

Opening Statement from the Shark Trust

International Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) 2025 Annual Meeting

The Shark Trust, in concert with our coalition partners, appreciates this opportunity to participate in the 2025 ICCAT annual meeting on the vibrant and historic city of Seville.

We continue to focus on rebuilding populations of the most inherently vulnerable species under ICCAT's purview: sharks and rays. Given that the time on the agenda allocated to these species is usually insufficient, we request that CPCs focus on **bolstering rather than consolidating** shark measures. Specifically, we urge Parties to prioritize and actively support ICCAT action to:

- enforce the finning ban and improve species-specific shark catch data by requiring that sharks be landed with **fins naturally attached**, *without exceptions* (in line with EU proposal PA4-807);
- protect endangered **white sharks** (*Carcharodon carcharias*) and **basking sharks** (*Cetorhinus maximus*) by prohibiting retention and promoting safe release (in line with UK proposal PA4-812 and SCRS advice);
- reverse declines of **shortfin mako** (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) by extending the North Atlantic retention ban, reducing the South Atlantic TAC to no more than 1000t (for a 70% chance of rebuilding by 2040), and taking additional steps to reduce incidental mortality of both populations; and
- ensure sustainability of **blue sharks** (*Prionace glauca*) by improving domestic quota enforcement and advancing the Management Strategy Evaluation process.

In addition, improving the effectiveness of existing ICCAT shark conservation measures remains critical. We urge Parties to work — independently and within ICCAT — towards:

- ensuring the adoption of the long-awaited **Shark Check Sheet submission exemption procedure** developed by SCRS (as per Rec. 18-06) to improve associated transparency, clarity, and scrutiny;
- continuing to improve the **reporting** of shark landings, discards, and national regulation details in ICCAT Shark Check Sheets; and
- increasing **observer coverage** (human and/or electronic) for longline vessels to 20% and commit to additional incremental increases to reach 100% coverage on all industrial vessels to ensure robust compliance monitoring and reliable estimation of catch composition and discards;

Our positions reflect the science-based, precautionary approach that is warranted for such slow-growing animals. Mindful of our vital role in contributing to sound policy, supporting good governance, and promoting accountability, we look forward to a productive meeting.