INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

102ND MEETING

Panama City, Panama
2-6 September 2024

PROPOSAL IATTC-102 H-2

SUBMITTED BY ECUADOR

AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION C-23-07[1]

CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Victoria, B.C, Canada, at the occasion of its 101st meeting:

Recalling that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks calls on States, within the framework of their respective competencies and consistent with international law, to cooperate through regional fisheries organizations with a view to ensuring the sustainability of shark stocks as well as to adopt a National Plan of Action for the conservation and management of sharks;

Recognizing further that some shark species are highly migratory, and that harmonized conservation and management, where appropriate, may help to ensure sustainable management at the regional level.

Noting that sharks are part of pelagic ecosystems and are caught by vessels fishing for tunas and tuna-like species in the Convention Area;

Recalling that under the Antigua Convention, "fish stocks covered by this Convention" means "stocks of tunas and tuna-like species and other species of fish taken by vessels fishing for tunas and tuna-like species in the Convention Area", and that under Article VIII, paragraph 1 (c), the Commission shall "adopt measures…to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks covered by this Convention";

Considering that that Article VII, paragraph 1 (f) of the Antigua Convention establishes that the Commission shall "adopt, as necessary, conservation and management measures and recommendations for species belonging to the same ecosystem and that are affected by fishing for, or dependent on or associated with, the fish stocks covered by this Convention, with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened";

Recognizing the need to collect data on catches, effort, discards, and utilization, as well as information on biological parameters of the species managed by the IATTC, particularly sharks;

Noting that in its Consolidated Resolution on Bycatch (C-04-05), the IATTC requires that purse-seine vessels release unharmed non-target species, to the extent practicable, including sharks, and urges

[1] Consolidates and replaces resolutions C- 05-03, C- 16-04 and C-16-05

governments with vessels targeting species covered by the Antigua Convention to provide any required bycatch information as soon as possible.

Further noting the IATTC staff's 2016 conservation recommendations for the release of sharks caught by purse-seine vessels and for prohibiting the use of shark lines by longline vessels targeting tuna and swordfish;

Aware that specific measures to be respected by vessels of all fishing gears are necessary for the conservation of sharks in the Convention Area;

Desiring to consolidate IATTC Resolutions C-05-03, C-16-04, C-16-05, and to strengthen shark conservation and management measures in the eastern Pacific Ocean;

Further considering the recommendations of the first meeting of the Permanent Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch (EBWG), which were endorsed by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) at its 14th meeting, regarding the need to address best handling and release guidelines and to explore new bycatch release devices and collect more post-release survival data for non-target shark species impacted by fisheries under the purview of the IATTC, as well as the recommendation from the SAC the adoption of a conservation and management measure requiring sharks with fins naturally attached to the body until the point of the first landing;

Considering also the need to improve the identification process of the shark species caught by fishing vessels targeting species under the purview of IATTC, with a view to their management and the integral utilization of the catches;

Considering that the IATTC scientific staff presented at SAC-14 a list of shark species that should be prioritized for inclusion in the research plan, and that this list was endorsed and recommended to the Commission by the Scientific Advisory Committee for consideration as a priority for research and management;

Recalling that the EBWG recommends that a fishery conservation and management measure be adopted that requires sharks to keep their fins attached to the body until the first point of landing;

Addressing the need to consolidate and update the management regime for sharks associated with fisheries developed under the Antigua Convention;

Agrees as follows:

DEFINITIONS

1. For the purpose of this Resolution:

   Shark finning means the practice of removing any fin from a shark's body and discarding its body prior to landing.

   Fin means any shark fin (including the tail) or a portion thereof.

   Full utilization means retention by a vessel of all parts of the shark, except head and guts, as appropriate until the first point of landing.

   Naturally attached means that all fins of the shark are fully or partially connected to the carcass of the shark by connective tissue or cartilage.

