

Recommendation n° 66

Turtle Excluder Devices in Tropical Shrimp Fisheries in the European Waters of the Outermost Regions

Considering that trawling has been prohibited in the Azores, Madeira and Canary Islands since 2005^{1,2,3}, but in French Guiana, trawling is legal and constitutes one of the main fishing activities, particularly for shrimp⁴. Considering that French Guiana decided in 2009⁵ to make the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) mandatory in order to reduce the accidental capture of turtles in this fishery.

Considering that Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 *on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures* establishes the obligation to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in “*Union waters in the Indian Ocean and the West Atlantic*” in shrimp fisheries using trawl nets⁶, which concerns *Saint Martin, Guadeloupe, french Guyane, Martinique, Mayotte and La Reunion*. Considering also that, under point 1.2 of Part C of Annex XIII of the same regulation, “*The Commission may adopt implementing acts establishing detailed rules for the specification of the device referred to (...)*”, and that a draft implementing regulation has been submitted by the European Commission with the aim of providing technical specifications for various fishing gears, including the use of TEDs.

Considering that the Outermost Regions (ORs) are home to around 80% of Europe’s biodiversity⁷, featuring coral reefs, seamounts, and breeding grounds for migratory species and that they also provide the European Union (EU) with the largest exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the world and that these rich tropical, subtropical and marine ecosystems⁸,

¹ União Europeia. (2005). Regulamento (CE) n.º 1568/2005 do Conselho, de 20 de setembro de 2005, que altera o Regulamento (CE) n.º 850/98 respeitante à proteção dos recifes de coral de profundidade dos efeitos da pesca em determinadas zonas do oceano Atlântico. Jornal Oficial da União Europeia, L 252, 2-3.

² Gobierno de Canarias. (2005, janeiro 7). Decreto 182/2004, de 21 de diciembre, por el que se aprueba el Reglamento de la Ley 17/2003, de 10 de abril, de Pesca de Canarias.

³ Bueno-Pardo, J., Queiroga, H., Pierce, G. J., & Grilo, C. (2017). *Pesca de arrasto em Portugal: E se fosse em terra?* Policy Brief. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Iniciativa Gulbenkian Oceanos.

⁴ Menezes, G. M., & Giacomello, E. (2022). *A pesca nos Açores: História, recursos e gestão*. Arquipélago. Ciências Biológicas e Marinhas, 39, 1-36.

⁵ CRPMEM Guyane. (2016). Délibération n°30/16 relative à l’obligation d’utilisation de dispositifs de sélection des captures (TED) dans la pêche crevette en Guyane.

⁶ European Union. (2019). Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures, amending and repealing certain regulations. Official Journal of the European Union, L 198, 105–201.

⁷ Comité das Regiões Europeu (2022). *Parecer do Comité das Regiões Europeu - Estratégia da UE para as Florestas 2030* (2022/C 301/11). Jornal Oficial da União Europeia, C 301, 61-63

⁸ Comissão Europeia (2020). *Comunicação da Comissão ao Parlamento Europeu, ao Conselho, ao Comité Económico e Social Europeu e ao Comité das Regiões: Estratégia de Biodiversidade da UE para 2030 - Trazer a natureza de volta às nossas vidas* (COM(2020) 380 final). Bruxelas, 20 de maio de 2020.

support activities such as (artisanal, selective, and sustainable) fishing, tourism and traditional agriculture, which ensure local employment and food security⁹.

Considering that the Outermost Regions of the European Union (ORs) play a relevant role in the conservation of sea turtles, and that the development of conservation and monitoring projects in the ORs has a direct impact on reducing threats such as bycatch, illegal capture, and habitat degradation^{10,11,12,13,14}. Considering that the beaches of French Guiana, Mayotte, and La Réunion are areas of great importance for sea turtle nesting, with the presence of several protected species such as the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), the olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)^{15,16}, and also considering that the Azores, Madeira, and the Canary Islands play a fundamental role as feeding and developmental areas for sea turtles, where juveniles remain for several years before returning to the beaches where they were born to reproduce^{9,17,18}.

Considering that some of the main countries exporting wild-caught shrimp to the European Union, in many cases, do not use TEDs or do not effectively enforce their own national legislation, and that the bycatch of turtles associated with these fisheries is potentially significant¹⁹. Considering that shrimp trawling results in significant bycatch, including endangered and crucial species, like sea turtles and elasmobranchs (sharks, skates, and rays) and that the use of Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) reduces turtle bycatch by over 97% and reduces elasmobranch bycatch. Furthermore, by conserving these species it also contributes to the balanced maintenance of marine ecosystems, consistently with EU conservation commitments²⁰.

⁹ Parlamento Europeu. (2023). *Resolução do Parlamento Europeu, de 13 de junho de 2023, sobre a avaliação da nova comunicação da Comissão sobre as regiões ultraperiféricas (2022/2147(INI))*.

