



27th regular ICCAT Meeting Position Statement by Pro Wildlife to Panel 4

Dear Delegates,

Pro Wildlife would like to comment on two Documents of the Panel 4 meeting:

Draft Recommendation PA4-807

Pro Wildlife fully supports the document and refers to the broadly acknowledged “Fins naturally attached” policy, which has already been implemented by many fishing nations, including India, the European Union (by its Council Regulation (EU) No. 605/2013), the USA, Canada, Brazil, Venezuela or Colombia. It is essential to prohibit the removal of shark fins at sea to enhance controls and to prevent laundering and fraudulence of numbers of caught sharks and related fins.

Draft Recommendation PA4-809

While we welcome that in the new proposal an alternative version proposes a temporary retention ban for North Atlantic mako for 2022 and 2023 this still does not meet the precautionary approach and the recommended high probability of 70% for rebuilding the stock by 2070. Pro Wildlife therefore strongly urges ICCAT Parties to support an immediate and long-term retention ban, in line with the advice from the SCRS.

In this context, Pro Wildlife would also like to draw your attention to a recent Legal Opinion “on the Conformity of the European Union’s Position with the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) concerning the Conservation and Management of North Atlantic Shortfin Mako Shark at ICCAT” by the Universities of Leeds Beckett, Hamburg, and Oxford (<https://sfact.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Mako-legal-opinion.pdf>).

According to the Legal Opinion, the EU’s proposal of October 2021 is still not complying with the precautionary principle due to the extremely long restoration period and the resulting uncertainties for success, as well as the proposed method of calculation for such a potential retention of a still to be defined amount of bycatch. The authors note that the calculation relies on mortality data that are either not available or inadequate. They therefore recommend the implementation of a temporary retention ban at least until 2035, or even better until 2045 (the earliest point in time a recovery of this population is at all possible).

Furthermore, Pro Wildlife would want to highlight that landings in EU ports from the High Sea will be in conflict with the CITES SRG decision of December 2020, which has banned imports of North Atlantic mako sharks in EU ports, in the absence of a mandatory Non-Detriment Finding (https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/a30daa66-704d-4160-a7fe-81948f22944b/92_summary_SRG.pdf).