

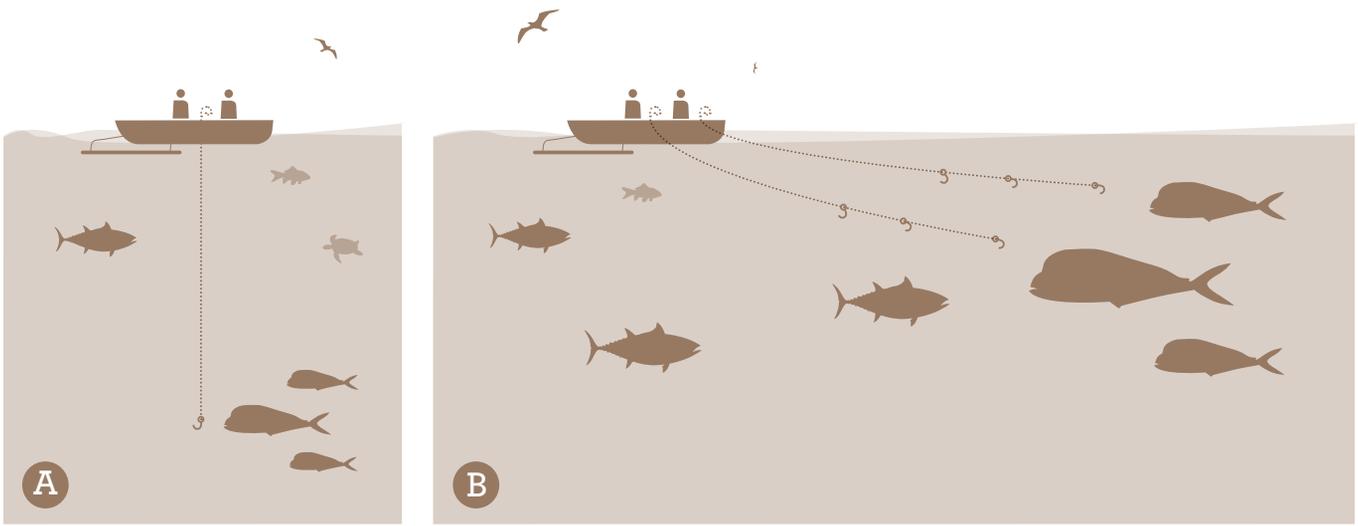


ARTESMAR[®]

The Art of Selective Fishing

Mahi Mahi

Coryphaena hippurus
Single-Hook Handline &
Surface Troll
Philippines



The Art of Selective Fishing

Mahi mahi is caught by small-scale, artisanal fishermen in the coastal waters of the Philippines. The fishermen employ two different catch methods, depending on the weather, time of day and season: Larger mahi mahi are caught using handlines with single hooks at depths of 50–200 m, using the drop-stone technique **A**. This type of fishing method is also used to catch adult yellowfin tuna by the same vessels and fishermen: A single, baited hook is attached to a stone by a self-releasing knot and then released into the sea. Once the bait reaches the depth of the targeted fishing zone, the stone is detached from the line with a strong pull by the fishermen—releasing the baited hook. Using this unique technique, the bait can be positioned in the deeper pelagic zones where large, adult tuna and mahi mahi usually hunt their prey. The weight of the stone assures that the bait quickly passes through the upper layers of the water column, preventing juvenile tuna, sharks, billfish, turtles and seabirds from accidentally taking the bait. Other small-scale fishing vessels troll for mahi mahi with multihook surface lines, usually equipped with artificial lures **B**.

The target fish hunt in the surface layers of the ocean where they are attracted by the artificial lures. The troll fishery usually targets adult skipjack tuna and mahi mahi. Both fishing methods result in very low bycatch and are arguably the most selective for catching adult mahi mahi on a commercial scale. For this reason, most environmental organisations rate this type of fishery as a low marine conservation concern, in contrast to pelagic long-lining or purse seining, which often results in the bycatch of juvenile fish and endangered species such as turtles, sharks and seabirds.

About the Artesmar® Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)

Filipino fishermen have been catching pelagic fish such as tuna and mahi mahi with traditional single-hook handline gear for generations. This artisanal small-scale fishery still exists in various locations in the Philippines today; however, it is being increasingly marginalized by the industrial fleets. The industrial fleet not only has a major impact on the sustainability of the fish stocks due to its high catch efficiency, but also catches juvenile fish as well as many vulnerable and endangered species. The Artesmar® fishery improvement project (FIP) engages with community-based coastal fisheries in 10 locations around the Philippines.

The FIP works directly with 5,000 fishermen and includes 2–3,000 small fishing boats. The improvement process focuses on awareness creation, capacity building and empowerment of fishery stakeholders, communities and local authorities as the basis for future co-management models. Key areas of improvement are the registration and licensing of vessels, the implementation of a catch documentation scheme (CDS) and the establishment of a consistent process of data gathering in order to establish resource access rights and informed fishery management decisions. Additionally, Artesmar® provides technical coaching and training for fishermen and fish traders for improved handling and food safety practices, assuring consistent quality of seafood products and value for participating seafood businesses.

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