

ICCAT 2020

Joint NGO Response to EU Statement on Mako Sharks (PA4-814)

Panel 4

The Shark Trust -- with support from Project AWARE, The Ecology Action Centre, The Ocean Foundation, Shark League, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Society International and Sciaena -- appreciates this opportunity to respond to PA4-814 regarding shortfin mako sharks. In this document, the European Union now asserts that a North Atlantic retention ban – the principal conservation measure advised by scientists and proposed by Canada -- would not apply to EU fleets because of a landings obligation under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

We regret that the European Union finds the conservation community “incoherent.” To clarify, the proposed retention ban would apply to EU fleets, assuming the European Commission properly implements the measure by adding North Atlantic shortfin makos to the EU prohibited species list, as has been done for the other sharks¹ prohibited by ICCAT. Under the CFP, prohibited shark species are exempt from the EU landings obligation.

As it has done with these sharks as well as basking sharks in the North Atlantic and whale sharks around the world, we encourage the EU to consider science-based shortfin mako limits, not only as penalties for overfishing, but also as necessary protections for endangered species.

We are perplexed as to why our support of SCRS advice for mako sharks would be “surprising” to the EU. If the suggestion is that our community should be pressing for additional, more proactive restrictions aimed at preventing longline interactions with makos in the first place, we look forward to such proposals after this critical first step is taken. Until then, we encourage the European Commission to engage more constructively with civil society through direct stakeholder consultations.

In the meantime, a joint NGO statement (PA4-810) addresses other aspects of the pending mako shark proposals and explains our support for Canada’s proposal.



¹ Silky sharks, bigeye threshers, hammerheads, and oceanic whitetip sharks.