

EUROPEAN UNION REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES RELATED TO SHARKS IN 2025

1. Purpose

The objective of this document is to report on implementation in 2025 by the European Union (EU) of its obligations under IATTC Resolutions related to sharks. The report presents information on the regulatory framework, interactions with different species of sharks and rays, available trade data, and other relevant information concerning programs, workshops and good practices related to sharks.

2. Regulatory framework for sharks and rays

a. International and EU framework

- IATTC Resolutions C-23-07, C-24-05 and C-25-08: *Resolution on the Conservation Measures for the protection and sustainable management of sharks.*
- IATTC Resolution C-11-10: *Resolution on the Conservation of Oceanic Whitetip Sharks Caught in Association with Fisheries in the Antigua Convention Area*
- IATTC Resolution C-15-04: *Resolution on the Conservation of Mobulid Rays Caught in Association with Fisheries in the IATTC Convention Area*
- IATTC Resolution C-23-08: *Conservation Measures for Shark Species, with Special Emphasis on the Silky Shark.*
- Regulation (EU) 2021/56 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 January 2021 laying down management, conservation and control measures applicable in the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Convention area and amending Council Regulation (EC) No 520/2007. Articles 8 to 14 of this Regulation set out obligations on Union fishing vessels concerning the retention, release, and data reporting of species mentioned in the IATTC Resolutions, including silky sharks. This includes a prohibition to use gaffs, hooks or similar instruments for the handling of sharks, and the use of shark lines by longline vessels.
- Council Regulation (EU) 2025/202 of 30 January fixing for 2025 and 2026 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, and amending Regulation (EU) 2024/257 as regards fishing opportunities for 2025. Article 40 in Section 8, Chapter III, Title II of this Regulation sets out the prohibition of fishing for oceanic whitetip sharks.
- Regulation (EU) 605/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013, amending Council Regulation (EC) 1185/2003. The Regulation prohibits the removal of shark fins on board vessels, and the retention on board, transshipment or landing of shark fins. Nevertheless, to facilitate on-board storage, shark fins may be partially sliced through and folded against the carcass but shall not be removed from the carcass before landing.
- Commission Communication on a European Community Action Plan for the Conservation and Management of Sharks of 5 February 2009 (COM(2009) 40 final), and related Council Conclusions of 23 April 2009.

b. National rules and regulations

Spain has developed a National Action Plan for the conservation and management of sharks in

IATTC (Annex 1). This plan is reviewed annually, most recently in 2025, and aims to fulfil IATTC obligations relating to purse seine and longline vessels operating in IATTC Convention, as regards retention, utilization, by-catch, release, and data management of oceanic whitetip sharks, silky sharks and whale sharks.

Additionally, Spain issues for each vessel an Authorisation of the Foreign Fleet ('*Autorización para la Flota Externa-AFE*'), which is mandatory for each vessel that is carrying out fishing activities and includes all national and international obligations, including the conservation and management measures adopted by the regional fisheries management organisations of which the EU is a member and where the vessel is authorised to fish.

Portugal also follows the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-SHARKS, 1999), which inspired the first ever EU Action Plan for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (EUPOA) in 2009.

3. Catches and interactions with sharks and rays by EU vessels in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in 2025

a. Purse seine vessels

In 2025, there were four EU purse seine vessels targeting tropical tuna species in the IATTC area of competence. These vessels do not target sharks. Any interactions with sharks (especially silky and whitetip) are included in the observer reports (100% coverage). The IATTC maintains all observer information for EU purse seine vessels and as such has access to reports of observed interactions with mobulid rays, oceanic whitetip sharks, silky sharks, and hammerhead sharks caught in that fishery.

Moreover, to reduce the entanglement of sharks, purse seine vessels use FADs that are not constructed with entanglement material. These vessels also apply a code of good practice.

b. Longline vessels

In 2025, there were 43 EU longline fishing vessels operating in the IATTC area of competence (39 from Spain and 4 from Portugal). Although these vessels mainly target swordfish, catches of sharks also occur, mainly of *Prionace glauca* (BSH) and *Isurus oxyrinchus* (SMA). In the case of the fleet from Spain, these catches in 2025 represented 8,177 tonnes and 1,008 tonnes, respectively. In terms of international trade, in 2025, Spain imported approximately 706 tonnes of these two species, mainly from Ecuador and Japan. And in the case of the fleet from Portugal, the observer report of one vessel indicates that the catches of BSH amounted 17 tonnes and the catches of SMA represented 5 tonnes.

The EU has reported to the IATTC Secretariat information on all catches (including species and weight) including sharks.

Moreover, in 2025, a total of 11 fishing trips by Spanish longline vessels and 1 trip by a Portuguese vessel were observed in the IATTC Convention Area, of which 5 by human observers and 6 with electronic monitoring. In these observed fishing trips, the interaction with different species of sharks and rays was registered in the observer reports. The table below includes the number and the condition of all individuals when released (dead, alive, or unknown condition) by code and species:

Code	Species	Alive	Dead	Unknown condition
BSH	Prionace glauca	14	4	2
SMA	Isurus oxyrinchus	4	8	1
LMA	Isurus paucus	1	3	
MAK	Isurus spp.	1	5	
POR	Lamna nasus	1	16	
PTH	Alopias pelagicus		3	
BTH	Alopias superciliosus	14	58	5
ALV	Alopias vulpinus		1	
THR	Alopias spp.	3	13	44
SPZ	Sphyrna zygaena		3	
SPN	Sphyrna spp.			1
OCS	Carcharhinus longimanus	1		
FAL	Carcharhinus falciformis		1	
TIG	Galeocerdo cuvier		1	
PSK	Pseudocarcharias kamoharai	90	245	4
SKX	Elasmobranchii	10	3	3
RMV	Mobula spp.			2
PLS	Pteroplatytrygon violacea	236	9	6
SRX	Rajiformes	1		

4. Good practices and projects on manipulation and release of several species in 2025.

In 2025, several projects and workshops were held on the handling and safe release of incidental by-catches of several species, including sharks. This included 4 workshops of tagging of mobulid rays, sharks, and turtles to monitor the mortality rate of these species. Moreover, Spain is implementing a pilot project to assess the use of velcros and harnesses on board one purse seine vessel. Portugal cooperates, where possible, with IATTC scientific staff on gear selectivity, biological/ecological knowledge of key shark species, and handling practices to improve post-release survival.

In 2025, specific attention was also given to implementing good practices on board purse seine vessels for the handling of endangered species, in line with the code of good practices that the purse seine private sector operating in IATTC adopted in 2012, and which includes the design of FADs that do not use entangling material to avoid the by-catch of accidental and non targeted species in the fishery, and specific releasing manoeuvres for sharks, sea turtles and rays.