

EUROPECHE STATEMENT ON:

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Note on the inclusion of the Carcharhinidae sharks in Appendix II of CITES in relation to the stock status, scientific advice provided to the Commission and relevant shark management recommendations

Since 1994, ICCAT ensures the conservation and management shark species associated with its fisheries, given that no RFMO manages such species in the Atlantic Ocean. Its mandate under the new ICCAT convention will clearly include migratory and oceanic shark species.

The CITES has proposed to include Blue-shark in the Appendix II of the convention, because of look-alike criteria.

As clearly indicated in the note by ICCAT's SCRS chair and vice-chair, the Shark species group rapporteur and ICCAT secretariat, "listing of blue shark in CITES Appendix II will not contribute to the conservation of the 19 species" of Carcharhinidae sharks for the following reasons:

- Blue shark is easily distinguishable, even when the fins are separated from the body, due to its characteristic metallic blue coloration, which is confirmed by the identification tool iSharkFin, developed by FAO
- "CPCs in ICCAT take the necessary measures to require that their fishermen fully utilize their entire catches of sharks and fishing vessels are required to retain all parts of the shark including fins and carcasses to the point of first landing"
- "Data on dead and live discards are collected by domestic observer and logbook programs" and
- "Catch records show that in practice, there are small or non-existent bycatch for the species proposed in the CITES proposal in the ICCAT area."

Finally, the most recent stock assessment conducted by ICCAT for blue shark took place in 2015 and concluded that the stocks of North and South Atlantic was not overfished and that no overfishing was occurring, which shows that blue sharks are managed sustainably in ICCAT waters.

With this proposal that does not take into account RFMOs and the FAO advice, we denounce the targeting of a sustainable commercial fishery and are worried that the contracting parties of CITES "supportive of the proposal, some of which are also ICCAT CPC," are undermining the "management" role of RFMOs and "the advisory role of the" FAO as independent fisheries experts.