



World Tuna Purse seine Organization

WTPO FAD Definition Position Statement (WCPFC SC14)

The World Tuna Purse seine Organization (WTPO) reiterates its request to the WCPFC, for a review of the definition of Fish Aggregate Device (FAD). The current WCPFC FAD definition is too broad, confusing and debatable, considering the limit of the number of FAD and limit of FAD set fishing taking place in this commission. A clearer definition of FAD and FAD fishing is needed. For instance, operators and observers, problematically, have arguments with a piece of leaf, wood, and a plastic bag, etc. and etc. A piece of chopstick or rubbish is considered a FAD and this unclear situation disturbs legal fishing activity during the FAD closure which is taking place now.

WTPO congratulates the improvement effort on Big Eye stock, it continues to support the precautionary measures on FAD protecting Big Eye juvenile fish as well as mitigating bycatches and supports the effective FAD management measures such as FAD registration, FAD marking, FAD closure and FAD limits. It is questionable though that FAD is defined in this commission “like a leaf or a plastic” effect and impact the scientific research. It makes us wonder if studies in this fishing area/region really consider a “chopstick” a FAD in line with the protection models for Big Eye juvenile fish or bycatches. And with the improvement in Big Eye status, were the positive results and studies based on the current FAD definition?

WTPO believes that without a clear, improved new FAD definition, there is no assurance on the effectiveness of FAD management measures in the WCPO.

WTPO would like to further remind that the disputes between operators and observers on board are continuing to date, as well as, there are a lot of possible non-compliance results or flag state investigation status in the TCC regarding the FAD fishing during the closure period.

WTPO encourages to adopt a new FAD definition in WCPFC which is used by other tuna RFMOs, for instance, the FAD definition in IATTC is that “Fish-Aggregating Device” (FAD) means anchored, drifting, floating or submerged objects deployed and/or tracked by vessels, including through the use of radio and/or satellite buoys, for the purpose of aggregating target tuna species for purse-seine fishing operations.

WTPO Secretariat