

Installation of fishing net tracking buoys in deep sea multiday tuna drift gillnetters at Chennai

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The deep sea multiday tuna drift gillnetters face many risks while they engage in fishing. The cutting and stealing of nets by fishermen of other boats or damage of the nets by the ships is common. As the total length of a net when set is around 5 to 6 nautical miles (nmi) and the fishing is carried out during night, quite often the fishermen come to know about the loss only at the time of hauling the net. Another serious issue is the possibility of collision with an approaching ship as sometimes the fishing ground can be on the same track of a ship and fishermen notice it only when the ship is too near to them. Installation of fishing net tracking buoy can effectively avoid these risks and enable a hassle free fishing trip.

The deep sea multiday day tuna drift-gillnetters in Chennai have fitted the fishing net tracking buoy in their boats in April-May 2019. This consisted of a transmitter (model SH-098 AIS buoy) fitted on the net, a receiver and a screen chart plotter fitted on the boat. The transmit distance is about 15 nmi. In

a boat generally, two transmitters, one receiver and one screen are used and the total cost of these is ₹ 75000. Now most of the drift gillnetters are fitted with this they have mostly procured this without any incentives from the government. With this installation, there is slight modification in the operation of net also. Earlier, one net consisted of 60 net pieces joined together during the setting of the net. One end of the net was free and the other end was tied to the boat. Now, the tying of the net to the boat is done away with and instead the net is divided into two, with each one consisting of 30 pieces. After fitting one transmitter to each net, these are set in one beside the other in any desired position. This enables the fishermen to haul the net at different times. The nets are monitored from the boats throughout the period of operation. The advantage with this system is that the fishermen can always track the position of the net, the presence of any other boats near the net and also other approaching ships or boats. Similar tracking system was installed much earlier in the boats based in Tuticorin Fisheries Harbour.