

**Opening Statement to Panel 4
ICCAT 2020**

The cancellation of this year's Commission meeting will limit very much the scope of the discussions that will take place. Nevertheless, Panel 4 will have the responsibility to host some of the most significant debates and the opportunity to produce some of the most meaningful outcomes for the Commission in 2020. This is all the more important because the concerned stock is indeed in need of urgent conservation measures – the Shortfin mako shark in the Atlantic.

Sciaena would like to fully support Plenary statement PLE-112, submitted by Shark Trust on behalf of several organizations, as we agree that "Decisive ICCAT action in the coming weeks can finally start to reverse the decline, but half measures will not be enough."

For Sciaena, the advice provided in 2017 and reinstated again in 2020 by SCRS is clear and provides direct measures that must be taken with the utmost urgency in order to give Shortfin mako the best chances of recovering in the shortest amount of time.

We took due note and analysed the three proposals presented by CPCs on Shortfin mako. Although there are elements that would be beneficial to the conservation of Shortfin mako in the Atlantic in all three proposals, it is our understanding that only proposal PA4-806 submitted by Canada fully acknowledges the dire state that the population is in and fully takes into account the crucial elements of the SCRS advice, namely the clear call for a full retention ban of this species in the north Atlantic.

The desperate situation that Shortfin makos are facing in the Atlantic calls for decisive and urgent action. ICCAT and its CPCs have the responsibility to adopt a new measure, which must have the full ban of retention at its heart.

Therefore, we encourage all CPCs to endorse PA4-806. Only by doing so can the Shortfin mako stand a true chance to recover and fulfil its essential role in Atlantic pelagic ecosystems.

Furthermore, Sciaena would encourage the scheduling of a Panel 4 intersessional meeting in 2021, to allow for work and discussions to be advanced on several of the stocks under its remit.

