

Joint Position Statement for ICCAT 2020: An Emergency Call for Shortfin Mako Sharks in the Atlantic

CONSCIOUS that Biodiversity and the future of our oceans are topics that affect humankind as a whole and the future of our planet.

AWARE that the challenging impacts of COVID-19 have led to the cancellation of ICCAT's annual commission and science (SCRS) meetings. However, we do not believe current circumstances should prevent ICCAT from taking action to ensure the uninterrupted, sustainable management of tuna stocks and marine ecosystems under its purview.

EMPHASIZING that Endangered, CITES App. II listed shortfin mako sharks require immediate attention by the Commission in 2020.

RECALLING that in 2019, the unanimous consensus from ICCAT's scientific committee was that fishing mortality was overwhelmingly above F_{MSY} (Maximum Sustainable Yield), with a combined 90% probability from all models showing shortfin mako as overfished, and experiencing overfishing in the North Atlantic.

MINDFUL of the Committee's recommendation to the Commission to adopt a non-retention policy without exceptions for the North Atlantic and at a minimum limit catches in the South Atlantic to 2,001 tonnes.

NOTING the potentially high effectiveness of a retention ban as post release survival rates can reach 77%.

AWARE that efforts for improved release handling and catch avoidance lack incentives as long as shortfin mako can still be landed and sold.

WELCOMING the proposal from Canada for a retention ban of shortfin mako sharks in the North Atlantic.

DEEPLY TROUBLED to see that the proposals made by the EU and USA are in contradiction to the scientific advice.

DEEPLY CONCERNED that those proposals from EU and USA will fail to protect shortfin mako stocks from a complete collapse in the North Atlantic and following a similar trajectory in the South Atlantic.

RECALLING that scientists, NGOs, retailers, wholesalers, suppliers and processors have urged the Commission to heed scientists' warnings about the depletion of the North Atlantic mako shark population and the imminent risk to the South Atlantic mako shark population.

Therefore, we specifically request the adoption of a new recommendation for shortfin mako sharks, that

- immediately (in 2020) prohibits all shortfin mako retentions
- and ensures that specific scientific advice for minimizing incidental mortality is developed and implemented in 2021

To safeguard this vulnerable shark species in the Atlantic, we have to take immediate and bold actions now, following scientific advice and acknowledging that there is no alternative to an immediate retention ban.

The 38 Signatories listed below



