

Original: English

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON MANAGEMENT MEASURES
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC BLUE SHARK
CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH ICCAT FISHERIES**

Proposal submitted by the European Union

RECALLING that the Commission adopted the *Resolution by ICCAT on Atlantic Sharks* [Res. 01-11], the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Conservation of Sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT* [Rec. 04-10], , the *Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT concerning Sharks* [Rec. 07-06], including the obligation of CPCs to annually report Task I & II data for sharks in accordance with ICCAT data reporting procedures and the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Development of Harvest Control Rules and of Management Strategy Evaluation* [Rec. 15-07];

FURTHER RECALLING that the Commission has adopted management measures for shark species considered vulnerable to overfishing and caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT;

RECOGNIZING that Atlantic blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) are caught in large numbers in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT;

CONSIDERING that following the stock assessment undertaken in 2015, the SCRS report states that despite the positive signs of the stock status of the North Atlantic stock of blue shark, a high level of uncertainty in data inputs and in model structural assumptions remains and, therefore, the possibility of the stock being overfished and overfishing occurring could not be ruled out;

FURTHER NOTING that, according to SCRS advice precautionary management measures should be considered for shark stocks for which there are few data and/or greater uncertainty in assessment results;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that in order to protect and manage the North Atlantic blue shark in a precautionary manner, an annual catch limit should be established to ensure that recent catch levels are not increased.

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:**

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities whose vessels fish blue shark in association with ICCAT fisheries in the Convention Area shall implement management measures to ensure the conservation of the North Atlantic blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) in line with ICCAT's Convention objective.

Specific authorization to fish for pelagic sharks

2. CPCs shall issue specific authorizations to vessels 20 meters LOA or greater flying their flag allowed to fish for North Atlantic blue shark in the Convention area, and to vessels flying their flag used for any kind of support to this fishing activity.

Catch limits for Blue Shark

3. CPCs shall take appropriate measures to ensure that their catches of North Atlantic blue shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries in the ICCAT Convention Area for 2017 and subsequent years. Do not exceed recent levels.
4. To the extent possible, as the CPCs catches of North Atlantic blue shark approach their recent catch levels, they shall take appropriate measures to ensure that all blue sharks that are alive at the time of boarding are released in a manner that maximises its survival.

5. If the total catch of the North Atlantic blue shark exceeds in any year the maximum level observed during the period 2009-2013 (38,083 t), the Commission shall review the implementation and effectiveness of these measures.

Scientific Research

6. CPCs are encouraged to undertake scientific research that would provide information on key biological/ecological parameters, life-history, migrations, post-release survivorship and behavioural traits of blue sharks. Such information shall be made available to the SCRS.
7. In the light of the results of the next stock assessment of blue shark, the SCRS shall provide, if possible, options of HCR with the associated limit, target and threshold reference points for the management of this species in the ICCAT Convention Area.