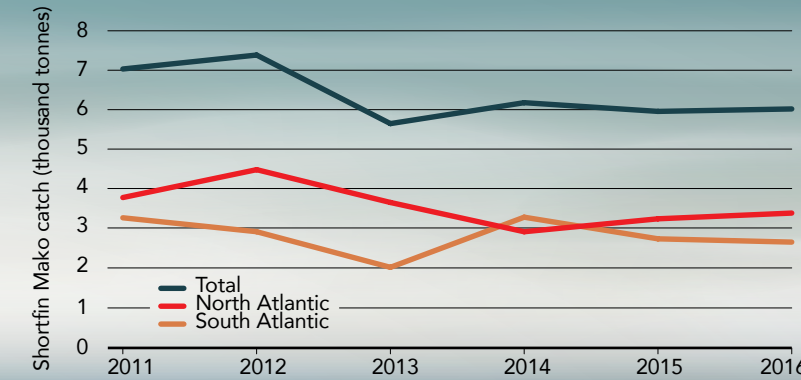
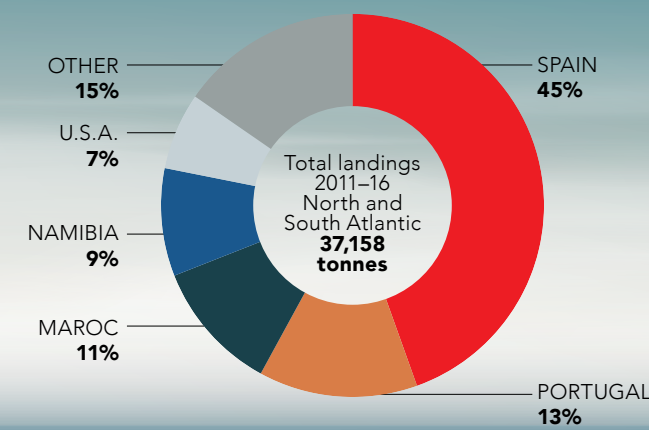


# MAKE TIME FOR MAKOS!

Bycatch of shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) in ICCAT fisheries has been overlooked for far too long.



## BLUE SHARKS REMAIN AT RISK

Preliminary catch data for 2016 reveals that North Atlantic blue shark catches are **on track to exceed** the threshold established by ICCAT in 2016 (42,117t vs. 39,102t average for two consecutive years).

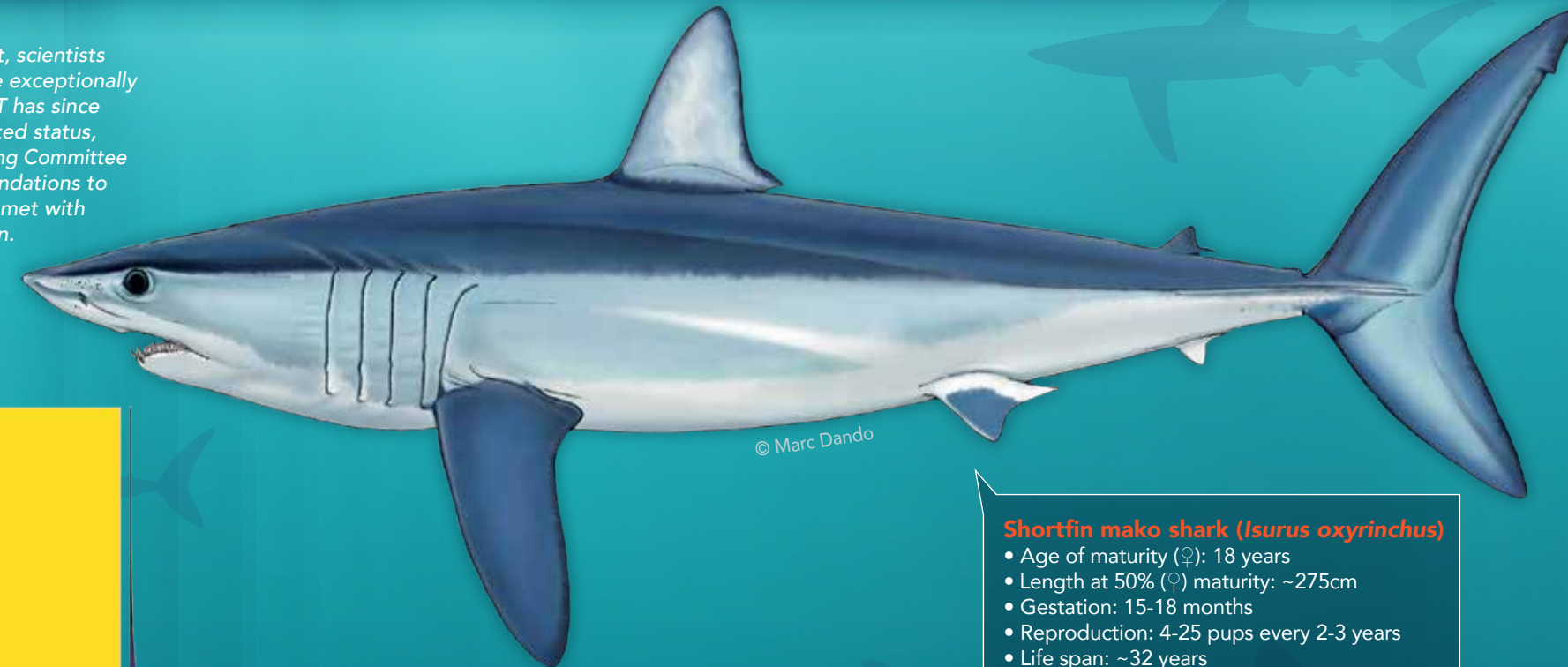
ICCAT's SCRS could not rule out that the South Atlantic blue shark population is overfished and experiencing overfishing. In light of high uncertainty regarding the status of this population (which still lacks any ICCAT measures), the SCRS "strongly recommends" a precautionary approach, and **this year** suggested a South Atlantic catch limit of 28,923t (average of the last five years used in the 2016 assessment in line with the formula used for the North Atlantic).