Buoy lines means individual lines or leaders that are attached to the float line or to the floats directly, and that are constructed of steel, metal, wire trace, or other materials[2]. Schematic diagram available at Annex 1.

Wire leaders means individual lines or leaders that are constructed of steel, metal, or wire trace, adjacent to the hooks and that are attached to the main line or a branch line. Schematic diagram available at Annex 1.

APPLICATION

2. This Resolution shall apply to all vessels operating pursuant to the IATTC Convention in the Convention Area.

NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

3. Members and Cooperating non-Members ("CPCs") should establish and implement a national plan of action for conservation and management of sharks, in accordance with the *FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks*.

RETENTION AND UTILIZATION

4. CPCs shall take the necessary measures to require that their fishers fully utilize all retained catches of sharks, with the exception of those species for which a retention ban has been adopted by the IATTC.

5. CPCs shall prohibit shark finning.

6. CPCs shall ensure that all sharks are landed with all fins naturally attached to the body. In order to facilitate on-board storage, shark fins may be partially sliced through and folded against the shark carcass as appropriate but shall remain naturally attached to the carcass until the first point of landing (see Annex 2).

7. Until the end of 2026, notwithstanding paragraphs 6, and other provisions in this Resolution, CPCs may take alternative measures to ensure that individual shark carcasses and their corresponding fins can be easily identified on board the vessel at any time, using one of the following methods:

   (i) each individual shark carcass and its corresponding fins are stored in the same bag, preferably a biodegradable one
   (ii) each individual shark carcass is bound to the corresponding shark fins using rope or wire; or,
   (iii) the shark fins and the corresponding shark are identically, uniquely, and numerically tagged in a manner that an authorized inspector can readily identify the matching of the shark fins to the corresponding shark.

8. Fishing vessels are prohibited from retaining on board, transshipping, landing or trading of any fins harvested or that have been removed on board in contravention of this Resolution.

9. Paragraphs 4 to 8 shall be reviewed, in consultation with IATTC scientific staff, and amendments shall be adopted by the Commission in 2026, as necessary. If no agreement is reached in 2026 on paragraph

[2] These are also commonly known as "shark lines."

7, paragraph 7 shall be replaced with the following text: Notwithstanding paragraphs 6, and other provisions in this Resolution, CPCs may take alternative measures to require their vessels to have onboard fins that total no more than 5% of the weight of sharks onboard, up to the first point of landing. CPCs that currently do not require fins and carcasses to be offloaded together at the point of first landing shall take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with the 5% ratio through certification, monitoring by an observer, or other appropriate measures.

BYCATCH AND RELEASE

10. CPCs shall prohibit vessels targeting tuna and/or swordfish from using buoy lines.

11. All sharks (alive or dead) that are not retained must be promptly released unharmed, to the extent practicable, as soon as they are seen on the line, entangled in the net or brailed on the deck, taking due consideration of the safety of any persons using the following procedures:

For purse seine vessels:

a. when seen entangled in the net, disentangle the sharks and release them into the ocean as soon as possible.
b. sharks brailed on deck must be returned to the water as soon as possible, either utilizing a ramp from the deck connecting to an opening on the side of the vessel, or through escape hatches. If ramps or escape hatches are not available, the sharks must be lowered with a sling or cargo net, using a crane or similar equipment, or as indicated in Annex 3 or any future revisions, as identified pursuant to paragraph 12.
c. prohibit the use of gaffs, hooks, or similar instruments for the handling of sharks.
d. prohibit the lifting of sharks by the head, tail, gill slits, or spiracles, or by using bind wire against or inserted through the body. Prohibit the punching of holes through the bodies of sharks (e.g., to pass a cable through for lifting the shark).
e. prohibit the lifting of whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) onboard the vessel and prohibit the towing of whale sharks out of a purse-seine net, e.g., using towing ropes.

For longline vessels:

f. leave the shark in the water, where possible.
g. use a line cutter to cut the branchline as close to the hook as possible, and so that less than 1 meter remains on the animal, to the extent practicable.

