

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

6TH TECHNICAL MEETING ON SHARKS¹

ASSESSMENT METHODS

FOR DATA-LIMITED SHARK FISHERIES

La Jolla, California (USA)

28-29 September 2017

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The Antigua Convention requires that the IATTC adopt, as necessary, conservation and management measures and recommendations for species belonging to the same ecosystem that are affected by fishing for, dependent on, or associated with the stocks of tunas and tuna-like species in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). In the EPO, sharks are targeted or caught incidentally (*i.e.* bycatch) by multi-species and multi-gear artisanal fisheries of the coastal members and also by large-scale tuna longline fisheries from distant-water members. Stock assessment of sharks poses several challenges. One of them is that fisheries statistics, such as catch, effort, and size-composition data, are either lacking or, if available, are often incomplete or aggregated into generic taxonomic groups (e.g., “sharks”). As a result, long-term time series of species-specific catch and effort data are rarely available, which makes stock assessments of sharks problematic. Biological information, such as growth rates and reproductive parameters, for many species in the EPO is also quite limited.

This workshop, the second of two, is being held under the framework of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) project on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), of which one component is the reduction of the impacts of tuna fisheries on the ecosystem, and specifically on sharks. The first workshop, [the 5th IATTC Technical Meeting on Sharks](#), facilitated by the IATTC staff in May 2015, gathered scientific and technical personnel interested in improving the collection of data on sharks in the EPO, with the aim of improving fisheries research and stock assessments. This second workshop will focus on assessment methods for sharks.

The 2-day workshop will focus on data-limited assessment methods for shark fisheries. Problems faced by fisheries researchers and managers in assessing stocks for which very limited catch and/or biological data are available will be discussed. Those fisheries are frequently “capacity-limited,” in that they lack human resources to undertake extensive data analyses. Therefore, two main type of simple data-limited methods will be discussed: 1) “scoping methods,” such as ecological risk assessment (*e.g.* Productivity-Susceptibility Analysis), which allow for the prioritization of species that may be potentially vulnerable to overfishing; 2) “proxy methods” that are metrics used as indicators and computed from existent available information for prioritized species (*e.g.* CPUE, length-frequency data, life-history data). The workshop will provide background on relevant methods through practical tutorials sessions, and will focus on building capacity among regional shark fishery experts which are in greater need for data-limited methods.

¹ Organized under the FAO-GEF ABNJ project