

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

5TH TECHNICAL MEETING ON SHARKS¹

DATA COLLECTION

**La Jolla, California (USA)
15-16 May 2015**

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, or dependent on or associated with the stocks of tunas and tuna like species in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). Several species of sharks are frequently caught incidentally in both the purse-seine and longline fisheries for tunas in the EPO.

Stock assessments of sharks pose several challenges. For example, fisheries statistics, such as catch, effort, and size-composition data, are either lacking or, if available, are often incomplete or grouped into categories such as ‘miscellaneous’ or ‘other’ species. As a result, long-term time series of catch and effort data are rarely available, which makes stock assessments of sharks problematic. Biological information, such as growth rates and reproductive parameters, is also quite limited for many species. The fisheries in the EPO, both those targeting sharks and those that take sharks as bycatch, are no exception to such data shortcomings.

This workshop, the first of two, is being held under the framework of the GEF-FAO project on areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJs), of which one component is the reduction of the impacts of tuna fisheries on the ecosystem, and specifically on sharks. The two workshops, one on data collection and the second on assessment methods for shark species, will be facilitated by the IATTC staff. This first workshop will gather 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. At the workshop, new data collection forms, prepared by IATTC Members in collaboration with the Commission staff, will be presented and discussed, and participants will receive training in the use of the MS Access database designed for the information to be collected. The forms and database have been developed specifically for the Central American region, where the need for better data is greatest, but some of its elements may be useful for improving data collection in other regions of the EPO.

¹ Organized under the FAO-GEF ABNJ project