



**The Pew Charitable Trusts’
Opening Statement to Panel 4
November 2023**

The Pew Charitable Trusts recognizes the significant intersessional work completed by Panel 4 and appreciates the opportunity to comment on this year’s agenda.

North Atlantic Swordfish

After many years of hard work, both by the SCRS and Panel 4, it is time to adopt a management procedure (MP) for North Atlantic swordfish to set the total allowable catch (TAC) starting in the 2024 fishing year. Pew would like to commend the SCRS Swordfish Species Group - led by scientists from Canada – for progressing these efforts and facilitating Panel 4 agreement on some MP elements, including a 3-year management cycle and a minimum TAC change threshold of 200 t. Now, Panel 4 must adopt a final MP, and ensure a 60% minimum probability of being in the green zone of the Kobe plot and a 5% maximum probability of breaching the limit reference point. **Pew urges members to finish this work by merging proposals [PA4_817](#) and [PA4_819](#) from Canada and the U.S./EU, respectively, and adopting the MP this year.** An allocation concern unresolved for 17 years should not be the cause of delayed adoption, especially recognizing the current TAC expires this year.

Blue Sharks

Noting the results of the 2023 stock assessments for Atlantic blue sharks, where the southern stock catch continues to exceed the TAC by more than 15% annually and the northern stock has just a 3% chance of remaining in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot under the current catch limit, we urge members to reduce the TACs for both populations to target a 60 to 70% chance of being in the green zone. Furthermore, Panel 4 should adopt an allocation mechanism for the southern TAC as a high priority. Pew also supports the language appearing in all the three proposals (PA4_813, PA4_814 and PA4_818) that tasks the SCRS with progressing the long-standing request to develop harvest control rules for these stocks, a timely effort since MSE work is now underway for blue sharks.

Other Matters

In addition to the above detailed recommendations, Pew urges Panel 4 to:

- Adopt [a Draft Recommendation by ICCAT for the conservation of whale sharks](#)
- Adopt [Recommendation by ICCAT on manta and mobulid rays](#)
- Adopt [Draft Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the conservation of sharks](#)
- Adopt [Draft Recommendation on bycatch of sea turtles](#)
- Strengthen and adopt [Draft Resolution by ICCAT on cetaceans' encirclement](#)