xx April 2021

Minister

Ministry for Fisheries xxxxx

Xxx

Xxx

Dear Minister XXX:

We write with great concern about the European Union’s lead role in the depletion of shortfin mako sharks *(Isurus oxyrinchus)*. We appreciate your government’s recent protections for the exceptionally overfished North Atlantic population, as they align with expert advice associated with both the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). We ask that you maintain your mako landings ban and press the European Commission to adopt a similar stance for upcoming ICCAT negotiations

As you know, ICCAT scientists have recommended -- since 2017 – a complete retention ban for overfished North Atlantic shortfin makos as the centerpiece of their management advice for this species. The European Commission has ignored this advice in domestic policy and has repeatedly blocked its adoption by ICCAT.

We applaud Spain’s prompt and comprehensive North Atlantic shortfin ban in response to the EU Scientific Review Group’s negative CITES Non-Detriment Finding (NDF).

Scientists have demonstrated that North Atlantic shortfin mako recovery is already likely to take 50 years or more. Further delays in implementing the scientifically advised ban put the population and associated fisheries at great risk for irreparable collapse. We are mindful that the July ICCAT intersessional meeting -- the next chance for securing the international action necessary for effectively protecting this highly migratory species -- is fast approaching. We remain dismayed that the European Commission has to date been a major obstacle to reaching consensus on a proposal that reflects the ICCAT scientific advice.

**Specifically, we therefore request that you and your staff:**

* **maintain national mako shark policies, in line the expert recommendations; and**
* **Urge the Commission to:** 
  + **end the pursuit of unsustainable, complex mako quota schemes, and**
  + **instead promote the scientifically advised North Atlantic shortfin mako ban, without exception.**

Immediately following this urgent course of action, we ask you to work toward:

* replacing the new EU 288t North Atlantic mako catch limit with an EU-wide prohibition; and
* directing ICCAT scientists to further develop scientific advice for minimizing incidental mako mortality, including specific recommendations for gear modifications, time/area closures, etc.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing shark conservation matter.

Sincerely,

Name

Organisation Name