

RESOLUTION REGARDING NORTH ATLANTIC SHORTFIN MAKO SHARKS

American Elasmobranch Society
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WHEREAS the U.S. and Mexico are Parties to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), ranking 4th and 10th, respectively, for landings of North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus*);

WHEREAS shortfin makos have ranked third among 20 pelagic elasmobranch stocks in terms of vulnerability to Atlantic longline fisheries in Ecological Risk Assessments conducted for ICCAT;

WHEREAS ICCAT shark scientists in 2019 found that the overfished North Atlantic shortfin population is subject to continued overfishing, will decline for at least the next 15 years, needs substantial reductions in fishing mortality to begin rebuilding, and is projected to be unable to recover by 2070 under ICCAT's current (2017) management measure;

WHEREAS the ICCAT scientists found that an annual total catch of zero (including discards) has a 53% probability of rebuilding the population by 2045, and recommend that ICCAT prohibit retention of North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks, as it has for other shark species;

WHEREAS ICCAT scientists noted that shortfin mako post-release survival can reach 75%, indicating a prohibition can be particularly effective at achieving significant reductions in mortality;

WHEREAS Canada recently banned retention of shortfin makos in domestic Atlantic fisheries and proposed the same action under ICCAT, in concert with fifteen other Parties, in 2019;

WHEREAS Mexico has yet to limit mako catches or publicly express a position on ICCAT proposals for shortfin mako limits; and

WHEREAS U.S. opposition was a key factor in ICCAT's failure to reach consensus on the 2019 science-based shortfin mako proposal, leaving the declining, vulnerable North Atlantic population without any international catch limits.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Elasmobranch Society urges the U.S. and Mexican governments to act on clear and urgent scientific advice for North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks by prohibiting retention domestically and supporting the same action under ICCAT as part of 2020 virtual negotiations.