12. The IATTC scientific staff, in collaboration with the IATTC SAC and EBWG, shall develop and recommend to the Commission a set of best handling guidelines for the safe release of sharks for inclusion in this measure in 2024. In the meantime, CPCs may elect to, as appropriate, use the safe handling and release guidelines for purse seine vessels described in Annex 3.

RESEARCH

13. The list of shark species under the purview of the Commission in the Convention Area to be given priority for research and management shall be that contained in Annex 4 of this resolution. ~~In 2024, the IATTC scientific staff, in consultation with the IATTC SAC and EBWG, shall develop a draft list of shark species under the purview of the Commission in the Convention Area for its consideration~~.

14. In 2024, the IATTC scientific staff, in consultation with the IATTC SAC and EBWG shall implement a data collection program for sharks associated with fisheries managed by the Commission, making use of and strengthening existing research and data collection mechanisms and programs ~~where possible~~. The program will include the monitoring of shark catches by small scale fisheries in coastal countries and the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of standardized data management databases, considering appropriate assistance to those CPCs.

15. In 2025, the IATTC, in cooperation with scientists of CPCs and, if possible, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), for Pacific-wide stocks, will assess the status of impacted shark species with a view to informing a research plan to conduct comprehensive assessments, and associated financial implications, for key species as determined by the scientific staff and the SAC. Key shark species include, but are not limited to: *Carcharhinus longimanus and C. falciformis, Sphyrna lewini*, *S. zygaena*, ~~and~~ *S. mokarran*, *Prionace glauca*, *Alopias pelagicus and Alopias superciliosus*. This non-exhaustive list will be reviewed and revised, as necessary, with the advice of the scientific staff and the SAC.

16. In 2026 and 2027, the scientific staff, in cooperation with the ~~SAC~~Bycatch Working Group, shall provide advice on the status of shark species for presentation to the SAC~~, where possible,~~ and, if necessary, recommend the development of any additional management measures, or amendments to existing measures to the Commission, as appropriate.

17. The SAC shall review the information reported by CPCs annually and will, as necessary, provide recommendations to the Commission on ways to strengthen the conservation and management of sharks within IATTC fisheries, including consideration of the use of wire leaders by vessels fishing for tuna and tuna-like species.

18. By 2027, CPCs will undertake~~, where possible,~~ in cooperation with the IATTC scientific staff, actions to:
    a. identify ways to make fishing gears more selective, where appropriate, including research into alternative measures to wire leaders;
    b. improve knowledge of key biological and ecological parameters, life-history and behavioral traits, and migration patterns of key shark species;
    c. identify key shark mating, pupping, and nursery areas; and
    d. improve handling practices for live sharks to maximize their post-release survival.

REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION

19. The Commission shall consider appropriate assistance to developing CPCs for the identification of shark species/groups and the collection of data on their shark catches.

20. Each CPC shall annually report data for catches, effort by gear type landing and trade of sharks, by species where possible, in accordance with IATTC reporting procedures, including available historical data, of the fisheries under the purview of the Commission.

21. CPCs are encouraged to provide aggregated information on trade, as available.

22. CPCs shall also provide to the IATTC, through observer programs, electronic monitoring programs or other means, the species identification, the number and status (dead/alive) of all sharks caught, in accordance with applicable monitoring requirements, including those caught incidentally and/or released by purse seine vessels of all capacity classes and longline vessels.

23. The IATTC Secretariat will develop a template for CPCs to report on the implementation of this Resolution for adoption by the Commission in 2024. In 2025, CPCs shall send to the IATTC Secretariat, by June 30 at the latest, a comprehensive annual report of the implementation of this Resolution during the previous year.

~~23.~~24. Beginning in 2025, the IATTC Secretariat, in coordination with the CPCs, shall convene technical meetings (virtual and/or in-person) regarding the shark species listed in paragraph 15 to compile existing data, with the assistance of experts from the CPCs on the species listed in paragraph 15 of this resolution, with the objective of developing stock assessments and ecological risk assessments (e.g., EASI-Fish) that can be used to inform management decisions by the Commission at its annual meeting in 2026.

