

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
COMISIÓN INTERAMERICANA DEL ATÚN TROPICAL

73RD MEETING

LANZAROTE (SPAIN)
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DOCUMENT IATTC-73-08b

CONSERVATION OF SHARKS

At the 72nd Meeting of the IATTC in June 2004, the two attached proposals regarding sharks were discussed; neither was approved, but it was agreed to maintain both for further consideration at the next meeting. Most participants expressed their agreement with the spirit of the European Union's proposal to regulate the removal of fins of sharks onboard vessels. The proposal by Japan is more comprehensive; it calls for, *inter alia*, assessments of shark stocks.

In 1999 FAO adopted the International Plan of Action on Sharks ([IPOA-SHARKS](#)), whose objective is to ensure the conservation and management of sharks and their long-term sustainable use. Recent increases in effort and yield of shark catches, as well as an expansion of the areas fished, have led to concern over the consequences for the populations of some shark species in several areas of the world's oceans. Conservation and management of sharks are impaired by the lack of accurate data on catch, effort, discards, and trade data, as well as limited information on the biological parameters of many species and their identification.

The IPOA calls on States whose vessels conduct directed fisheries for sharks or regularly catch sharks in other fisheries to implement a national program for conservation and management of shark stocks. When developing such plans, the experience of regional fisheries management organizations should be taken into account.

Each State should determine whether there is a need for a shark plan. Data collected by States should, where appropriate, be made available to, and discussed within the framework of, relevant regional fisheries organizations. International collaboration is particularly important in relation to transboundary, straddling, highly migratory and high seas shark stocks.

Such plans should aim to, *inter alia*, ensure that shark catches, intentional and incidental, are sustainable; assess threats to shark populations, determine and protect critical habitats and implement harvesting strategies consistent with the principles of biological sustainability and rational long-term economic use; identify and provide special attention to vulnerable or threatened shark stocks; improve and develop frameworks for establishing and co-ordinating effective consultation among all stakeholders; minimize unutilized incidental catches of sharks; contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem structure and function; minimize waste and discards from shark catches (for example, requiring the retention of sharks from which fins are removed); and encourage full use of dead sharks.

In the development of regional plans, States should cooperate through regional fisheries organizations. States should also collaborate in research, training and the production of information and educational material.

For purposes of comparison, the Recommendation on sharks adopted by ICCAT in 2004 is also attached.

PROPOSAL BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

RESOLUTION ON THE REMOVAL OF FINS OF SHARKS ON BOARD VESSELS

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meeting in Lima, Peru, on the occasion of its 72nd Meeting;

Noting that the practice of ‘shark finning’, whereby the fins are removed from sharks, with the remainder of the shark being discarded at sea, may contribute to the excessive mortality of sharks to such an extent that many stocks of shark are depleted, and their future sustainability may be endangered;

Being Aware that the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks expressly calls upon states to co-operate internationally, including through regional fishery management organizations such as IATTC;

Noting that IATTC has adopted in its Consolidated Resolution on bycatch a requirement for fishermen on purse-seine vessels to release unharmed non-target species, to the extent practicable, including sharks, and that governments with long-line fleets also provide the required bycatch information as soon as possible;

Believing that specific measures to be respected by all fishing gears are necessary for the protection of shark stocks in the Eastern Pacific Ocean;

Resolves that:

1. Parties and co-operating non-Parties of IATTC shall prohibit the removal of shark fins on board vessels flying their flag, and retain on board, transship or land shark fins.
2. It shall be prohibited to purchase, offer for sale or sell sharks fins which have been removed on board, retained on board, transshipped or landed in contravention of this Resolution.
3. In derogation to paragraph 1 above, Parties and co-operating Non-Parties may allow vessels flying their flag to remove shark fins from dead sharks and to retain onboard, tranship or land shark fins from such vessels holding a special authorization to fish for sharks issued by the flag state for that vessel.
4. Such a special authorization shall only be issued to fishing vessels where a capacity to use all parts of sharks has been demonstrated and where the need for the separate processing on board of shark fins and the remaining parts of sharks has been justified.
5. It shall be prohibited to discard at sea the remaining parts of sharks after the removal of shark fins, except those parts resulting from basic processing operations, such as beheading, gutting and skinning.
6. The weight of the fins kept from the catch shall never exceed the theoretical weight of the fins that would correspond to the remaining parts of sharks retained on board, transshipped or landed.
7. For the purposes of controlling the application of paragraph 5 above, the theoretical correspondence between weights of fins and bodies shall be established by the IATTC Secretariat, taking into account the type of fishery, the species composition and the type of processing and storage. In no case shall the theoretical weight of the fins exceed 5% of the live weight of the shark catch.
8. Fishing vessel captains which hold a special authorization to fish for sharks shall keep records of the weight of shark fins and the remaining parts of sharks retained on board, transshipped or landed.
9. When the shark catch is not landed as a whole, captains of vessels shall record, with valid documentation, the landings, transshipments and sales of shark fins or remaining parts of sharks.

