

DIET AND FEEDING HABITS OF PREDATORY FISHES AROUND ANCHORED FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES IN THAI WATERS, THE ANDAMAN SEA

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ABSTRACT: The deployment of anchored fish aggregating devices (AFADs) in Thai waters in the Andaman Sea was expected to enhance pelagic fish resources and provide benefits to fishers. This study aimed at comparatively describing the diet and feeding habits of large predatory fishes caught in three areas (*i.e.*, reference station, AFADs at 500 m depth, and AFADs at 1,000 m depth). Fishing surveys were operated in the three areas using trolling line, pelagic longline, and drifting vertical line during 2010–2011. A total of 44 stomach samples were collected from eight predatory fish species, and 22 prey taxa were found and categorized into four groups (*i.e.*, fishes, cephalopods, crustaceans, and others). Fishes were the most important prey group for great hammerhead, bigeye thresher, savalai hairtail, great barracuda, and swordfish; cephalopods were for snake mackerel; and crustaceans were for kawakawa and yellowfin tuna. The major prey group available in each area was fishes. The feeding relationships among predatory fishes, preys, and secondary preys in the two areas of AFADs were more complex than in the area of reference station. The AFADs were considered to provide the feeding requirements of pelagic fish resources in Thai waters in the Andaman Sea though further studies are necessary to improve this knowledge.

Keywords: Fish aggregating device, Tuna, Billfish, Diet, Feeding habit, Andaman Sea
