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The Pew Charitable Trusts' Opening Statement to Panel 4 November 2021

While SCRS scientists have warned of the highly concerning population status of the shortfin mako shark since 2017, The Pew Charitable Trusts is hopeful this is the year it can congratulate ICCAT and its members on adoption of a recovery plan for this severely overfished population. Pew continues to stress the scientific advice that a ban on retention of north Atlantic shortfin mako is an important first step to begin recovery. We are encouraged by the progress made at the October intersessional meeting of Panel 4, where there was acknowledgement from even the most significant mako fishing Parties that retention will not be possible in the next several years given the status of the population and the number of incidental interactions between makos and longline fishing gear. The work completed at that meeting and in the intersessional period since then has resulted in a new proposal from the ICCAT Chair ([PA4-800](#)), and **adoption of this proposal should be Panel 4's top priority**. There are some outstanding questions/issues that remain to be settled, and specifically, there are still two alternative proposals to determine if/when there will be retention in the future. But, with the world now watching, the fate of north Atlantic makos and ICCAT's reputation hinges on CPCs reaching agreement to adopt an effective recovery plan this year.

For the consideration of Panel 4, we offer the following specific recommendations to improve the latest [draft text](#):

- **There should be no less than a 60% probability of recovering the population by 2070. This will be the longest ICCAT recovery plan on record.** Therefore, it is important that the timeline is not delayed when new stock assessments are conducted or science is completed. And it must be clarified that the recovery deadline will be no later than 2070 in any future updates to the plan.
- Regardless of which version of paragraph 2 bis is supported, **it must be clearly stated that retention will not be allowed until the total fishing mortality (including discards) is reduced to sustainable levels.** However, to conduct this calculation correctly, the SCRS will have to assess live and dead discards on the basis of a reference year where mako landings are prohibited. The second alternative under paragraph 2 sufficiently addresses this issue, but the first alternative requires an addition. Pew recommends the following be added between sub-paragraphs 2bis d and e:
 - "In order to establish a baseline for live and dead discards under a new management system where landings are limited, and notwithstanding the above sub-paragraphs, retention shall not be permitted in 2022 or 2023. As such, the exercise outlined in sub-paragraph 2bis b will be executed for the first time in 2023, to assess the possibility of fishing opportunities in fishing year 2024, using discard mortality data from 2022."

This proposal builds on the consensus view during the October intersessional meeting that retention will not be possible for the next several years.

- Regardless of which alternative is chosen, there is still not a clear requirement to return to this Recommendation to consider additional measures if mortality remains too high. This is highly likely, as there continues to be no agreement on the bycatch mitigation measures necessary to achieve reductions in total fishing mortality nothing yet in place. The following should therefore be added before paragraph 3:

- “If the total fishing mortality is higher than the amount that would achieve the objective outlined in Paragraph 1 for two consecutive years, the Commission shall review this Recommendation in order to ensure the necessary bycatch mitigation measures are in place to achieve the objective of the rebuilding program.”
- As discard data will directly impact fishing opportunities moving forward, it is of paramount importance that discards and landings are correctly reported after the adoption of this rebuilding program. One concern is the potential misreporting of shortfin mako as longfin mako. Therefore, we recommend inclusion of the following paragraph under the section on scientific and research activities or at another appropriate location:
 - “Annually, the SCRS shall review the reported landings and discards of longfin mako shark to identify any unexpected inconsistencies that could be the result of misidentification within the two mako species.”

With adoption of the Chair’s proposal, including these additions, ICCAT CPCs will finally have demonstrated they are serious about following the scientific advice and taking steps to recover this imperiled population. Importantly, if this new measure is not sufficient to reduce total mortality of north Atlantic mako to a sustainable level, PA4 must come back to the table to add additional measures to the recovery plan.

Finally, Pew continues to believe that the south Atlantic mako population requires science-based management, and we encourage CPCs to take up this business in 2022 or as soon as possible. And we continue to support the draft proposal [PA4-811](#) to reduce the impact of ICCAT fisheries on Atlantic sea turtle populations.