

November 23rd 2021

27th Session of the Commission Sharkproject: Closing Statement to Panel 4

Knowing that Northern Atlantic shortfin mako will continue to decrease until 2035 we had hoped to see a retention ban at least until a time, when new scientific advice from SCRS based on a new stock assessment is available, or preferably until we have proof of this stock recovering. Therefore, [PA4 809D](#) proposing a default retention ban for 2022 and 2023 only is a disappointing outcome after five years of negotiations and inadequate for a stock which is about to collapse and may not recover in our lifetime, if ever.

We had certainly hoped for more but acknowledge the compromise, with de facto one year of no retention and an option to possibly allow some retention in 2023.

Nevertheless, this falls significantly short of SCRS advice and a precautionary approach accounting *“for many of the uncertainties and increase the chances for successful implementation and rebuilding of the NA-SMA stock in accordance with the best available scientific information”* outlined in a recent legal opinion.

We are grateful to all CPCs who pushed hard over the last months to improve prerequisites now proposed as basis for calculation of any potential retention in PA4-809D representing the lowest common denominator Panel4 members might agree on.

- Appreciating the collective agreement on the importance of complete data sets (including dead and live discards) being submitted by all CPCs for an annual estimation of total mortality by SCRS and calculation of potential retention for the following year.
- Welcoming the proposed monthly reporting of retained quantities to the Secretariat by all CPCs to monitor compliance against their applicable allowances.
- Acknowledging, that the proposed approach with stringent oversight by SCRS and the request that CPCs have to repay exceeded allowances in full over the following years are major steps forward, while we would have preferred an initial phase of data collection prior to starting any considerations of potential retention.
- Noting, that the proposed approach results in additional annual tasks for SCRS and the Secretariat.
- Highlighting the importance of compliance with reporting requirements and the agreed measures on the water but noting the lack of representative observer coverage and an EMS taking into account minimum standards to be agreed by ICCAT based on advice from SCRS and PWG.

Notwithstanding this we believe ICCAT must account for the existing uncertainties and adopt 70% probability instead of the proposed range for stock rebuilding by 2070. A 66% probability would be a compromise appropriate for elasmobranchs, close to [NOAA's approach for migratory sharks](#), and a precautionary approach for a species, which ranked third in vulnerability in the ecological risk assessments conducted by SCRS and was globally recognised for its vulnerability to unsustainable exploitation when listed on CITES App. II in 2019.

SHARKPROJECT International

Rebhaldenstrasse 2
8910 Affoltern am Albis
Switzerland

CONTACT

+41 44 586 50 02
info@sharkproject.org
www.sharkproject.org

BOARD

P. Alex Smolinsky
VP. Christine Gstöttner
Jasmin Finger
Denise Smolinsky

SHARKPROJECT Germany e.V.
SHARKPROJECT Austria
SHARKPROJECT Switzerland