

Original: English

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

Proposal submitted by Japan

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;

CONSIDERING ALSO 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;

FURTHER 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;

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.

**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 catch blue shark in association with ICCAT fisheries in the Convention area shall implement the following measures to ensure the conservation of the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) stocks in the Atlantic Ocean.

Catch limits for Blue Shark

2. Each CPC shall take appropriate measures to ensure that its catches of blue shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries in the ICCAT Convention area for 2017 and subsequent years do not exceed the recent levels of North Atlantic and South Atlantic stocks, respectively, except where the CPC has not increased its fishing effort for blue shark.

3. To the extent possible, as the CPCs catches of blue shark approach their recent catch levels, they shall take appropriate measures to ensure that all blue sharks that are alive when brought alongside the vessel are released in a manner that maximises its survival.
4. If the total catch of the North Atlantic blue shark exceeds in any consecutive two years for 2017 and subsequent years the average level observed during the period 2011-2015 (*i.e.* 39,102 t), the Commission shall review the implementation and effectiveness of these measures.
5. If the total catch of the South Atlantic blue shark 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.