

Original: English

**DRAFT RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON BLUE SHARK
CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH ICCAT FISHERIES**

(Proposal by the European Union)

RECALLING that the Commission adopted the *Resolution by ICCAT on Atlantic Sharks* [Res. 01-11], the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Conservation of Sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT* [Rec. 04-10], the *Recommendation of ICCAT to amend the Recommendation 04-10 on the Conservation of Sharks caught in association with the fisheries managed by ICCAT* [Rec. 05-05], the *Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT concerning Sharks* [Rec. 07-06], including the obligation of CPCs to annually report Task I & II data for sharks in accordance with ICCAT data reporting procedures;

FURTHER RECALLING that the Commission has adopted management measures for shark species considered vulnerable to overfishing and caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT;

RECOGNIZING that Atlantic blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) are caught in large numbers in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT;

CONSIDERING that the 2015 SCRS report states that despite the positive signs of the stock assessment of the North Atlantic stock of blue shark, a high level of uncertainty in data inputs and in model structural assumptions remains and, therefore, the possibility of the stock being overfished and overfishing occurring could not be ruled out;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that in the same 2015 SCRS report it is recommended that, given the uncertainty in stock status results for the South Atlantic stock of blue shark recent catch levels (e.g. 2009-2013) should not be increased;

FURTHER NOTING that, according to SCRS advice precautionary management measures should be considered for shark stocks for which there are few data and/or greater uncertainty in assessment results;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that in order to protect and manage blue sharks in a precautionary manner, an annual catch limit on both northern and southern Atlantic stocks of blue sharks, calculated on the basis of the average of catches on both stocks during the period 2009-2013, should be established.

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:**

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities whose vessels fish blue shark in association with ICCAT fisheries in the Convention Area shall implement multi-annual measures to ensure the conservation of the stocks of North and South Atlantic blue shark in line with ICCAT's Convention objective.

Catch limits for Blue Shark

2. The total allowable catches for blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) caught in association with ICCAT fisheries in the ICCAT Convention Area for 2016 and subsequent years are set at 36,860 t for North Atlantic blue shark stock and 26, 400 t for South Atlantic blue shark stock.

3. If the total catch for any of the blue shark stocks exceeds in any year the TAC in paragraph 2, the Commission shall review these measures.

Recording, reporting and use of the catch information

4. Each CPC shall ensure that its vessels fishing for blue shark in association with ICCAT fisheries in the Convention area record their catch in accordance with the requirements set out in the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Recording of Catch by Fishing Vessels in the ICCAT Convention Area* [Rec. 03-13].
5. CPCs shall improve their catch reporting systems to ensure the reporting of accurate and validated blue shark catch and effort data to ICCAT in full accordance with the ICCAT requirements for provision of Task I and Task II catch, effort and size data.
6. CPCs shall include in their annual reports to ICCAT information on the actions they have taken domestically to monitor catches and to conserve and manage blue sharks.

Research

7. CPCs are encouraged to undertake research that would provide information on key biological/ecological parameters, life-history and behavioural traits of blue sharks. Such information shall be made available to the SCRS.
8. In the light of the results of the next stock assessment of blue shark, the SCRS shall provide, if possible, options of HCR with the associated limit, target and threshold reference points for the management of this species in the ICCAT Convention Area.