ICCAT Parties should establish national blue shark catch limits to curb landings now -- before populations become seriously overfished and more severe measures are needed -- and should come to the 2018 ICCAT annual meeting prepared to set Atlantic-wide measures that actually limit blue shark landings to the levels advised by the SCRS.

## RAISE THE PRIORITY

Since the 2008 Ecological Risk Assessment, scientists have warned that shortfin mako sharks are exceptionally vulnerable to ICCAT fisheries. While ICCAT has since granted many other shark species prohibited status, makos have been passed over. The Standing Committee on Statistics and Research (SCRS) recommendations to cap or reduce fishing mortality have been met with inadequate responses, time and time again.



- Shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)**
- Age of maturity (♀): 18 years
  - Length at 50% (♀) maturity: ~275cm
  - Gestation: 15-18 months
  - Reproduction: 4-25 pups every 2-3 years
  - Life span: ~32 years
  - IUCN Red List Status: Vulnerable

## HEED THE ADVICE

**This year, the alarm bells are loud. For the North Atlantic, the SCRS reports:**

- Overfishing is occurring on an overfished population (90% chance of both);
- Declines will continue under current catch levels;
- Catch must be cut to **zero** in order to have more than a coin flip's chance of rebuilding over two decades (54% by 2040);
- Banning retention is the most effective immediate step; and
- Additional bycatch mitigation measures are also needed

## TAKE A PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

Although the status of the South Atlantic population is less clear, a retention ban is prudent in the face of this uncertainty, especially given the enforcement challenges, species' vulnerability, and lessons from the North Atlantic.

## AIM FOR SUCCESS

While makos are inherently vulnerable, the species does survive capture relatively well. The SCRS notes post-release survival can reach 70%. That rate can be improved through better handling and release techniques. Banning retention can therefore be effective at dramatically reducing mako fishing mortality.

## ACT NOW

Conservation action for mako sharks is now **urgent**. Ban retention for this exceptionally vulnerable species – *before it's too late*.

## ICCAT'S FINNING BAN IS WEAK

ICCAT's ban on shark finning (the wasteful practice of slicing off a shark's fins and discarding the body at sea) is hard to enforce and exacerbates inadequacies in shark catch information. Replacing the fin-to-carass ratio limit with a ban on removing shark fins at sea would:

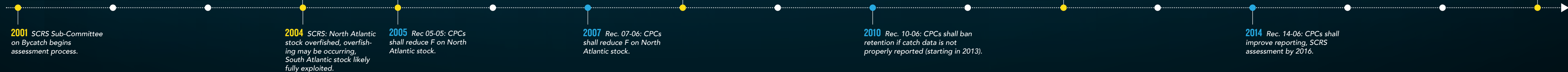
- ease enforcement burden;
- eliminate wiggle-room to fin sharks; and
- facilitate the collection of species-specific catch data.

The 2016 "fins attached" proposal enjoyed 30 co-sponsors and support from ~80% of ICCAT Parties in attendance. It's high time that ICCAT joined both North Atlantic regional fishery management organizations and adopted this increasingly accepted best practice for effective finning ban enforcement.



