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PAPUA NEW GUINEA SUMMARY - FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES

by

Kanudi Fisheries Research Station  
Konedobu  
Papua New Guinea

TUNA

FADs have not been commercially important in PNG's domestic tuna fishery principally because of the widespread availability of good quality baitfish throughout the year. However, some FADs were deployed by NBFi at Cape Lambert in 1980-1981. The following statement summarizes PNG's experience with the commercial use of FADs:

FADs were first used regularly by the PNG pole-and-line fishery in 1981 : 36 were moored in the New Hanover area and 20 around Cape Lambert. Many FADs were stationed in water up to 2000m deep and required 3000m of mooring rope; losses were relatively high, particularly in the Bismark Sea, and concern was expressed about the costs of using FADs. Little information has been collected on the benefits of FADs but local fishing masters have commented as follows.

- (a) FADs are useful at times when tuna are scarce since some tuna are almost always available around them.
- (b) FADs are very productive at times when new schools of tuna are moving into the area.
- (c) In general, the biting response of tuna around FADs is limited to the first hour after sunrise.
- (d) Pole-and-line boats, due to their method of fishing, do not seriously deplete the accumulate stock under the FADs, which remain continuously productive. However, purse seining is though to destroy the tuna aggregations and rafts which have been purse seined are usually left for about a month to recover.

COASTAL FISHERIES

Wewak, in the East Province, has been chosen as the centre for testing the potential for FADs in PNG's coastal waters. It is an area relatively rich in pelagic fish resources, and a number of islands offshore provide a certain amount of sheltered water. The objective of the programme is to establish whether FADs are effective when set in relatively shallow water. Trials will be carried out initially in water depths of between 50m and 200m and the hope is that coastal villages may eventually set their own FADs close inshore. The first raft was put in position in mid-June 1983 and whilst a few problems have been encountered in keeping the attractant material attached to the raft, schools of several species of fish have already been attracted to the raft.

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