



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/B2/XV (2021)

Subject: Drifting fish aggregating devices (dFADs) in the context of the conservation and management of Atlantic tunas

Dear Mr Pavón,

Thank you for your letter of 15 June 2021 (your reference 15/2021) with recommendations of the CCRUP in relation to drifting fish aggregating devices (dFADs) in the context of the conservation and management of Atlantic tunas in view of the intersessional meeting of Panel 1 of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), held on-line on 1-2 July 2021. We appreciate the recommendations that were considered as part of our preparations for the Panel 1 meeting.

The issues you raise were discussed at the Panel 1 intersessional meeting. A report of these discussions has been prepared by the rapporteur and sent to the Chair of Panel 1 and to the ICCAT Secretariat. It will soon be available for comments of the parties.

We share your concern about the current management of FADs. The EU is advocating for a precautionary, transparent and accountable management of FADs at global level. In this context, the EU Delegation presented to Panel 1 a Discussion Paper PA1-23 in relation to FADs measures. The discussion paper was focused on two main aspects: a) the relevance of FADs sets, already considered by ICCAT and referenced in Recommendation [19-02], with SCRS due to provide information on appropriate numbers; and b) the possibility to establish a FADs registry in ICCAT. This would open new opportunities in terms of the control of these activities and would in particular contribute to solving the issue related to the lack of ownership of FADs.

That being said, fishing on FADs is only part of the problem currently faced by tropical tunas, and in particular by bigeye tuna. In fact, one of the biggest problems is the

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systemic overfishing related to the lack of a catch limit for a number of Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs) actively fishing for tropical tunas. The catches by these CPCs continue to increase while the TAC continues to be symbolically decreased. The CPCs with a catch limit continue to reduce their catches without any effect since their conservation efforts are more than offset by the increase in catches by others. We firmly believe that the focus this year should not be on trying to introduce additional measures on FADs, since we still do not know the impact of the measures adopted only last year. Instead, effective measures to manage the fishing effort (fishing capacity) and clear fishing limits for all CPCs should be adopted. Failing to do so will continue to prevent the recovery of the stock because there will be no effective means to implement the TAC agreed.

I would also note that intersessional meetings are not the place to take decisions but rather to advance the discussions between the Parties. The discussions on management of tropical tunas will continue at the next inter-sessional meeting of Panel 1 scheduled for 1-3 September. Decisions will be taken during the 27th Regular Annual meeting of the ICCAT Commission scheduled for 15-22 November.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to the relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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