## ICCAT & SHORTFIN MAKOS: A TIMELINE

More than a decade of warning signs met with inadequate responses.





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In 2008, ICCAT scientists produced some long-standing advice for sharks, recommending management measures for species with the greatest biological vulnerability, and noting that landings prohibitions could be effective for species with high longline survivorship. Since then, ICCAT has prohibited retention of bigeye threshers, oceanic whitetips, most hammerheads, and silky sharks.

IT'S MY  
TURN

**Intrinsically vulnerable, even among sharks**  
Shortfin mako sharks ranked **first** among 20 pelagic shark stocks for vulnerability to ICCAT fisheries based on Euclidean distance, and **third** overall in the 2012 ICCAT Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA).

Stock	V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>3</sub>
Bigeye thresher	3	1	1
Longfin mako	5	3	2
Shortfin mako	1	8	2
Porbeagle	2	7	4
Night shark	11	4	5
Silky shark South Atlantic*	12	5	6
Sandbar shark	15	2	6
Oceanic whitetip	4	13	8
Silky shark North Atlantic*	8	11	8
Thresher shark	9	14	11
Blue shark North Atlantic	6	19	10
Dusky shark	17	6	12
Great hammerhead*	14	10	13
Blue shark South Atlantic	7	20	14
Tiger shark	10	16	15
Pelagic stingray South Atlantic	18	9	16
Scalloped hammerhead North Atlantic*	16	12	16
Smooth hammerhead*	13	17	18
Scalloped hammerhead South Atlantic*	19	15	19
Pelagic stingray North Atlantic	20	18	20

**Figure 2.** Vulnerability ranks for 20 stocks of pelagic sharks calculated with three methods: Euclidean distance (v1), multiplicative (v2), and arithmetic mean (v3). A lower rank indicates higher risk. Stocks listed in decreasing risk order according to the sum of the three indices. Red highlight indicates risks scores 1-5; yellow, 6-10; blue, 11-15; and green, 16-20. Productivity values ranked from lowest to highest. Species in **bold** are prohibited. \* Some exceptions apply

Unenforceable half-measures are not enough to save sharks!

The Shark League of the Atlantic & Mediterranean Urges ICCAT to:

- Ban mako shark retention
- Curb blue shark landings
- End at-sea shark fin removal

Introducir medidas deficientes y no aplicables en la práctica no bastará para salvar a los tiburones!

La Liga de tiburones para el Atlántico y el Mediterráneo insta a ICCAT a:

- Prohibir la retención a bordo de marrajos (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)
- Reducir los desembarques de tintoreras (*Prionace glauca*)
- Acabar con el aleteo de tiburones en el mar

Des demi-mesures inapplicables ne suffiront pas pour sauver les requins !

La Shark League for the Atlantic and Mediterranean demande à la CICTA :

- d'interdire la rétention à bord des requins-taupes bleus
- de limiter les débarquements de requins peau bleu
- de mettre un terme à la découpe des nageoires de requins en mer

التدابير المجتزأة غير القابلة للتنفيذ ليست كافية لإنقاذ القرش!

- ن رابطة القرش في الأطلسي والمتوسط تناشد اللجنة الدولية للحفاظ على أسماك التّن في الأطلسي (ICCAT):
- حظر الاحتفظ بقرش مako
- كبح تفريغ القرش الأزرق على اليابسة
- وضع حد لإزالة زعانف القرش في عرض البحر

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## Partners

The organizations that make up the Shark League have exceptional collective experience in science-based shark conservation and a history of successful collaboration.

**Shark Advocates International** (Washington, DC, USA) is a project of The Ocean Foundation based on 25 years of expertise in securing science-based shark and ray fishing limits, threatened species protections, and finning bans at local, national, and international levels.

**Shark Trust** (Devon, UK) is the United Kingdom's leading conservation organization dedicated to sharks and rays, with a 20-year record of effective independent and collaborative advocacy toward key UK and EU policy gains.

**Project AWARE** (California, USA) brings to the shark and ray policy debate the special, influential voice of its global constituency of 1.2 million scuba divers, along with an extensive network for communications and citizen action.

**Ecology Action Centre** (Nova Scotia, Canada) is a recognized leader in Canadian conservation policy, and the only Canadian conservation group consistently engaging on shark policy issues at national and international levels.

Website: [www.sharkleague.org](http://www.sharkleague.org) | Email: [info@sharkleague.org](mailto:info@sharkleague.org)

Funded by the Global Partnership for Sharks and Rays.



MAKE TIME  
FOR MAKOS

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## POSITION STATEMENT

2017 Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

