

CAFTA-DR



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The "Better TEDs" Project

Protecting Endangered Sea Turtles and Improving Shrimp Harvests

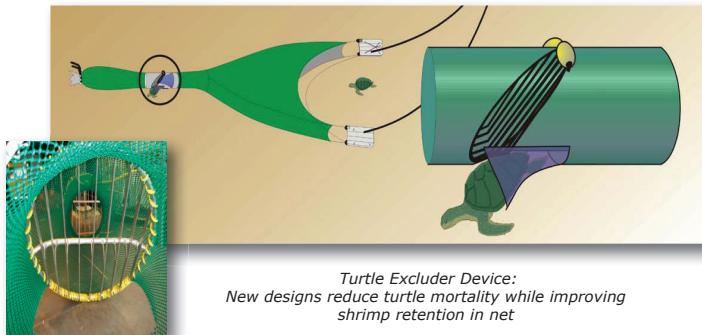


Shrimp boat trawl nets fitted with TEDs

Using Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) in shrimp nets saves sea turtles and enhances shrimpers' livelihoods. The U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

list all species of sea turtles with habitat in the Western North Atlantic, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, as endangered or threatened. The primary cause of marine turtle mortality in this region is incidental capture as "bycatch" in the nets and traps of commercial fisheries. The Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is working under a cooperative agreement funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES) to help expand the use and adoption of Turtle Excluder Devices in Central America. When properly used, TEDs improve profitability while nearly eliminating sea turtle bycatch and mortality.

What are TEDs and how do they enhance shrimp harvesters profits?



Turtle Excluder Device: New designs reduce turtle mortality while improving shrimp retention in net

A Turtle Excluder Device is a grid of bars that fit into the neck of a trawl net. Shrimp pass through the bars and into the end purse of the net, while larger animals such as marine turtles swim out safely. Lower levels of bycatch reduce costs by eliminating the drag (energy efficiency) and processing time associated with large bycatch. Product quality improves because larger marine life and trash does not crush the harvested shrimp during the trawl. Reducing bycatch also shortens sorting time on a hot deck, keeping shrimp fresher. This further contributes to improved product quality and



Improved shrimp harvests and improved shrimp quality



Loggerhead turtle safely exiting TED-equipped shrimp net

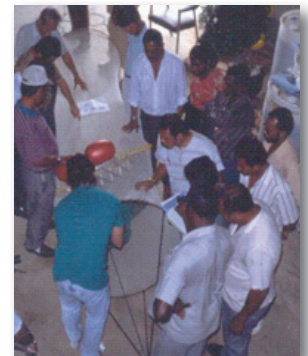


the prospect for better market prices. Crewmembers on shrimp boats have a safer working environment because TEDs eliminate unsafe catch, including sharks and rays, from the harvest.

As part of the CAFTA-DR Environmental Cooperation Program, OES supports NOAA Fisheries Service's work with Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua to improve compliance with U.S. import requirements. U.S. law mandates that countries exporting shrimp into U.S. markets attain certification that their wild shrimp

catch was harvested using methods comparable to those used in the United States. Effectively this means using nets that are fitted with TEDs.

The project is helping participating countries to use the best technology possible and to train enforcement officers in TEDs inspections. NOAA trains extension agents and local shrimpers on how to build TEDs with local materials. The extension agents train boat crews on how to incorporate these devices into current fishing practices. The National Marine Fisheries Service is also working with several of the CAFTA-DR countries testing next-generation TED technology. The outreach activities promote a clear understanding of trade requirements and provide recommendations for maintaining viable TED programs through assistance to fisheries ministries, industry associations and shrimpers. By working through governments and local communities, the project creates opportunities for protecting endangered marine life while increasing both income and economic opportunities in fishing communities.



"Better TEDs" Workshop

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