

Original: English

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON MANAGEMENT MEASURES
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SOUTH 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 in the last stock assessment of South Atlantic blue shark stock, all scenarios with the Bayesian surplus production model estimated that the stock was not overfished and that overfishing was not occurring. However, that the estimate obtained with the state-space surplus production model formulation were generally less optimistic, predicting that the stock could be overfished and overfishing could be occurring in some cases;

CONSIDERING that in the 2015 SCRS report it is recommended that, given the uncertainty in stock status results for the South Atlantic blue shark, recent catch levels (e.g. 2009-2013) should not be increased;

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 South Atlantic blue shark in a precautionary manner, an annual catch limit should be established to ensure that recent catch levels (e.g. in the final five years of the assessment model, 2009-2013) 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 South 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 South 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 South Atlantic blue shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries in the ICCAT Convention Area for 2017 and subsequent years do not exceed recent levels (2009-2013).
4. To the extent possible, as the CPCs catches of South 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 southern blue shark stock exceeds in any year the maximum level observed during the period 2009-2013 (*i.e.* 35,069 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.