

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

102ND MEETING

Panama City, Panama

2-6 September 2024

PROPOSAL IATTC-102 H-4 **REV 1**

SUBMITTED BY BELIZE, CANADA, COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR,
GUATEMALA, NICARAGUA AND PANAMA

**RESOLUTION C-24-XX (AMENDMENT TO C-23-07⁺)
CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION AND
SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS**

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in ~~Victoria, B.C., Canada~~
~~Panama City, Panama~~, at the occasion of its ~~101st~~ 102nd 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”;

~~*Consolidates and replaces Resolutions C-05-03, C-16-04, and C-16-05~~

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 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;

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 **continue** updating 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 materials². 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:

² These are also commonly known as “shark lines”.

- (i) each individual shark carcass and its corresponding fins are stored in the same bag, preferably 1 These are also commonly known as “shark lines.” 4 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 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. **CPCs shall require their vessels to promptly release unharmed 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 the safety of any person on board. ~~using the following procedures:~~**
 11. bis. **To the extent practicable and taking due consideration of the safety of persons on board, CPCs shall require their vessels to follow the best handling and release practices for sharks, described in Annex 3 and as appropriate, the tools identified in Annex 3.1 of this Resolution.**

~~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.

- ~~e. 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 **Scientific Advisory Commission (SAC)** and **Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group (EBWG)** shall **continue to 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.** **review and recommend changes to Annex 3, to ensure they continue to reflect best practices.**

RESEARCH

13. **Among shark species, the list of shark species in Annex 4 shall be given priority for research. In 2024,** The IATTC Scientific Staff in **collaboration** with EBWG and CPCs, shall **develop a draft list of shark species under the purview of the Commission in the Convention Area for its consideration** **continue to review and recommend changes to Annex 4 to the Commission, as appropriate.**
14. **Beginning** in 2024, the IATTC Scientific Staff, in consultation with the IATTC SAC and EBWG shall **continue to develop and strengthen** ~~implement~~ a data collection program for sharks associated with fisheries managed by the Commission, making use of existing research and data collection mechanisms and programs **with a goal to implement and maintain a standardized program** that includes the monitoring of shark catches in small scale, coastal fisheries, as identified in SAC-15-10, by 2026, taking into consideration the capacity requirements of those CPCs. ~~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, for Pacific-wide stocks, will assess the status of impacted shark species with a view to information a research plan to conduct comprehensive assessments, and associated financial implications,~~ **Scientific Staff in collaboration with the IATTC SAC and EBWG shall develop and recommend to the**

Commission a Shark Research Plan that will prioritize research activities for ~~key shark 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*, and as appropriate, the other species listed in Annex 4.~~ This Shark Research Plan will include timelines and financial considerations for stock assessments, ecological risk assessments, and management strategy evaluations. This plan will also identify opportunities for collaboration with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) for Pacific-wide stocks. ~~This non-exhaustive list will be reviewed and revised, as necessary with the advice of the scientific staff and the SAC.~~

16. Beginning in 2026 and annually thereafter, the IATTC scientific staff, in collaboration ~~cooperation~~ with the SAC and EBWG, shall provide an update on ~~the status of shark species, where possible,~~ the Shark Research Plan at the SAC and recommendations to the Commission, as appropriate. ~~necessary., the development and implementation of new measures, or amendments to existing measures to the Commission.~~
17. The IATTC SAC with support from Scientific Staff and the EBWG 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 tuna and tuna like species.
18. By 2027, CPCs will undertake, where possible, in cooperation with the IATTC scientific staff and the EBWG, 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, available.

22. CPCs shall also provide to the IATTC, through observer programs, electronic monitoring or other mean, the species identification, the number and status (dead/alive) of all shark 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~~5~~.
24. In 2025, CPCs shall use the annual compliance questionnaire to report on their compliance with this Resolution. ~~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.~~
25. In 2026, CPCs shall use the reporting template provided by the Staff to annually report on its implementation of this Resolution. Reports for the previous year shall be submitted to the IATTC Secretariat, by June 30 of each year.

