

TRIALS WITH FISH AGGREGATION DEVICES (FADS) OFF WEST AND SOUTH-WEST COASTS OF SRI LANKA

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Three FADs were deployed on the continental slope off Lunawa, Panadura (West Coast) and Ambalangoda (South-West coast), in late 1993. All were constructed out of bamboo and other locally available materials. Information on fishing effort associated with the FADs, catch and species composition were collected during weekly visits.

Handline fishing around FADs yielded daily catch rates of 37.7 kg, 29.2 kg and 31.5 kg for 3.5 ton boats, 17-18 feet FRP boats and traditional canoes respectively. When compared to other non-FAD associated fisheries conducted by these categories of crafts, hand line fishing with live bait using non-mechanized traditional canoes was shown as the ideal fishing craft/gear combination to fish around FADs.

The dolphin fish (*Coryphaena hippurus*) and rainbow runners (*Elagatus bipinnatus*) contributed 42.4% and 21.7% respectively to the total catch. As these two species are not caught in large quantities in other fisheries, FADs proved to be useful in exploiting this underutilized resource. Due to the Socio-economic importance of the artisanal fishery operating with non-mechanized traditional canoes and handlining with live bait, the continuation of the FAD deployment programme with a careful monitoring of its economic and social aspects seems desirable.