

**LETTER FROM PANEL 4 CHAIR
(ON WAY FORWARD ON ROUND 1 OF CORRESPONDANCE PERIOD)**

10 November 2020

Dear Members of Panel 4,

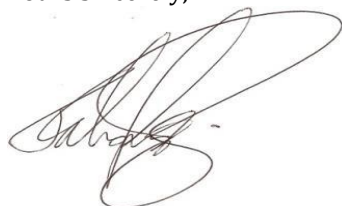
I hope this message finds all of you healthy and well in these difficult times.

Following up on my previous correspondence (ICCAT Circular 7181 from 20 October 2020) where I draw your attention to the proposed recommendations requiring decision by this Panel, on N-SWO (PA4-803) and N-SMA (PA4-804, PA4-805 and PA4-806), I am pleased to inform you that PA4-803, tabled by Morocco, did not receive any objection and it is, therefore, considered adopted.

On the N-SMA proposals (PA4-804, PA4-805 and PA4-806), however, twelve statements were received by the ICCAT Secretariat (5 by CPCs: Senegal, EU, UK, Morocco and USA; and, 7 by NGOs and NGO coalitions), by the deadline, and were posted in the website. An e-mail message, also by the deadline, was sent by Norway (attached to this correspondence). From the positions expressed by these CPCs, it is clear that consensus could not be reached. Notwithstanding, as you may have noticed, in my previous message I did encourage the delegations who have proposed these three recommendations (EU, USA and Canada) to work together to see if their views can converge into a single proposal. As Chair of Panel 4, therefore, I want you to know that I will keep working with the concerned delegations to see if a path for convergence can be found and then brought to the attention of the Panel, before opening a second correspondence period. If that is not the case, however, we will have no choice but to postpone any new decision on this stock until 2021, when, hopefully, we will be able to host a physical meeting. With this objective, a tentative date for a physical meeting of Panel 4 was already tentatively scheduled to take place from 12-15 July 2021, provided, of course, that sanitary conditions by then will allow.

Yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely,



Fábio Hazin
PA4 Chair

Attachment:

Email correspondence from Norway to Panel 4 Chair [ICCAT Entrada #10693, dated 10 November 2020].

Email correspondence from Norway to Panel 4 Chair

From: Gabrielsen Elisabeth Norgård
To: ICCAT
Sent: 01 November 2020 16:05
Subject: ICCAT 2020 - Panel 4 - discussions as essential commission business - comments from Norway

Dear Panel 4 Chair,

Reference is made to ICCAT Circular #7100/2020 with the list of draft proposals to be discussed via correspondence on Panel 4 as essential Commission Business.

Here are our initial comments:

Norway recognizes the fact that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ICCAT annual physical meeting has been substituted by a process where all communication is in writing. Although such a process can be transparent, there is also the possibility of important information “drowning” in the flood of information if or when substantial changes are discussed or proposed. Thus, Norway is of the opinion that substantial changes to the Recommendations should only be made where this is of utmost urgency.

In this respect, Norway can go along with most of the proposals made concerning roll-over. It is, however, important to notice that we will get back to several of the Recommendations in question in order to discuss the content of these thoroughly as soon as it is possible to have physical meetings or as soon as we otherwise deem it necessary.

Regarding the list of draft proposals to be discussed in Panel 4:

PA4 – 803: Norway supports the proposal from Morocco.

PA4 – 804: Norway does not support *Draft recommendation by ICCAT on the conservation of North Atlantic stock of shortfin mako caught in association with iccat fisheries* proposal by the European Union

Our comments on this proposal:

The Scientific Committee (SCRS) estimates that a TAC for the north Atlantic shortfin mako of 700 t will, with 57% probability, end overfishing. Such a TAC will, however, only with 41 % probability lead to a rebuilding of the stock by 2070. If the TAC is set to 100 t, this gives a 70 % probability that the stock will be rebuilt by 2070. When it comes to sharks, it is generally recommended to use the level that gives 70 % probability of rebuilding the stock (amendment 14 to the 2006 consolidated Atlantic highly migratory species fishery management plan, NOAA, 2019). Experimental modeled projections suggest that total mortality may be about twice as large as the fish mortality caused by a catch equivalent to TAC (SCRS / 2019/101).

In the proposal from the EU, the TAC for the north Atlantic stock of shortfin mako is set to 500 t. This includes fish that is already dead (para 5), and does not include dead discards of live but potentially damaged fish. Norway is of the opinion that the draft mortality of dead discards of live but potentially damaged fish, is significant, and the proposal of 500 t will therefore most likely lead to overfishing of the stock, contrary to the advice from the SCRS.

PA4 – 805: Norway does not support the *Draft recommendation by ICCAT to establish a rebuilding program for North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks caught in association with ICCAT fisheries* proposal by the United States.

Comment:

The proposal has set a TAC of 700 t in 2021 and 500 t in 2022. We refer to our comments on proposal PA4-804 in this regard. The proposal PA4-805 from the US appears to be unnecessarily complicated, which makes it difficult to implement and control. The proposal, amongst other things, requires a modification of gear. It is unclear what effect this requirement will have, as the SCRS has not come to a conclusion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of different gear types.

PA4 – 806: Norway supports the *Draft recommendation by ICCAT on the conservation of Atlantic stock of shortfin mako caught in association with ICCAT fisheries* proposal from Canada.

PA4 – 807: Norway does not support the proposal on *Best practices for reducing total mortality of North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks* (submitted by the United States).

Comment:

First of all, Norway would like to acknowledge the measures the US has taken in their proposal. However, when it comes to gear, the SCRS has recently stated that there is still a need for more studies before one can conclude on the benefit of circle hooks. The preparation of a plan for such studies was on the SCRS agenda this year, but has been delayed, and the SCRS has therefore not concluded on this point. The US proposal provides for the possibility of retaining live shortfin mako larger than the minimum size. This is contrary to the SCRS advice of zero catch, and is in our opinion extra unfortunate because large, sexually mature individuals are particularly important for the development of the stock.

A general comment on the shortfin mako proposals:

At the ICCAAT Annual meeting in 2019 there was a great disagreement about the management of shortfin mako, and from our point of view, the in depth discussions on this matter should be done in a normal forum and not by correspondence.

A recommendation that contains a TAC will give an incentive to fish mako and an incentive to retain the fish onboard. It is theoretically possible that a small TAC can be better than zero-TAC if it is followed by a credible monitoring regime that will allow to make more reliable stock analyses, thus enabling management to introduce more targeted and more effective measures to ensure recovery of the stock. From our point of view the Canadian proposal on the shortfin mako PA4-806 is the only proposal that is in line with the advice from the SCRS, on non-retention without exception in the northeast Atlantic. The other two proposals from the EU and the US are contrary to the advice of the SCRS.

Norway requests that this communication be translated and shared with all relevant Panel 4 contacts for the present 2020 decision-making process.

Please accept assurances of my highest consideration.

Regards, Elisabeth



Elisabeth N. Gabrielsen

Director

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