

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

103rd MEETING

Panama City, Panama
1-5 September 2025

PROPOSAL IATTC-103 F-1 REV-1

SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES

CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR SHARK SPECIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE SILKY SHARK (*Carcharhinus falciformis*), FOR THE YEARS ~~2024~~ 2026-2028 ~~AND 2025~~

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Panama City, Panama, on the occasion of its 103rd meeting:

Considering that Article VII, paragraph 1 (f), of the Antigua Convention indicates 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*”;

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 silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) are the shark species most commonly caught as bycatch by purse-seine vessels in the Convention Area;

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

Aware of the need to establish conservation measures for the protection of sharks, especially the silky shark;

Recalling that Resolution C-19-05 requires the IATTC scientific staff to develop complete assessments of the silky shark stocks, but that due to a lack of data it has not been possible to conduct these and thus have indicators of the status of these species; and

Emphasizing the necessity of obtaining better data to achieve management measures in accordance with the variability of the fisheries, as well as to improve the understanding of fishing and pupping areas, catches and fishing effort that affect the fishing mortality of sharks by multi-species longline fleets, both artisanal and industrial, in the coastal countries.

Agrees as follows:

1. To continue the long-term sampling program (Project C.4.a), to the extent possible, in those shark fisheries related to tunas and tuna-like species in Central America with the goal of improving data collection for assessing ~~indicators of~~ silky shark stocks.

2. Members and Cooperating Non-Members (CPCs) shall prohibit retaining on board, transshipping, landing, or storing, in part or whole, carcasses of silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) caught by purse-seine vessels in the IATTC Convention Area. CPCs shall require that their purse-seine vessels release live silky sharks whenever possible. However, if silky sharks are unintentionally caught and frozen as part of purse-seine vessel's operations, if the flag CPC's governmental authorities are present at the point of landing, the whole silky shark must be surrendered to them. If the flag CPC's governmental authorities are unavailable, the whole silky shark surrendered may not be sold or bartered but may be donated for purposes of domestic human consumption. Silky sharks surrendered in this manner shall be reported to the Secretariat.
3. CPCs shall require all longline vessels whose fishing licenses do not include sharks as a fishing target but catch sharks incidentally, to limit bycatch of silky sharks to a maximum of 20% of the total catch by fishing trip in weight. The 20% limit is set as an interim limit in the absence of data and scientific analysis on which to base conservation and management measures, and will be revised, based on recommendations by the scientific staff, once improved species-level catch and composition data are available.
4. CPCs shall require their multi-species fisheries using surface longlines¹ to limit the catch of silky sharks of less than 100 cm total length to 20% of the total number of silky sharks caught during the trip.
5. CPCs that allow retention of silky sharks by their longline vessels, shall ensure compliance with the measures established in paragraphs 3 and 4 by means of control and inspection mechanisms, for Port CPCs and Flag CPCs, as applicable. At a minimum, such mechanisms shall require effective inspections at the time of first unloading in port or the submission of catch logbooks that will allow for species identification, verification of size when caught, and enforcement of applicable sanctions such as prevention of entry into markets of product caught in violation of this measure. Where applicable, internationally recognized certification and reporting procedures for the conservation of silky sharks may be used for fulfilling the obligations of this paragraph. CPCs shall inform the IATTC Secretariat of the use of said certification procedures. Data derived from these control and inspection measures shall be communicated to the Secretariat, in accordance with IATTC data submission requirements. In 2026, the compliance committee shall receive the data provided by CPCs to the Secretariat and review the implementation of the provisions in Paragraphs 3 and 4 for their effectiveness, considering the criteria for inspection and control established in Paragraph 5.
6. The IATTC scientific staff shall take steps to identify whether and where and when pupping grounds exist in the IATTC Convention Area and present this information ~~indicate~~ to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) at its meeting in 2026. The SAC may evaluate at that time if management measures could minimize impacts to the stock. ~~the geographical location of the silky shark pupping areas in the Convention Area. CPCs shall require vessels to not fish in silky shark pupping areas, as may be adopted by the Commission, in accordance with the recommendation of the IATTC scientific staff, in coordination with the SAC.~~
7. For those multi-species fisheries using surface longlines that have captured more than 20% of silky sharks in weight on average in a year, CPCs shall prohibit the use of steel leaders during a period of three consecutive months each year. The average proportion of silky sharks in the catch will be calculated from data of the previous calendar year. New vessels entering the multi-species fisheries affected by this Resolution and those for which no data are available from the period immediately prior shall be subject to the provisions of this paragraph.

¹ For the purposes of this resolution, surface longlines are those in which the majority of hooks fish at depths shallower than 100 meters and target species other than swordfish.

8. At the SAC meeting in the year 2027~~5~~ and at the subsequent meeting of the IATTC in 2027~~5~~, the IATTC scientific staff shall present to the SAC an analysis of the unloading, observer, and long-term sampling program data on the catches of sharks in the fisheries in central America with which they shall also recommend any improvement of the resolution including an adjustment on the period of prohibition on the use of steel leaders (paragraph 7).
9. CPC shall ensure that the closure period for not using steel leaders by their vessels subject to paragraph 7 coincide with the periods recommended on the basis of the analyses indicated in paragraph 8.
10. Vessels of less than 12 m length overall using manually operated fishing gear (*i.e.* without mechanical or hydraulic winches) and that do not deliver to motherships at any time during the fishing trip are excluded from the application of this resolution. For this excluded fleet, CPCs shall continue working with the Commission's scientific staff on the strengthening of data-collection programs, whose progress shall be presented at the meeting of the SAC in 2026~~4~~ and in full in 2027~~5~~.
11. CPCs shall notify the Director, before 1 October of each year, the single period of restricted use of steel leaders referred to in paragraph 7 which will be observed for the calendar year.
12. CPCs shall keep a record of the vessels and the period to which each vessel operator or owner has committed for the enforcement of this resolution.
13. CPCs shall require the collection and submission of catch data for silky sharks, 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/and condition if released alive if possible) of silky sharks caught and released and report it to the IATTC.
14. The Commission shall prioritize research by the scientific staff in the following areas:
 - a. Identification of the pupping areas of the silky shark.
 - b. Mitigation of bycatch of sharks, especially in longline fisheries, and survival of sharks caught by all types of gears, giving priority to gears with significant catches. Survival experiments should include studies of the effects on survival of shorter sets and the use of circle hooks.
 - c. Improve handling practices for live sharks to maximize post-release survival.
 - d. Establish the appropriateness of the percentage limit on silky sharks catch established in paragraphs 3 and 4.
 - e. Opportunities for the use of Close-Kin Mark Recapture as a tool for the assessment of silky sharks in the EPO.
15. This Resolution shall be reviewed by the scientific staff and at the meeting of the SAC in 2027~~5~~, in order to evaluate the adequacy of the measures of this Resolution.
16. This Resolution shall enter into force on 1 January 2026~~4~~ and shall be reviewed at the IATTC annual meeting in 2025~~8~~.