REPEAL AND ENTRY INTO FORCE

~~24.~~25. This Resolution shall enter into force on July 1, 2024, and the Commission shall approve a budget for the in-person data collection technical meetings scheduled pursuant to Article 24 of this resolution.

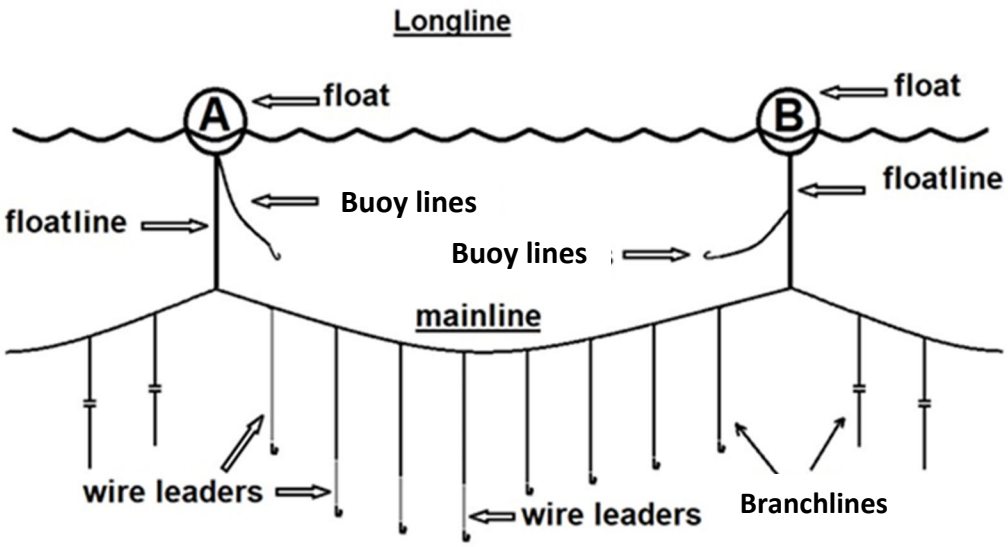
~~25.~~26. Upon the date this Resolution enters into force, the following Resolutions are repealed and replaced: C-05-03, C-16-04, and C-16-05.

Annex 1

Schematic diagram of shark lines and wire leaders

Buoy lines: individual lines or leaders that are attached to the float line or to the floats directly, and that are constructed of steel, metal, wire trace, or other materials, and are deployed in the water column at depths shallower than the mainline[3].

Wire leaders: individual lines or leaders that are constructed of steel, metal, or wire trace, and that are attached to the main line or a branch line.

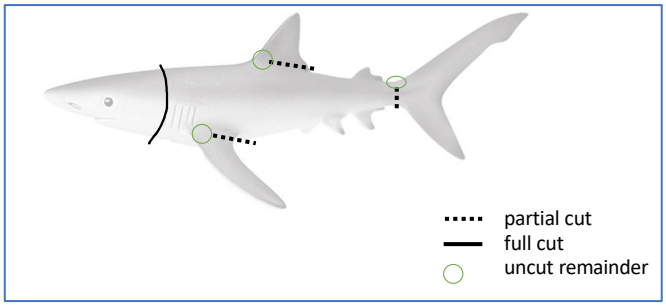


[3] These are also commonly known as "shark lines."

Annex 2

Naturally attached means that all fins of the shark must be fully and/or partially connected to the body of the shark by connective tissue or cartilage, while at sea. In order to facilitate on-board storage, shark fins may be partially sliced through and folded against the shark carcass, but shall not be removed from the carcass until the first point of landing. Below is a schematic to guide fishers.