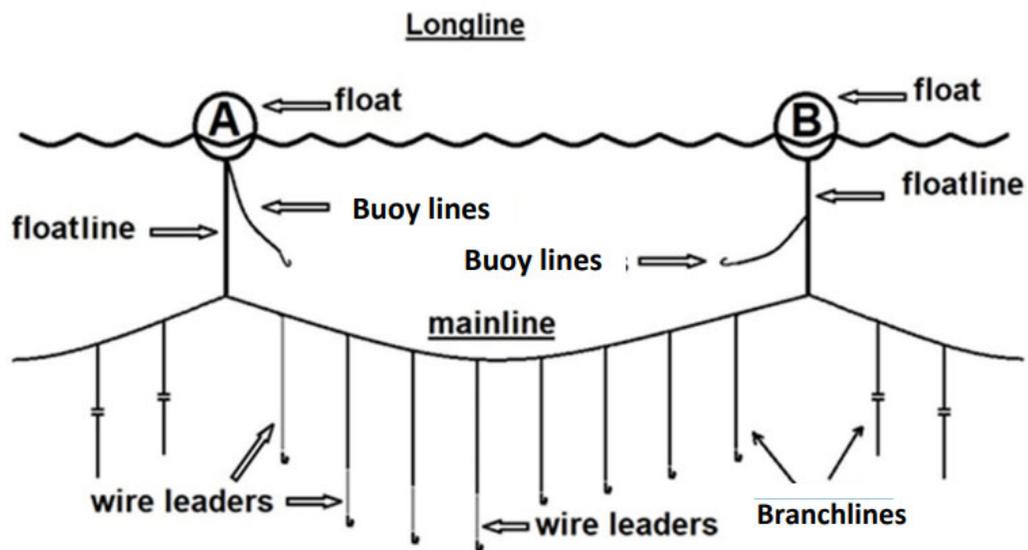
REPEAL AND ENTRY INTO FORCE

26. This Resolution shall replace Resolution C-23-07 upon its entry into force on July 1, 2024~~5~~
27. ~~Upon the date this Resolution enters into force, the following Resolution C23-07 is 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 mainline³.

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.



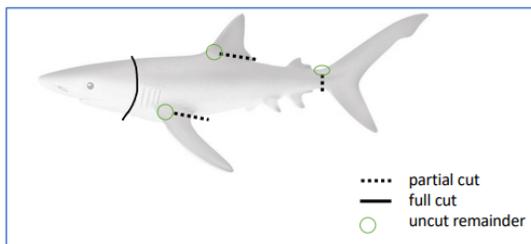
³ These are also commonly known as “shark lines.”

Annex 2

Diagram of allowable partial cuts

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 ALT
Best handling and release practices for sharks

This Annex reflects best handling and release practices for sharks. The primary aim of these practices is to ensure the highest level of survival of sharks while prioritizing the safety of people on board. Certain of these practices are mandatory, as indicated by the word “shall” or “must” below. CPCs are encouraged to implement the remaining best handling and release practices, as appropriate.

To maximize the efficacy and utility of adopted BHRPs, CPCs should ensure crew are educated and trained by qualified staff on these practices regularly. Illustrated best handling and release practices should be available on the vessels.

All fisheries

Shall

- Release the shark in the water, if possible
- Encourage the immediate release of sharks

Shall not

- Attach sharks to vessel and drag while vessel operations are underway
- Hit or kick the shark
- Use gaffs or hooks, or similar instruments for handling of sharks
- Suspend the shark by the head, tail, gill slits or spiracles
- Use bind wire against or inserted through the body of the shark
- Punch holes through the bodies of sharks (e.g., to pass a cable through for lifting the shark)
- Leave sharks laying on the deck, exposed to sun or air

Purse-seine fishery

Shall not

- Roll sharks through the power block

For sharks entangled in the net:

Shall

- Release the shark from the net, always preventing it from ascending to the power block.

Should

- Maneuver the animal into a stretcher/cradle or ramp and release it on the opposite side of the vessel.

When brailing sharks on board:

Shall

- 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.

Should

- According to the vessel's conditions, use bycatch reduction devices (BRDs; e.g., hoppers or ramps) to ensure sharks are sorted on the main deck and do not go down the loading hatch.
- Release the shark as soon as possible from the brailer, hopper or chute by grabbing it, without suspending it, by the caudal peduncle. This should be done manually.
- Maneuver sharks into a stretcher/cradle or ramp and release it on the opposite side of the vessel.
- Promote, according to vessel's conditions the use of bycatch/waste ramps on the lower decks to facilitate fast and safe release of sharks that were not sighted on the main/working deck.

For whale sharks

Shall

- Leave whale sharks in the water for release.
- Release whale sharks prior to brailing.

Should

- If the whale shark is at the side of the vessel and its head is pointed towards the stern of the vessel, the shark should be released (including by cutting the net to facilitate its safe release).
- If the head of the whale shark is pointed towards the bow of the boat, the crew in charge of the net hauling operation can maneuver the winch and the capstan to bring the whale shark close to the hull, then stand the animal on the net and roll it outside the bunt.

