November 10, 2026

Sciaena's Statement to Panel 4

25th Special Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

Sciaena is thankful for the opportunity to contribute to ICCAT's Panel 4 proceedings and acknowledges the work that the Secretariat, SCRS and the CPCs have done in preparation for this meeting and its upcoming negotiations. We ask all CPCs to consider the following issues:

Maintain the North Atlantic Shortfin mako shark retention ban

Sciaena underscores the importance of maintaining the North Atlantic shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) retention ban, which remains essential to rebuilding this severely depleted stock. The uncertainties surrounding the stock assessment, including gaps in biological and life-history information, reinforce the need for caution when interpreting recovery projections. Scientific uncertainty must not be used to justify prematurely relaxing existing protections, particularly for a slow-growing, late-maturing species whose recovery is expected to take decades.

We therefore urge CPCs to maintain the current retention ban, prioritise research to address key biological uncertainties, and strengthen efforts to reduce fishing-related mortality and improve compliance with existing measures.

Ambitious management objectives for the Blue Shark MSE

Sciaena welcomes the technical progress made towards developing Management Strategy Evaluations (MSEs) for both North and South Atlantic blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) stocks, and calls on CPCs to adopt proposal PA4-812 by the European Union. This is an important opportunity to move towards more predictable, precautionary and science-based management of one of the most frequently caught shark species in Atlantic fisheries. Further delays risk undermining the progress already achieved.

Fins Naturally Attached

Despite years of negotiations and overwhelming support from CPCs, ICCAT has yet to adopt a mandatory Fins Naturally Attached (FNA) policy without exceptions. The continued reliance on fin-to-

carcass ratios creates unnecessary enforcement challenges and limits the effectiveness of efforts to prevent shark finning.

Sciaena calls on CPCs to overcome the remaining obstacles and finally adopt a comprehensive FNA requirement, ensuring that sharks are landed with their fins naturally attached. In doing so, we stress the importance of preserving the integrity and original purpose of this initiative, ensuring that its specific conservation and enforcement objectives are not diluted or compromised by its inclusion in broader negotiations on shark management. Such a measure would strengthen monitoring and enforcement, facilitate species identification, and bring ICCAT into closer alignment with international best practices.

Other important issues

Recent developments under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) reinforce the need to strengthen protections for thresher sharks (*Alopias spp.*). We encourage CPCs to review and update existing retention prohibitions to ensure that ICCAT's conservation measures adequately reflect these international commitments.

Finally, Sciaena draws attention to persistent reporting gaps concerning longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*). Reports of substantial landings in certain fisheries, alongside indications of continued underreporting, highlight the need for improved species-specific catch data, stronger monitoring and further scientific assessment.

Sciaena thanks all delegations for their attention and looks forward to fruitful discussions and substantive progress in Panel 4.