



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

November 2024

The Pew Charitable Trusts acknowledges the extensive work undertaken by Panel 4 and the SCRS during the intersessional period and appreciates this opportunity to provide input on the following items:

**North Atlantic swordfish**

This year presents an important opportunity for ICCAT to finally adopt a management procedure (MP) for north Atlantic swordfish. The SCRS and Panel 4 members have worked closely together to complete the management strategy evaluation (MSE) and have narrowed the options to five viable candidate MPs (CMPs). Now, Panel 4 should finish the job and adopt a final MP at this meeting, as its highest priority. While most of the remaining CMPs are good, Panel 4 should choose one that maintains the safety objective at no more than a 10% probability of breaching the limit reference point. After years of work, Panel 4 can and should adopt a final MP here.

**Whale Sharks and Mobulid Rays**

At the 2023 Commission meeting, members adopted conservation measures on whale sharks (Rec. 23-12) and mobulid rays (Rec. 23-14). Both measures were contingent on SCRS advice, which is now available and concludes that the Commission should give full effect to both measures. Given this advice from the SCRS, we urge Panel 4 to ensure that these two Recommendations now fully enter into force.

**Blue Shark MSE**

Pew applauds Panel 4 for the blue shark measures adopted in 2023, particularly the text on development of MSEs for the north and south Atlantic populations. In partial response to the Commission’s request for a feasibility study on that topic, at this year’s SCRS meetings, a paper was presented that confirmed the feasibility of a blue shark MSE. Panel 4 should direct this work to begin in earnest in 2025 by including both stocks in the updates to the MSE roadmap this year.

**Blue Marlin**

Pew urges Panel 4 members to maintain the current 1,670 t limit for blue marlin and update it to ensure it covers both landings and dead discards. This would not only be consistent with ICCAT practice, but it is necessary to ensure that the mortality does not breach sustainable levels as provided by the SCRS in its report. Blue marlin has been designated overfished for over 30 years, and Panel 4 should not approve increased landings until there is relative certainty that the combination of landings and dead discards does not threaten the recovery.