Shall not

- Lift the whale shark onboard the vessel and prohibit the towing of whale sharks out of a purse seine net (such as by using towing ropes).
- Land a whale shark on deck regardless of size.
- Start a brailing process if it endangers the survival of the whale shark.
- Pull or drag whale sharks out of the net by the tail or caudal peduncle.

Longline fishery (also applicable to fisheries of other surface fleets other than purse seine)

Shall

- Slow the vessel to bring the sharks towards it and close to it, for identification and removal of gear.
- Avoid removing hooks from sharks if possible. If attempting to remove hooks use long-handled de-hookers for vessels with high freeboards.
- Use line cutters to cut the line as close to the hook or mouth as possible, so that less than 1 meter remains on the animal. To the extent practicable, ensure that weights are removed, when cutting the line.

- Avoid bringing sharks on board for gear removal if possible. If sharks are brought on board for gear removal:
 - use a dip net or lasso to help lift them onboard.
 - If sharks are brought on board for gear removal, use a stretcher or cradle for handling and restraint for the safety of the crew and to reduce injury to the animal.
 - If sharks are brought on board for gear removal, sharks should be maneuvered using manual restraint of the pectoral fins and the caudal peduncle (this may require two crew members depending on the size of the animal).

Shall not

- Use drag lines or drag sharks behind the vessel until the hook rips free of the jaw.
- Lift and release the line with the hooked shark, to use its weight to rip the hook from the jaw, without bringing it on board
- Lift sharks onto the deck without the use of a dipnet and or second point of attachment to support the weight of the animal, noting it is not recommended to lift sharks onboard the vessel.
- Use gaffs to lift or maneuver sharks.
- Attempt to remove a hook from a live shark if it is not visible.
- Insert gaffs, hooks, or similar instruments into the bodies of live sharks.
- Cut into the jaw of a live shark to remove a hook.

Should not

- Lift sharks onto the deck if possible.
- Lift and release the line with the hooked shark, without bringing it on board, so that it falls because of its weight to rip the hook from its jaw.

Annex 3.1

Recommended tools for best handling and release practices

FOR PURSE SEINE FISHERIES

- Bycatch sorting/releasing devices for working/main deck (e.g., hopper with a door, ramp)
- Stretcher/cradle

FOR LONGLINE FISHERIES

- Dipnet
- Short de-hooker (for sharks brought on board)
- Line cutter
- Short handled de-hooker (vessels with low [$<2\text{m}$] free-board)
- Long-handled line cutter (equal or in greater in length than the vessel's freeboard)
- Long-handled de-hooker (equal or in greater in length than the vessel's freeboard)

Annex 4
List of priority species for research and management

| Familia | nombre científico | Common name | Nombre común |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Alopiidae | <i>Alopias pelagicus</i> | Pelagic thresher | Zorro pelágico |
| Alopiidae | <i>Alopias superciliosus</i> | Bigeye thresher | Zorro ojón |
| Alopiidae | <i>Alopias vulpinus</i> | Common thresher | Tiburón zorro pinto |
| Carcharhinidae | <i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i> | Copper shark | Tiburón cobrizo |
| Carcharhinidae | <i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i> | Silky shark | Tiburón sedoso |
| Carcharhinidae | <i>Carcharhinus galapagensis</i> | Galapagos shark | Tiburón de Galápagos |
| Carcharhinidae | <i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i> | Oceanic whitetip shark | Tiburón punta blanca oceánico |
| Galeocerdonidae | <i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i> | Tiger shark | Tintorera tigre |
| Lamnidae | <i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i> | Shortfin mako shark | Mako de aleta corta |
| Lamnidae | <i>Isurus paucus</i> | Longfin mako shark | Marrajo carite |
| Lamnidae | <i>Lamna ditropis</i> | Salmon shark | Marrajo salmón |
| Lamnidae | <i>Lamna nasus</i> | Porbeagle shark | Marrajo sardinero |
| Carcharhinidae | <i>Prionace glauca</i> | Blue shark | Tiburón azul |
| Pseudocarchariidae | <i>Pseudocarcharias kamoharai</i> | Crocodile shark | Tiburón cocodrilo |
| Rhincodontidae | <i>Rhincodon typus</i> | Whale shark | Tiburón ballena |
| Sphyrnidae | <i>Sphyrna lewini</i> | Scalloped hammerhead shark | Cornuda común |
| Sphyrnidae | <i>Sphyrna mokarran</i> | Great hammerhead | Cornuda gigante |
| Sphyrnidae | <i>Sphyrna zygaena</i> | Smooth hammerhead shark | Cornuda cruz |