

**INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**  
**90<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

**La Jolla, California (USA)**  
**27 June-1 July 2016**

**PROPOSAL IATTC-90 C-4**

**SUBMITTED BY COSTA RICA, BELIZE, NICARAGUA, AND EL SALVADOR**

**CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR SHARK SPECIES WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE SILKY SHARK (*CARCHARHINUS FALCIFORMIS*) FOR THE YEARS 2017, 2018 AND 2019.**

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

For various coastal countries of the Commission, among them Costa Rica, the utilization of sharks is an important source of protein for its populations, with this fishery being one of the most prominent socio-economic pillars. Catches are made mainly as target or incidental to these species, and the majority of them are made by vessels that operate without targeting one species but rather several, in a multi-species manner, for example: sharks, tunas, billfishes, dorado, among others. These vessels are mainly small longliners or artisanal vessels with outboard motors that use different fishing gears such as longlines or gillnets to make the catches.

In view of the above and to achieve sustainability of these fisheries, we consider that it is necessary to continue to take management measures, differentiating between species and type of fisheries.

In this regard and taking into account the silky shark assessment presented by the IATTC staff during the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee, in which the indices for purse-seine vessels for silky shark have been updated with data from the year 2015, it should be noted that there are various important uncertainties in the fisheries data mainly with regard to the level of catches in early years and that it is necessary to improve the information in the future to achieve a better assessment. It was indicated that the index for all silky sharks in the Northern area shows an increase in 2015 compared to 2014, but the index for all silky sharks in the southern area continues at the 2014 level. However, the IATTC scientific staff does not consider that the recent trends are sufficiently strong or optimistic to invalidate the urgent need for precautionary management actions.

On the basis of the above, Costa Rica, Belize, Nicaragua and El Salvador, have developed a proposal with management measures for sharks and with special attention to silky sharks in the Eastern Pacific Ocean for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019, which at the outset and depending on the results of the stock assessment that the Commission staff will conduct for the year 2019, could be maintained for subsequent years or be reconsidered.

It should be noted, that as part of this draft Resolution, it is considered necessary to combine efforts to increase the coverage of information for small longline vessels and classes 1 to 5 purse-seine vessels and, also, to take into consideration the unilateral management regulations that the coastal countries may be applying and that may have an effect on the fishing mortality of sharks. It is necessary that all this information be analyzed and included in an upcoming assessment of the stock of silky sharks for the year 2019.

*The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)*, gathered in La Jolla, California (USA), on the occasion of its 90th meeting:

*Considering* that Art. VII paragraph 1 (f) of the Convention indicates that conservation and management measures and recommendations must be adopted 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 the Convention;

*Recalling* Art IV paragraph 3 of the Convention which states that where the status of target stocks or non-target or associated or dependent species is of concern, the members of the Commission shall subject such stocks and species to enhanced monitoring in order to review their status and the efficacy of conservation and management measures, revising those measures regularly in the light of new scientific information available;

*Taking into account* the recommendations of the scientific staff of the IATTC;

*Noting and appreciating* the socio-economic importance that utilization of sharks has for the coastal populations of developing countries and that most of the catches are made by small and artisanal longline vessels;

*Aware* of the need to establish conservation measures for the protection of sharks especially the silky shark;

*Agrees as follows:*

1. All longline vessels whose fishing licence does not have sharks as a fishing target, will only be allowed one bycatch of sharks up to a maximum of 30% of the total weight of the fisheries product caught during the fishing trip.
2. Limit the unloading of silky sharks of less than 100 cm total length to 20% of the total number of silky sharks caught during the trip and encourage the fishers to not fish in pupping areas.
3. Establish a closure for the shark fishery during three months each year, during which the use of steel leaders on longlines is prohibited during fishing operations, except artisanal vessels.
4. The operator or owner of the vessel shall have two options for observing the closure:
  - a. The first three-month period, from 01 January to 31 March.
  - b. The second closure period would be from 01 October to 31 December
5. The operator or owner of the vessel shall notify the corresponding fisheries authority, before 01 October of each year, the closure period which will be observed.
6. The fisheries authorities shall keep a record of the vessels and the closure period to which each operator or each vessel operator or owner has committed and will carry out such inspections as they consider pertinent in compliance with these regulations.
7. Those vessels that operate during the closure period to which they have committed, shall only be allowed a maximum bycatch of silky sharks of 20% of the total catch during the fishing trip.
8. Establish in the framework of the IATTC program for collecting fisheries biological data on sharks in the unloadings of the developing coastal countries.
9. Incorporate in the research of the Scientific staff of the IATTC in the following research areas:
  - a. Identification of the pupping areas of the silky shark.
  - b. Mitigation of bycatch of sharks, especially in longline fisheries, and of the survival of sharks caught by all types of gears, giving priority to gears with significant catches. The survival experiments should include studies of the effects on survival of shorter sets and the use of circle hooks.

10. These measures shall be reviewed at the meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee in 2019
11. These regulations shall be in force from 01 January 2017 through 31 December 2019.