

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON BASKING SHARK AND GREAT WHITE SHARK
CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH FISHERIES MANAGED BY ICCAT**

NOTING that Article 5 of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) requires flag States of fishing vessels harvesting highly migratory species to minimise impacts on bycatch species, protect marine biodiversity and collect relevant data for the development of appropriate science-based conservation and management measures for ensuring the protection of such species;

CONSIDERING that basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) and great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) are caught in association with ICCAT fisheries;

NOTING that basking shark and great white shark exhibit slow growth rates and very low fecundity, and that population growth rates are very low, making them extremely vulnerable to overfishing;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) has previously advised that “Precautionary management measures should be considered for stocks where there is the greatest biological vulnerability and conservation concern, and for which there are very few data”, which could reasonably apply to basking shark and great white shark;

NOTING the strength of scientific evidence presented to the Sharks Species Group and the Subcommittee on Ecosystems and Bycatch which demonstrated that basking shark and great white shark exhibit life history traits including low productivity and slow growth making them vulnerable to overfishing;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Subcommittee on Ecosystems and Bycatch “recommends considering both basking shark and great white shark as species of greatest biological vulnerability and that precautionary management measures for their conservation should be considered by the Commission”, and that the Shark Species Group “recommended considering both basking shark and great white shark as species of greatest biological vulnerability and that precautionary management measures for their conservation should be considered by the Commission. Specifically, measures similar to those adopted for mobulid rays (*Recommendation by ICCAT replacing Recommendation 23-14 on mobulid rays (family Mobulidae) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries* (Rec. 24-12)) and whale sharks (*Recommendation by ICCAT for the conservation of whale sharks (Rhincodon typus) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries* (Rec. 23-12)) should be considered”.

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

1. Contracting Parties, and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (hereafter referred to as CPCs) shall prohibit fishing vessels flying their flags from retaining on board, transshipping, or landing any part or whole carcass of basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) and great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) taken in the Convention area in association with ICCAT fisheries.
2. CPCs shall require vessels flying their flag to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, basking shark and great white shark as soon as they are seen in the net, on the hook or at the vessel, in a manner that will result in the least possible harm to the individual, while taking into consideration the safety of the crew and vessel.
3. Consistent with the requirements of *Recommendation by ICCAT to establish minimum standards for fishing vessel scientific observer programs* (Rec. 16-14), CPCs shall record through their domestic observer programmes the number of discards and releases of basking shark and great white shark caught in ICCAT fisheries and, where possible, an indication of status (dead or alive). These data shall be reported to ICCAT.
4. The retention of any biological material from basking shark or great white shark by scientific observers should be in line with *Recommendation by ICCAT on biological sampling of prohibited shark species by scientific observers* (Rec. 13-10) and other appropriate national requirements.

5. As appropriate, the Commission and its CPCs should, individually and collectively, engage in capacity building efforts and other cooperative activities to support the effective implementation of this Recommendation, including entering cooperative arrangements with other appropriate international bodies.
6. In regard to great white shark, paragraphs 1 to 3 shall not apply to fishing vessels operating exclusively North of 55° N and East of 10° W, i.e. outside the core geographic range of great white shark in the Atlantic Ocean.
7. Notwithstanding paragraph 6, the SCRS shall in 2026 and periodically thereafter advise on the geographic range distribution of basking shark and great white shark. CPCs with vessels operating exclusively outside of the advised geographical range shall subsequently, upon Commission decision based on SCRS advice, be exempted from the measures under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3. The exemption analysis should be species specific, taking into consideration the range distribution of both species. If the SCRS finds this geographical range to be inaccurate, the exemption will not apply.