

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

89TH MEETING

Guayaquil (Ecuador)
29 June-3 July 2015

PROPOSAL IATTC-89 A-3

SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

RESOLUTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF SILKY SHARKS CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH FISHERIES IN THE IATTC CONVENTION AREA

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The Antigua Convention requires IATTC to adopt conservation measures for species associated with the main targeted stocks.

The European Union is proposing a new Resolution which aims at adopting a series of conservation measures to manage fisheries for Silky Sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*).

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Rationale:

The Scientific Advisory Committee expressed concern about the recent declining trend in catches of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) by purse seiners and that there is clear evidence of declining populations of silky sharks in both the northern and southern stocks. It is therefore critical that precautionary measures be implemented immediately to allow silky sharks populations to rebuild in the EPO.

Both in 2014 and 2015 the IATTC scientific staff considered that fishing mortality should be reduced in order to promote rapid rebuilding of silky sharks stocks in the EPO and put forward a series of recommendations on which the present proposal is based.

The Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC),

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

Recalling 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 the Convention, with a view to maintaining or restoring populations of such species above levels at which their reproduction may become seriously threatened;

Taking due note that the Scientific Advisory Committee expressed concern about the recent declining trend in catches of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) and that there is clear evidence of declining populations of silky sharks in both the northern and southern stocks; and

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Recognizing that it is critical that fishing mortality be reduced and measures be implemented immediately to allow silky sharks populations to rebuild in the EPO;

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Agrees as follows:

1. Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) shall prohibit retaining on-board, transhipping, landing, storing, selling, or offering for sale any part or whole carcass of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) in the fisheries covered by the Antigua Convention that do not target this species.

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2. CPCs shall require vessels flying their flag and not targeting silky sharks to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, Silky sharks when brought alongside the vessel and to do so in a manner that results in as little harm to the shark as possible.
1. Fisheries directed at silky sharks shall be closed between 1st January and 31st March of each calendar year. Fisheries not directed at silky sharks, but which catch the species incidentally, may continue to operate during the closure, but should not be allowed to use steel leaders on longlines for the duration of the closure.
2. CPCs shall require vessels flying their flag and targeting silky sharks to limit the catch of silky sharks of less than 100 cm total length during a trip to 20% of the total number of silky sharks caught during that trip.
3. For fisheries that target silky sharks, CPC's shall declare that they have targeted fisheries, and develop a management plan for that fishery that includes specific authorisations to fish such as a licence and a TAC along with other measures such as additional closed seasons or seasonal limitations on the use of wire leaders to limit the catch of silky shark to sustainable levels. These management plans must be developed by 31 December 2016, and submitted to the SAC for review before discussion at the subsequent IATTC meeting.
4. For purse-seine vessels, CPCs shall establish observer programs for capacity class 1-5 vessels, with technical assistance from IATTC staff, at a level of observer coverage adequate to reliably monitor silky shark by catches.
3. CPCs shall require that vessels flying their flag to record, through observer programs for purse-seine vessels of all capacity classes, the number and status (dead/alive) of silky sharks caught and released.
4. Observers shall be allowed to collect biological samples from silky sharks that are dead on haulback in the EPO, provided that the samples are part of a research project approved by the Scientific Advisory Committee. In order to get approval, a detailed document outlining the purpose of the work, number of samples intended to be collected and the spatio-temporal distribution of the sampling effect must be included in the proposal. Annual progress of the work and a final report on completion will be presented to the Scientific Advisory Committee.
5. CPCs shall, where possible, undertake research to:
 - a. Identify silky shark pupping grounds and prohibit fishing (with steel leaders) in them;
 - b. Conduct experiments on mitigating shark catches, especially in longline fisheries, and on the survival of sharks captured by all gear types, with priority given to those gears with significant catches. Survival experiments should include studies of the effects on survival of shorter sets and of the use of circle hooks;
 - c. Support research on mitigation of shark by catches and data collection projects
 - d. improve handling practices for live sharks to maximise post-release survival.
5. CPCs and the Scientific Advisory Committee shall continue work on bycatch mitigation measures and live release guidelines to avoid the initial catch of this species wherever possible, and maximize the number of incidentally caught individuals that can be released alive.
6. This Resolution shall enter into force on 1st January 2016.

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