

WWF

Statement to Panel 4

October 2020

WWF recognizes the constraints that the ICCAT CPCs and Secretariat must face with the global pandemic that made it impossible to run a physical meeting of the Commission and determined the cancellation or postponement of several other important meetings, including the intersessional meeting of Panel 4 and the SCRS annual meeting this year. However this cannot become a reason to postpone the most urgent actions in 2020.

Despite the unprecedented conditions, three proposals for management measures of the North Atlantic stock of shortfin mako shark were submitted by CPCs and are now on the table for discussion.

The status of shortfin mako sharks in the Atlantic requires acting with no further delay. Urgent measures are needed to revert the declining trend of the North Atlantic stock.

WWF therefore strongly calls on CPCs to build a constructive and fruitful dialogue and spare no effort to prevent a simple rollover of the measures in place that will only continue the status quo of overfishing and expose the stock to the serious risk of collapse.

WWF urges CPCs to immediately stop the current overfishing and adopt a zero retention policy which, according to the clear scientific advice, is the measure that would increase the chances of success for the rebuilding of the stock by 2070.

Additional measures including area/time based management, technical measures on fishing gears, adoption of safe handling and best practices for the release of live specimens, and verification means are also crucial to mitigate bycatch, reduce mortality and increase post-release survival. A clear mandate should be given to the SCRS to collect and analyse all available data and identify specific measures aimed at minimizing the total mortality of shortfin mako sharks from all fisheries impacting this stock.