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**The Pew Charitable Trusts’  
 Statement to Panel 4  
 October 2020**

Despite the cancellation of this year’s Commission meeting, Panel 4 has received three proposals for shortfin mako shark management in the Atlantic, all three of which are essentially identical to proposals from the same CPCs in 2019. As noted in the joint Plenary statement submitted by Shark Trust on behalf of several organizations, including The Pew Charitable Trusts (PLE-112), the status of the shortfin mako shark is dire and urgent action is needed in the Atlantic without delay. Even if no makos are caught in ICCAT fisheries, the north Atlantic population will continue to decline until at least 2035, and probabilities for recovery on 50-year timelines are very low, despite the requirement of Rec 11-13 which requires overfishing to be ended with “high probability...in as short a time as possible.”

While negotiating over email will be challenging this year, the continued advice from SCRS for “no retention, no exceptions” is clear and strong. Proposal PA4-806, from Canada, is the only proposal that fully supports the scientific advice, including providing much needed management to the south Atlantic population. Proposals PA4\_804 and PA4\_805, from the European Union and United States, respectively, allow fishing to continue under some circumstances. This would only lead to further decline of an already depleted species. Pew urges the E.U., the U.S., and other governments to join Canada and ban the retention of shortfin mako sharks in the north Atlantic this year. These vulnerable ocean predators deserve a chance to recover and thrive. The rollover of an insufficient measure should not be the default action if Panel 4 members fail to take necessary action to reduce catch and agree to a plan that will rebuild the north Atlantic stock and manage the south Atlantic stock. Quicker, more substantial action must be taken this year.

Beyond mako sharks, Panel 4 must renew its commitment to development of a harvest strategy for north Atlantic swordfish by scheduling time on the agenda of a 2021 intersessional meeting for dialogue between scientists and managers on this issue. Scientists have made substantial progress on developing a management strategy evaluation (MSE), and it’s vital that Panel 4 provide feedback, so that ICCAT stays on track to adopt this new and improved management approach for north Atlantic swordfish in 2022.