Commitment "bio" of the Spanish tuna fleet

The Spanish tuna fishing fleet will start the deployment in the Indian Ocean, of at least 100 new FAD (fish aggregating devices, DCP in Spanish) biodegradable. The purpose of this experimental test is to evaluate the durability of such devices in real conditions of use and the absence of toxicity of the materials used in its construction.

Minimize possible impact on the ecosystem is the main purpose of this experimental campaign aggregating devices biodegradable fish. Initiative is part of the R & D project initiated in 2015 by the Organization of Producers of Large Tuna Freezers (OPAGAC) in collaboration with AZTI (Technological Centre Expert in Marine and Food Innovation) and the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), with the aim of developing more advanced and respectful FAD with the marine environment.

In addition to materials such as bamboo, jute and other natural fibers used for some time in the construction of these devices, new FAD-bio incorporate elements made from natural fibers (cotton, linen, etc ..) and different types of biodegradable plastic with the aim of achieving a balance between the durability of these devices and zero impact on the environment in case of loss or drift.

This pilot project of the new FAD-bio is developed following an initial investigation conducted in the Atlantic Ocean in which different materials and designs were evaluated with the objective that these devices not only prevent entanglement (capture unplanned of other species sea), but also are as efficient as possible in terms of biofouling uptake (accumulation of microorganisms or plants) and as biodegradable as possible.

With Spain leading the way, the European tuna fleet is leading the research and development of FAD-bio, an effort towards sustainability in addition to measures such as limiting the number of FAD by boat, recently established by the Tuna Commission Indian Ocean (IOTC), which has reduced by 38% from 2015, the number of FAD per vessel; as well as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

As Julio Morón, manager OPAGAC, has declarated, "if the previous generation of FAD not 'enmallantes' we virtually eliminate bycatch of turtles and sharks, with new FAD-bio fulfill the

challenge of reconciling the double achievement of durability and safety of these devices, eliminating the potential negative impact on the ecosystem. " "Analyses -Morón continues- put the breakeven durability of a year and a half, compared with ten or more years of life than the previous generation of FAD".

About OPAGAC

Founded in 1982, the Organization of Associated Producers of Large Tuna Freezers (OPAGAC) is an association of companies assemblers 8 freezer tuna seiners. Its fleet consists of 40 ships purse seine tuna catch 300,000 tons per year, 6% of the world catch, and fishing in three major oceans of the world -Atlántico, Indian and Pacific, under the jurisdiction of the four main ORP of this fishery : ICCAT, IOTC, IATTC and WCPFC. Environmental and socioeconomic sustainability and the principle of transparency, are the basis of the activity of OPAGAC.

Source: OPAGAC