

Consolidated Statement from the Ecology Action Centre, ICCAT 2020

The Ecology Action Centre, with support from its Shark League partners, appreciates the opportunity to offer a consolidated statement regarding our priority for ICCAT Panel 4 attention: shortfin mako sharks.

ICCAT's lack of consensus on urgently needed mako protections is deeply disappointing. ICCAT scientists have warned about makos' inherent vulnerability for more than a decade. For years they have recommended, *inter alia*, a South Atlantic 2001 TAC and a North Atlantic retention ban. Repeated failure to heed this advice jeopardizes an exceptionally valuable and vulnerable shark species, exacerbating risk for population collapses that are irreparable in our lifetimes.

We oppose landing allowances for the depleted North Atlantic population because they:

- Run counter to SCRS advice for a non-retention policy "*without exception*"
- Create incentive for irresponsible fishing practices that cause stress and ensure mortality
- Delay a recovery period that already spans decades.

The SCRS has been clear and comprehensive in advising a North Atlantic ban. This measure:

- Is based on TAC scenarios that incorporate all sources of mortality, *including dead discards*
- Is deemed the *most effective* way to achieve the substantial reductions necessary
- Takes into account the species' relatively high potential to survive capture
- Reflects the benefits of encouraging fleet movement away from hotspots.

Retention bans are not strange, novel or overly burdensome. Such measures:

- Are vital to remove incentives to encounter and kill valuable, threatened species
- Were recommended by the SCRS for shark species of concern more than a decade ago
- Have been recommended by SCRS for North Atlantic shortfin makos since 2017
- Are the most common RFMO measure for sharks
- Have been mandated by ICCAT for many other shark species
- Have been implemented by several ICCAT Parties for many shark species
- Are less restrictive than closing fisheries.

More must be done. We support additional measures and research to minimize incidental mako mortality. Such actions are recommended to boost recovery but cannot replace the core elements of the SCRS advice.

We are grateful for the leadership of Canada, Senegal, the UK, Gabon, and Chinese Taipei, and encouraged by the diverse and expanding array of organizations united in support of science-based measures. We are hopeful that CITES implementation will produce stricter national mako measures in the near future.

Over the coming months, unilateral actions and collective prioritization are needed to minimize further damage and enable an effective intersessional agreement. We urge Parties to:

- Immediately implement domestic science-based mako measures
- Encourage other Parties to engage in mako protection, and
- Prepare to propose, promote, and agree in July 2021 the mako measures advised by the SCRS.