

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT AMENDING THE RECOMMENDATION 16-12 ON
MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC BLUE
SHARK CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH ICCAT FISHERIES**

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;

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;

RECOGNIZING that the average of the total reported catch during the period 2011-2015 was 39,102 t;

SEEKING, therefore, to ensure that total catch does not exceed 39,102 t through establishment of an annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC);

RECALLING the provisions of *Resolution by ICCAT on Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities* (Res. 15-13), notably the criteria for the allocation of fishing possibilities set out in part III, and the need to ensure that these are applied in a fair, equitable and transparent manner;

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

1. To ensure the conservation of the North Atlantic blue shark stock in the Convention area, the following shall apply;

TAC and catch limits for blue shark

2. An annual TAC of 39,102 t for North Atlantic blue shark is established. The annual TAC may be revised subject to a decision of the Commission based on the updated advice of the SCRS in 2021, or at an earlier stage if enough information is provided by the SCRS.

3. The following CPCs shall be subject to the following catch limits:

<i>CPC</i>	
EU	32,578 t
Japan	4,010 t
Morocco	1,644 t

- a) All other CPCs shall endeavor to maintain their catches at recent levels.
- b) If in any year the total catches of the North Atlantic blue shark exceed the TAC, the Commission shall review the implementation of these measures. Based on the review and the results of the next stock assessment scheduled for 2021 or at an earlier stage if enough information is provided to the SCRS, the Commission shall consider introduction of additional measures.

Recording, reporting, and use of the catch information

4. Each CPC shall ensure that its vessels catching North Atlantic blue shark in association with ICCAT fisheries in the Convention area record their catch in accordance with the requirements set out in the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Recording of Catch by Fishing Vessels in the ICCAT Convention Area* (Rec. 03-13).
5. CPCs shall implement data collection programmes that ensure the reporting of accurate North Atlantic blue shark catch, effort, size and discard data to ICCAT in full accordance with the ICCAT requirements for provision of Task I and Task II data.
6. CPCs shall include in their shark implementation check sheet submitted to ICCAT pursuant to Recommendation 18-06 information on the actions they have taken domestically to monitor catches and to conserve and manage North Atlantic blue sharks.

Scientific research

7. CPCs are encouraged to undertake scientific research that would provide information on key biological/ecological parameters, life-history, migrations, post-release survivorship and behavioral traits of blue sharks. Such information shall be made available to the SCRS.
8. In the light of the results of the next stock assessment of North Atlantic 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.

Implementation and review

9. This recommendation shall be reviewed in light of the outcomes of the next stock assessment of the North Atlantic blue shark by the SCRS in 2021.

This Recommendation repeals and replaces *Recommendation by ICCAT on management measures for the conservation of Atlantic blue shark caught in association with ICCAT fisheries* (Rec. 16-12).