1. Only head and guts, as appropriate, may be removed at sea.
2. A partial cut at the level of the base of the dorsal fin and the base of the pectoral fins is permitted.
3. A partial cut at the level of the caudal peduncle of the base, allowing the caudal fin to be folded over the posterior area of the shark's trunk is permitted.
4. A full cut along the abdominal section is permitted in the case of the Blue Shark (*P. glauca)* in the process of gutting, provided the fins remain naturally attached.



Annex 3

Voluntary Guidelines on live sharks Safe handling and release practices specific to purse-seine fisheries:

When enforcing the provisions of this measure in the purse seine fisheries:

1. Bear in mind that the primary aim of release processes is to ensure the highest level of survival of sharks.
2. Whenever possible, prompt and effective action will be taken to return the shark to the sea, provided there is no risk to crew safety.
3. If, for any reason, one or more shark individuals bare unintentionally or unavoidably retained and it has not been possible to identify them previously or remove them from the wells, make a note of this incident in the records of interaction with non-target species, stating when the individual or individuals were identified, and surrender them to the port authority. Keep in mind that any attempt to trade these species constitutes a serious violation.
4. Endeavor to release them in the shortest possible time. Recommended practice is to remove the shark from the brailer, hopper or chute by taking it by the caudal peduncle to place it on deck. This should be done manually whenever possible.
5. when seen entangled in the net, disentangle sharks and release them into the ocean as soon as possible.
6. Sharks brailed on deck must be returned to the water as soon as possible, either utilizing a ramp from the deck connecting to an opening on the side of the vessel, or through escape hatches. If ramps or escape hatches are not available, the sharks must be lowered with a sling or cargo net, using a crane or similar equipment, or as indicated in Annex 3 or any future revisions as identified pursuant to paragraph 12.
7. It is prohibited to hold the shark by its head, tail, gill slits or spiracles.
8. It is prohibited to use bind wire against or inserted through the body, and no holes may be punched through the bodies of sharks (e.g., to pass a cable through for lifting the shark).
9. Avoid lifting them up in the net toward the power block.
10. Do not cut the tail or any other body part.
11. Do not cut or punch holes in the shark.
12. Do not hit or kick a shark.
13. Do not insert hands into the gill slits.
14. Do not expose the shark to the sun for extended periods.
15. Prohibitions contained in 5), 8), 9), 10) and 11), are allowed as appropriate, exclusively under urgent circumstances due to force majeure when safety of the crew is compromised. Crew members shall endeavor to avoid hazards in the safe handling and release operations for sharks. Any such events shall be recorded and reported to the corresponding flag state.

Annex 4

List of priority species for research and management

Familia	Especie	Nombre común
Alopiidae	*Alopias pelagicus*	Pelagic thresher
Alopiidae	*Alopias superciliosus*	Bigeye thresher
Alopiidae	*Alopias vulpinus*	Common thresher
Carcharhinidae	*Carcharhinus brachyurus*	Copper shark
Carcharhinidae	*Carcharhinus falciformis*	Silky shark
Carcharhinidae	*Carcharhinus galapagensis*	Galapagos shark
Carcharhinidae	*Carcharhinus longimanus*	Oceanic whitetip shark
Carcharhinidae	*Prionace glauca*	Blue shark
Galeocerdonidae	*Galeocerdo cuvier*	Tiger shark
Lamnidae	*Isurus oxyrinchus*	Shortfin mako shark
Lamnidae	*Isurus paucus*	Longfin mako shark
Lamnidae	*Lamna ditropis*	Salmon shark
Lamnidae	*Lamna nasus*	Porbeagle shark
Rhincodontidae	*Rhincodon typus*	Whale shark
Sphyrnidae	*Sphyrna lewini*	Scalloped hammerhead
Sphyrnidae	*Sphyrna mokarran*	Great hammerhead
Sphyrnidae	*Sphyrna zygaena*	Smooth hammerhead
Pseudocarchariidae	*Pseudocarcharias kamoharai*	Crocodile shark