10. A vessel which holds a special authorisation to fish for sharks shall notify its flag state and the competent authority of the port state or landing facility it wants to use, at least 72 hours before the estimated time of arrival at the port of landing, of the catches retained on board, the catches intended for landing and its estimated time of arrival.
11. Parties and co-operating non-Parties shall send to the IATTC Secretariat, by 1 May at the latest, a comprehensive annual report on the implementation of this Resolution during the previous year.

PROPOSAL BY JAPAN

RESOLUTION ON CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meeting in Lima, Peru, on the occasion of its 72nd Meeting;

Concerned that an extensive shark fishery is reported to be conducted in the EPO off Central America by a large number of shark fishing vessels, including some slightly smaller than 24 m length overall, about which the Commission has little information, and shark meat has a large market demand;

Recalling that the 58th General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution A/58/L concerning sharks; and

Recalling that the International Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks was adopted at the 23rd FAO Committee on Fisheries;

Resolves that:

1. Each Party and co-operating non-party, co-operating fishing entity or regional economic integration organization (collectively "CPCs") shall establish and implement a national plan of action for conservation and management of shark stocks, in accordance with the FAO International Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks.
2. CPCs shall collect information on their shark catches, effort by gear type, landing and trade of shark products, and provide it to the Commission.
3. CPCs shall prohibit directed shark fisheries conducted solely for the purpose of harvesting shark fins.
4. The Working Group on Stock Assessments, in cooperation with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, shall conduct stock assessments on sharks (in 2005) and, as appropriate, recommend conservation and management measures to the Commission for its considerations and decision.

**RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT
CONCERNING THE CONSERVATION OF SHARKS
CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH FISHERIES MANAGED BY ICCAT**

RECALLING that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Plan of Action for 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;

CONSIDERING that many sharks are part of pelagic ecosystems in the Convention area, and that tunas and tuna-like species are captured in fisheries targeting sharks;

RECOGNIZING the need to collect data on catch, effort, discards, and trade, as well as information on the biological parameters of many species, in order to conserve and manage sharks;

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Contracting Parties, Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities (CPCs) shall annually report Task I and Task II data for catches of sharks, in accordance with ICCAT data reporting procedures, including available historical data.
2. CPCs shall take the necessary measures to require that their fishermen fully utilize their entire catches of sharks. Full utilization is defined as retention by the fishing vessel of all parts of the shark excepting head, guts and skins, to the point of first landing.
3. CPCs shall require their vessels to not have onboard fins that total 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.
4. The ratio of fin-to-body weight of sharks described in paragraph 3 shall be reviewed by the SCRS and reported back to the Commission in 2005 for revision, if necessary.
5. Fishing vessels are prohibited from retaining on board, transshipping or landing any fins harvested in contravention of this Recommendation.
6. In fisheries that are not directed at sharks, CPCs shall encourage the release of live sharks, especially juveniles, to the extent possible, that are caught incidentally and are not used for food and/or subsistence.
7. In 2005, the SCRS shall review the assessment of shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) and recommend management alternatives for consideration by the Commission, and reassess blue shark (*Prionaca glauca*) and shortfin mako no later than 2007.
8. CPCs shall, where possible, undertake research to identify ways to make fishing gears more selective.
9. CPCs shall, where possible, conduct research to identify shark nursery areas.
10. The Commission shall consider appropriate assistance to developing CPCs for the collection of data on their shark catches.
11. This recommendation applies only to sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT.