

Flexible Turtle Excluder Device (TED): an effective tool for Mediterranean coastal multispecies bottom trawl fisheries



The effect of a flexible Turtle Excluder Device (TED) on the catching efficiency and performance of a commercial bottom trawl was tested in a gear comparison study for a Mediterranean coastal multispecies bottom trawl fishery. The device affected neither bottom trawl technical performances (horizontal and vertical net opening and door spread) nor did it increase the required towing force, hence fuel consumption remained constant. Comparison of commercial catches for the major species demonstrated that using the TED did not affect catching efficiency, while it reduced the amount of debris. The device did not influence the size of commercial species, leaving the selective performance of the trawl unmodified. Underwater video camera recordings documented that fish caught in the net swam through the grid and easily reached the cod-end, missing the TED escape opening. Easy storage and improved catch retention compared with previous devices tested in this area make the present flexible TED a practical and valuable solution to reduce turtle bycatch in coastal Mediterranean demersal multispecies fisheries.

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