

# INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

## 90<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

La Jolla, USA

### PROPOSAL IATTC-90 C-2

#### SUBMITTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

### RESOLUTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF SILKY SHARKS CAUGHT 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*).

#### **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.

Since 2014 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

*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;

Agrees as follows:

1. Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) shall prohibit retaining onboard, transhipping, landing, storing, selling, or offering for sale any part or whole carcass of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) caught in the IATTC Convention Area in the fisheries covered by the Antigua Convention that do not target this species.
2. CPCs shall require their vessels to release of all silky sharks alive wherever possible.

Notwithstanding paragraph 1, if silky sharks are unintentionally caught and frozen as part of a purse seine vessel's operation, the vessel must surrender the whole sharks to the responsible governmental authorities at the point of landing. Silky sharks surrendered in this manner may not be sold or bartered but may be donated for purposes of domestic human consumption.

3. CPCs shall require vessels flying their flag and not targeting silky sharks to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, silky sharks caught in the IATTC Convention Area as soon as possible after the shark is caught and when brought alongside the vessel and to do so in a manner that results in as little harm to the shark as possible without compromising safety of any person
4. Fisheries targeting silky sharks shall be closed for a period of three months of each calendar year.
5. CPCs shall ensure that their vessels in fisheries not directed at silky sharks, but that catch the species incidentally, may continue to operate during the closure, but longline vessels should comply with at least one of the following options:
  - a) Do not use or carry wire trace as branch lines of leaders;
  - b) Do not use branch lines running directly off the longline floats or drop lines, known as shark lines (See Annex 1 for a schematic diagram of a shark line).
6. CPCs shall require vessels flying their flag and targeting silky sharks to endeavour to limit the retention of silky sharks of less than 100 cm total length during a trip to 20% of the total number of silky sharks retained at any time during that trip.
7. For fisheries that target silky sharks, CPCs shall declare that they have targeted fisheries, and develop a management plan for fisheries that target silky sharks. The elements of such management plans shall be developed by the Scientific staff and discussed at the 2017 SAC meeting with a view to adoption at the 2017 IATTC Annual meeting. CPCs shall submit their management plans to the Director by 31 December 2017. The IATTC scientific staff in coordination with the Scientific Advisory Committee shall review the plans and provide an assessment for consideration by the Commission at its next annual meeting. Targeted fishing for silky sharks by vessels of CPCs that have not declared they have targeted fisheries in accordance with this paragraph shall be prohibited.
8. For purse-seine vessels, CPCs shall establish observer coverage for purse-seine vessels of less than 364 metric tons carrying capacity, and evaluate the use of electronic monitoring systems observer programs.
9. CPCs shall require the collection and submission of catch data for silky sharks and shall submit to the IATTC in accordance with IATTC data reporting requirements. CPCs shall also record, through observer programs and other means, for purse-seine vessels of all capacity classes, the number and status (dead/alive) of silky sharks caught and released and report it to the IATTC.
10. 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 effort 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.
11. CPCs shall, where possible, undertake research to:
  - a. Identify silky shark pupping grounds and prohibit longline 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.
12. 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.
13. This Resolution shall enter into force on 1st July 2017.

**Figure 1.** Schematic diagram of a shark line.

