

# Can certification improve an open access fishery? An application to Pacific tuna

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International and high-seas fisheries often lack the institutions that enable the use of negative incentives such as catch limits and taxes. This leads not only to overfishing, but also to excessive bycatch of charismatic species and juveniles of valuable commercial species. Certification has been proposed as an instrument that may reduce the bycatch issue, but it has also received criticism as it may increase overall fishing pressure. This issue becomes even more relevant when certification aims to shift fishing pressure from juveniles to adults in an already heavily exploited stock. In this paper we analyze under what circumstances certification can improve the efficiency of the Pacific tuna fishery, where fishing on Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) is known to catch many juveniles of skipjack tuna and yellowfin tuna. We find that under plausible assumptions the positive effect of shifting fishing effort away from the FAD fishery towards the fishery that does not use FADs can offset the negative effect of an increase in overall fishing effort.

