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 continuing depletion of shortfin mako sharks *(Isurus oxyrinchus)*. Most urgently, we request that you pursue a reversal in the European Commission’s damaging position regarding the exceptionally depleted North Atlantic population to a stance that aligns with scientific advice laid before the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

As you are likely aware, 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.

Meanwhile, the EU’s successful proposal to list mako sharks on CITES Appendix II has resulted in a negative opinion from the EU Scientific Review Group with respect to the Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) required for trading North Atlantic shortfin makos. Accordingly, EU Member States should have already ceased all exports and imports sourced from this population – including landings from high seas fisheries.

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. The next chance for securing the international action necessary for effectively protecting this highly migratory species is the ICCAT intersessional meeting in July; the May 14 deadline for associated management proposals is fast approaching.

**We therefore request that you and your staff, as a matter of priority:**

* **ensure that national mako shark policies are in line the expert recommendations; and**
* **actively engage in all upcoming EU ICCAT coordination meetings to urge the Commission to:** 
  + **end its harmful pursuit of unsustainable, unpopular, 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