

Statement for Compliance Committee

Ensuring Compliance with ICCAT's Shark Measures

ICCAT has been a leader among RFMOs in the adoption of concrete requirements to safeguard sharks, but the success of these measures relies on proper implementation, demonstrated and verified through Compliance Committee (CoC) scrutiny.

The Ecology Action Centre, the Shark Trust, and The Ocean Foundation have prioritized participation in ICCAT's CoC processes. We are pleased by recent progress in fulfillment of the Shark Check Sheets as a tool to gauge and promote adherence with obligations.

Our analysis of these sheets shows **significant improvements by 24 Parties** from 2022 to 2024 in key areas, including:

- Increased reporting of relevant domestic regulations, with titles, numbers, and links;
- Greater detail and clarity regarding data collection on board vessels and at landing sites; and
- **A remarkable 57% decrease** (from 21 in 2022 to 9 in 2023) in Parties reporting that they “do not target” sharks/particular species, a response clarified as unacceptable by the CoC.

We commend the Parties that have recently submitted their first Shark Check Sheets, including the Republic of Guinea and Angola this year. This information is helpful for broadening the understanding of regional shark conservation efforts.

Despite these advances, critical gaps in information and implementation persist. Of particular concern is the continued **lack of reporting on relevant domestic regulations** for implementing ICCAT shark measures. In the last round of submissions, 36% failed to include this information in their responses (for at least one measure) or listed regulations that do not specifically address the ICCAT requirement. Relevant, cited regulations are essential for verifying national-level implementation and thereby adherence with treaty obligations.

The ongoing **dearth of reporting on discarded sharks** remains a serious problem. Such data are vital for evaluating the effectiveness of all ICCAT shark measures and particularly key to monitoring compliance with prohibitions on threatened shark species. Yet, most Parties are still failing to meet this obligation. We stress that even countries whose fleets do not encounter ICCAT-managed shark species should be submitting '0's in their discard reports.

A full third of Parties continue to report that a species is not found in their waters or encountered by their fleets, often as a means of self-exemption from measures.

These gaps reinforce the pressing need for ICCAT to establish a clear process for the SCRS and CoC to evaluate Parties' requests for exemptions (as per 18-06) or — if the task is too challenging — simply delete paragraph 3.

Holding Parties to account for proper implementation and enforcement of ICCAT shark management measures is crucial for the recovery of some of the Atlantic's most vulnerable species. We look forward to continued cooperation toward improvements in the Shark Check Sheet process and shark measure compliance overall.