

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

94TH MEETING

Bilbao, Spain, 22-26 July 2019

PROPOSAL IATTC-94 B-1

SUBMITTED BY VENEZUELA

CONSERVATION OF WHALE SHARKS

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Section 4 of Resolution C-18-05, which amends and replaces Resolution C-16-01 on FADs, refers to whale sharks. However, the aforementioned resolution pertains to “FADs”, but paragraphs 12 and 13 refer to regulations to not harm and release "live" whale sharks. Therefore, they should be considered in a separate resolution and Venezuela is thus submitting this proposal, which includes exactly what these paragraphs refer to, but in a separate resolution.

RESOLUTION C-19-xx

CONSERVATION OF WHALE SHARKS

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC):

Recognizing that fish stocks covered by the Commission include other species of fish taken by vessels fishing for tunas;

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;

Recalling Article IV, paragraph 3, of the Antigua Convention, which states that “*where the status of target stocks or non-target or associated or dependent species is of concern, the members of the Commission shall subject such stocks and species to enhanced monitoring in order to review their status and the efficacy of conservation and management measures, revising those measures regularly in the light of new scientific information available*”;

Recognizing that whale sharks are caught as bycatch by purse-seine vessels in the Convention Area;

Recognizing that measures should be implemented to allow whale shark populations to rebuild in the Convention Area;

Further noting that whale sharks are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including from fishing, and noting the ecological and economic value these species can bring to the EPO; and

Concerned about the potential effects of purse-seine operations on the status of whale sharks when

deliberately or accidentally set upon;

Agrees:

1. CPCs shall prohibit their flag vessels from setting a purse-seine net on a school of tuna associated with a live whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), if the animal is sighted prior to the commencement of the set.
2. CPCs shall require that, in the event that a whale shark is not deliberately encircled in the purse-seine net, the master of the vessel shall:
 - a. ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure its safe release; and
 - b. report the incident to the relevant authority of the flag CPC, including the number of individuals, details of how and why the encirclement happened, where it occurred, steps taken to ensure safe release, and an assessment of the life status of the whale shark on release (including whether the animal was released alive but subsequently died).