations and regulations designed to minimize the abandonment and discarding of fishing gears

Risk Assessment Approach

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Impact | H | A | A | R | R |
| | MH | G | A | A | R |
| | ML | G | G | A | A |
| | L | G | G | G | G |
| | | L | ML | MH | H |
| | | | | | Likelihood |

Paragraph 11 – Scope and Principles

The system for the marking of fishing gear should:

- i. build on an assessment of risks associated so gear marking actions are prioritized and proportional with the identified risks, and be designed to mitigate these risks effectively;
- ii. provide a simple, pragmatic, affordable and verifiable means of identifying the ownership and position of fishing gear, and its link with the vessel(s), or operator(s) undertaking the fishing operations;
- iii. be supported by a monitoring process that ensures that the system is responsive to the changing conditions of all stakeholders;
- iv. aid resource management systems and meet obligations of international conventions;
- v. be consistent with MARPOL Annex V and associated guidelines, and contribute to implementing regulation 10.6 relating to reporting requirements

IMPLEMENTATION OF A GEAR MARKING SYSTEM

Policy making authorities, with the participation of interested parties, should decide:

- i. on the use of a system, if applicable, for the marking of fishing gear;
- ii. the fisheries, fishing gears, vessels or areas to which the system applies to, and conditions for implementation, or the grant of exemptions from, the agreed system; and
- iii. reporting procedures, data storage, retrieval and information exchange.

States should cooperate, either bilaterally or through subregional or regional fishery bodies, including RFMO/As, as appropriate, on the establishment, implementation and harmonization of fishing gear marking schemes as deemed necessary and appropriate

Thank You

Francis.chopin@fao.org



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations