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# *Improving Conservation and Management of Sharks in the EPO and Promoting Compatibility with other RFMOs in the Pacific Ocean*

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1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the IATTC's Permanent Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch (EBWG)

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# IATTC Resolution C-05-03 on Shark Conservation

- The current provision, set out in Resolution C-05-03, addressing the practice of shark finning for fisheries managed by the IATTC **requires limiting the fin-to-body weight ratio to 5%.**
- Resolution C-05-03 also tasked the IATTC Working Group on Stock Assessment to **review the fin-to-body weight requirement and report back to the Commission for revision if necessary.**
- Recalling, that the **Working Group on Stock Assessment** identified **several problems** with the **use of a ratio of fins-to-body weight** owing to differences in wet vs. dry weight of fins and variation in ratios between different species.

# Challenges associated with fins-to-body-weight ratios

- Peer-reviewed literature (e.g. Sanatana-Garcon et al. (2012), Biery and Pauly (2012), Cortes and Neer (2006)) has highlighted the challenges with using a fins-to-carcass ratio as an approach to limit the practice of shark finning, which include but are not limited to:
  - significant differences in fin-to-carcass-mass ratios between fin sets or cutting procedure; and
  - difficulty establishing a standardized wet-to-dry-fin-mass conversion factor for instances when fins are dried at sea before landing due to the variation in drying practices.
- **Conclusions:** When sharks are landed with fins attached, it is easier for trained observers at landing sites to record the number, weight and species of sharks landed, making data collection and monitoring more straightforward and accurate.

# Joint Tuna RFMO By-Catch Working Group Meeting (2019)

Recommendations put forward in the report from the **1st Joint Tuna RFMO By-Catch WG** meeting in 2019 included:

- apply a concerted effort to determine the magnitude of elasmobranch (and other) by-catch in all fisheries;
- develop incentives, to reduce elasmobranch by-catch mortality and gear restrictions;
- coordinate efforts to reduce uncertainty in relation to elasmobranch species identification;
- develop and share approaches across RFMOs to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of by-catch CMMs; and
- ensure that the adoption of new management measures does not result in a decline in data quality and availability.

# Aligning IATTC Measures with those in other Pacific RFMOs

- Recalling Article XXIV of the Antigua Convention providing that “the IATTC shall strive to agree with another organization with an overlapping area on the relevant measures to be taken, such as ensuring the harmonization and compatibility of the conservation and management measures adopted by the IATTC and the other organization”.
- Recalling the IATTC-WCPFC MoU, which calls for cooperation between the two commissions, to cooperate towards the “development of processes to promote harmonization and compatibility of conservation and management measures, including measures relating to monitoring, control and surveillance”.

# Updated Shark Conservation and Management Measures in the Pacific

- In 2022, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) adopted CMM 2022-04 at its 19<sup>th</sup> Regular Session, including requirements for fins to be landed naturally attached, full utilization and safe handling practices, and additional gear restrictions.
- In March 2023, the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) adopted CMM 2023-14 at its 7<sup>th</sup> Regular Session on landing fins naturally attached and reporting of shark catches.

# Draft Recommendation

*Recommends the Commission take note of the recommendations from 1<sup>st</sup> Joint Tuna RFMO By-Catch Working Group meeting (2019), as well as measures recently adopted by the WCPFC and NPFC relating to shark conservation and management, in particular those addressing the practice of shark finning, full utilization and safe handling practices. Recommends the Commission consider adopting similar measures with a view to ensuring shark conservation is, to the extent practical, compatible throughout the Pacific Ocean.*

*Recomienda que la Comisión tome nota de las recomendaciones de la 1<sup>a</sup> reunión del grupo de trabajo conjunto de OROP de túnidos sobre la captura fortuita (2019), y las medidas recientemente adoptadas por la WCPFC y la NPFC en relación con la conservación y el manejo de los tiburones, particularmente aquellas medidas que abordan la práctica del aleteo, la plena utilización, y las prácticas de manipulación segura. Recomendación que la Comisión que considere la adopción de medidas similares con un propósito de asegurar que la conservación y el manejo de los tiburones sea, en la medida de lo posible, compatible en todo el Océano Pacífico .*