¹⁰ LIFE IP AZORES NATURA. (2023, outubro 11). *Seis das sete espécies conhecidas de tartarugas marinhas estão agora registadas nos Açores*.

¹¹ Avanfuier. (n.d.). *Avanfuier environmental volunteering. Fuerteventura Rural*.

¹² Mistic Seas 3. (2017, dezembro). *Campañas de monitorización de cetáceos y tortugas marinas en aguas de Canarias*.

¹³ Ifremer. (2021, August 26.). Departmental Council of Mayotte.

¹⁴ WWF France. (2025). *Protéger les dauphins et les tortues marines de Guyane*.

¹⁵ Filliâtre, P. (2017, december 17). *Turtle watching in French Guiana: tips from a naturalist. France.fr*.

¹⁶ Quillard, M. (2011). Les tortues marines à Mayotte : Bilan des actions de protection et perspectives. In Colloque Tortues Marines Paris 2010.

¹⁷ Wilder (2016). Açores e Madeira são cruciais para jovens tartarugas marinhas.

¹⁸ Varo-Cruz, N., Bermejo, J. A., Calabuig, P., Cejudo, D., Godley, B. J., López-Jurado, L. F., Pikesley, S. K., Witt, M. J., & Hawkes, L. A. (2016). New findings about the spatial and temporal use of the Eastern Atlantic Ocean by large juvenile loggerhead turtles. *Diversity and Distributions*, 1–12.

¹⁹ Jacob, T., Deckert, N., & Nalovic, M. (2022). *The need for a European Union import regulation to reduce marine turtle bycatch in shrimp fisheries: How to condition imports of wild-caught shrimp to the European market to minimise impacts on marine turtle populations*. WWF – World Wide Fund For Nature.

Considering that the EU's Common Fisheries Policy aims to ensure that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term and should contribute to achieving economic and social benefits²⁰, the use of TEDs ensures the long-term sustainability of shrimp fisheries by reducing bycatch, preventing the loss of biodiversity, promoting ecological balance and enhancing the quality of shrimp products²⁰. Furthermore, it should be noted that these devices enhance the productivity of shrimp fisheries, by reducing net damage, minimizing catch crushing, decreasing fuel consumption and improving crew safety on board, thus supporting local economies²⁰.

Considering that fisheries of the Outermost Regions differ in scale, capacity, and fishing practices and that a gradual and tailored implementation of TEDs is advisable¹⁸. Also, considering that regulating the use of TEDs in the capture of shrimp strengthens the EU's sustainability standards, responds to increasing consumer demand for environmentally friendly products and appeals to consumers concerned with marine conservation²⁰.

Thus, the **Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) recommends to the European Commission:**

- 1- The strengthening of European production standards, through the promotion of the certification of shrimp captured using Turtle Excluding Devices (TEDs) of the Outermost Regions^{20,21};
- 2- To financially support Member States in the phased introduction of TEDs by promoting the implementation of pilot programs as well as technical and financial²⁰ assistance, ensuring that the adoption of TEDs does not create economic or technical burdens for fishers of the Outermost Regions;
- 3- To promote industrial development and innovation with both European and third-country entities, so that TEDs can be optimized in order to ensure their effective implementation in all Outermost Regions^{20,22};

²⁰ Jacob, T., Deckert, N., & Nalovic, M. (2022). *The need for a European Union import regulation to reduce marine turtle bycatch in shrimp fisheries: How to condition imports of wild-caught shrimp to the European market to minimise impacts on marine turtle populations*. WWF – World Wide Fund For Nature.

²¹ CRPMEM Guyane. (2016). *Wild-caught tropical shrimp imports into the EU and associated impacts on marine turtle populations: The need for EU import restrictions* (Technical Report).

- 4- Cooperation with the main third-country shrimp-producing States, so that they are more rigorous in the control and application of national and international legislation relating to the use of TEDs^{20,22};
- 5- The development of technical specifications for TEDs in such a way that they do not conflict with existing regulations.

Considering that Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 *on the conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures*, **the Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP) recommends to the French Member State:**

- 1- To provide training to our fishers about the use of TEDs, ensuring their proper use and maintenance, involving them in the decision-making process;
- 2- To assure compliance of the above-mentioned regulation in our waters.

The President of the Executive Committee of the CCRUP,

(Ruben Farias)

²⁰ Jacob, T., Deckert, N., & Nalovic, M. (2022). *The need for a European Union import regulation to reduce marine turtle bycatch in shrimp fisheries: How to condition imports of wild-caught shrimp to the European market to minimise impacts on marine turtle populations*. WWF – World Wide Fund For Nature.

²² CRPMEM Guyane. (2016). *Wild-caught tropical shrimp imports into the EU and associated impacts on marine turtle populations: The need for EU import restrictions* (Technical Report).