

**ICCAT 2021
Final Plenary Statement
Shark Trust and Ecology Action Centre**



The Shark Trust and Ecology Action Centre congratulate Canada, the UK, Senegal, and Gabon for their leadership in securing a truly historic measure for rebuilding North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks. We are also pleased that the US has accepted the scientific advice for a full North Atlantic prohibition and has introduced critical elements necessary for safeguarding similarly vulnerable longfin makos. We strongly urge Parties to now focus on ***augmenting rather than relaxing*** this critical new recovery initiative.

We remind Parties that slow growing makos need many decades to recover from overfishing. Their life history characteristics warrant a precautionary management approach, including the incorporation of a 70% probability of success (at least). The new North Atlantic retention ban must be given ample time to work. Resuming landings from an exceptionally vulnerable and depleted shark population before rebuilding even begins would be particularly egregious.

We look forward to the development and implementation of more specific scientific advice for reducing mako bycatch and associated mortality, across the Atlantic. We also urge Parties to promptly continue efforts to establish a science-based catch limit for South Atlantic shortfin makos, allocate the South Atlantic TAC for blue sharks, and strengthen the finning ban with a requirement that all sharks be landed with their fins still naturally attached.

Last, as a foundational matter for future negotiations, we object to the suggestion (made in Panel 4) that the conservation positions of Parties with high mako catches (particularly when due to the lack of basic fishing limits) should somehow carry more weight than those of Parties that have followed science unilaterally or, for another reason, decided not to exploit a population. We cannot agree that ICCAT's consequential decisions (often affecting the health of entire ocean ecosystems) should be left primarily to vested interests, or that fishing without limit, especially when scientists advise cutting back, should be rewarded with added negotiating clout.

Thank you for considering our views.