

RECOMMENDATION BY ICCAT ON MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SOUTH ATLANTIC BLUE SHARK CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH ICCAT FISHERIES

RECALLING that the Commission adopted the *Resolution by ICCAT on Atlantic Sharks* (Res. 01-11), the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Conservation of Sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT* (Rec. 04-10), the *Supplemental Recommendation by ICCAT concerning Sharks* (Rec. 07-06), including the obligation of CPCs to annually report Task I & II data for sharks in accordance with ICCAT data reporting procedures and the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Development of Harvest Control Rules and of Management Strategy Evaluation* (Rec. 15-07);

FURTHER RECALLING that the Commission has adopted management measures for shark species considered vulnerable to overfishing and caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT;

RECOGNIZING that Atlantic blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) are caught in large numbers in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT;

CONSIDERING that in the last stock assessment of South Atlantic blue shark stock, all scenarios with the Bayesian surplus production model estimated that the stock was not overfished and that overfishing was not occurring. However, also noting that the estimates obtained with the state-space surplus production model formulation were generally less optimistic, predicting that the stock could be overfished and overfishing could be occurring in some cases;

NOTING that, according to SCRS advice precautionary management measures should be considered for shark stocks for which there are few data and/or greater uncertainty in assessment results;

CONSIDERING that given the uncertainty in stock status results for the South Atlantic blue shark, the SCRS strongly recommends the adoption of a precautionary approach for this stock;

FURTHER CONSIDERING that in order to protect and manage the South Atlantic blue shark, the SCRS recommends that the average catch of the final five years used in the assessment model (28,923 t for 2009-2013) could be used as an upper limit;

ACKNOWLEDGING that catches of blue shark in the South Atlantic have significantly increased in recent years, to values higher than the catch limits recommended by the SCRS;

RECOGNIZING the need to stabilize the exploitation patterns for this fishery, in particular to avoid large fluctuations of catches in the future, to the extent possible.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities whose vessels fish blue shark in association with ICCAT fisheries in the Convention area shall implement management measures to ensure the conservation of the South Atlantic blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) in line with ICCAT's Convention objective.

Catch limits for blue shark

2. An annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 28,923 t for South Atlantic blue shark is established. The Annual TAC may be revised subject to a decision of the Commission based on the updated advice of the SCRS in 2021, or at an earlier stage if enough information is provided by the SCRS.
3. On the basis of the stock assessment results, an allocation of the future TAC shall be decided by the Commission by 2021.

Recording, reporting, and use of the catch information

4. Each CPC shall ensure that its vessels catching South Atlantic blue shark in association with ICCAT fisheries in the Convention area record their catch in accordance with the requirements set out in the *Recommendation by ICCAT Concerning the Recording of Catch by Fishing Vessels in the ICCAT Convention Area* (Rec. 03-13).
5. CPCs shall implement data collection programmes that ensure the reporting of accurate South Atlantic blue shark catch, effort, size and discard data to ICCAT in full accordance with the ICCAT requirements for provision of Task I and Task II.
6. CPCs shall include in their shark implementation check sheet to ICCAT information on the actions they have taken domestically to monitor catches and to conserve and manage South Atlantic blue sharks.

Scientific research

7. CPCs are encouraged to undertake scientific research that would provide information on key biological/ecological parameters, life-history, migrations, post-release survivorship and behavioural traits of blue sharks. Such information shall be made available to the SCRS.
8. In the light of the results of the next stock assessment of South Atlantic blue shark, the SCRS shall provide, if possible, options of HCR with the associated limit, target and threshold reference points for the management of this species in the ICCAT Convention area.