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Sharks at RFMOs

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Current Gaps for Sharks at (Tuna) RFMOs



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Caught as a “bycatch” without sustainable management



Absence of effective mortality reduction measurements



Finning prohibitions inferior to EU Regulation



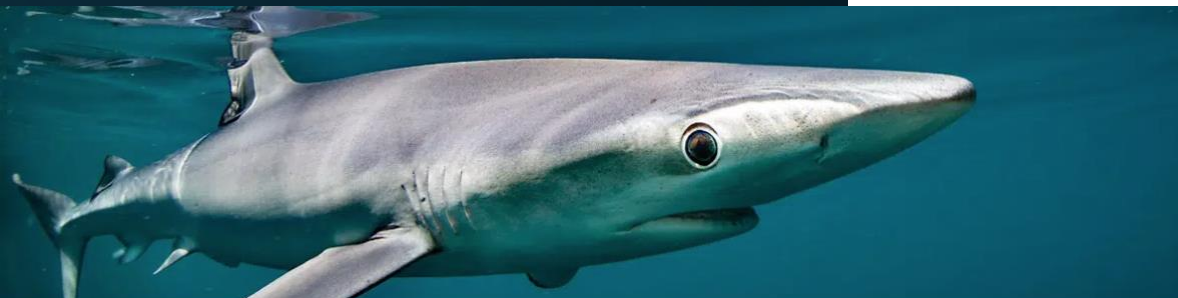
Retention bans with many exemptions



Widespread non-compliance with reporting requirements



Few stock assessments and no LRPs in most RFMOs



Better Shark Conservation across ALL RFMOs



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Management Procedures for commercially targeted sharks equivalent to other primary and secondary target species



Reduce mortality of unwanted shark bycatch



‘Fins Naturally Attached’ without exceptions



Level playing field for shark conservation must apply to all CPCs



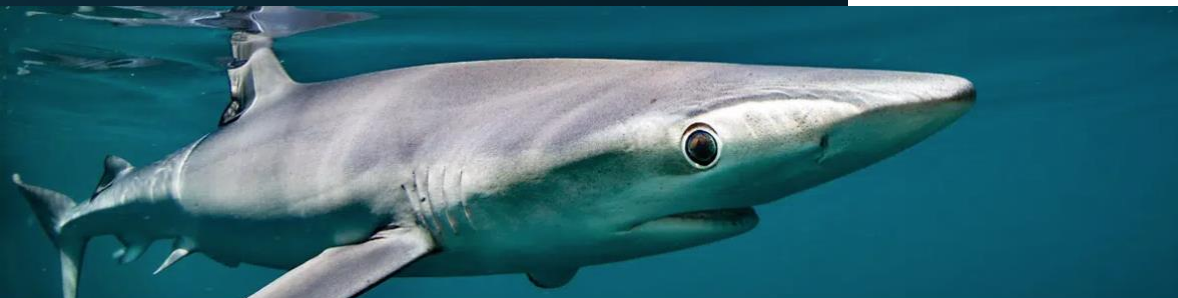
Follow scientific advice



Apply precautionary approach in case of uncertainty or absence of specific scientific advice



Improve reporting of total mortality of sharks to better inform stock assessments



Management Procedures for Commercially Targeted Sharks



The LDAC supports efforts to establish effective, longtime sustainable management for the stocks of sharks at all RFMOs to provide the basis for scientifically viable Non-Detrimental Findings (NDF) certificates for Member States for export to international markets in line with CITES requirements.

LDAC therefore asks the Commission to drive the development of robust management procedures for all sharks fished for commercial purposes making blue sharks and shortfin mako a priority.

- a. Harvest strategies (including HCRs, target, limit and threshold reference points to be developed and adopted at all RFMOs for all commercially exploited sharks (blue shark and shortfin mako) within the next 5 years with management procedures ensuring not to compromise their viability and risk losing a valuable fleet.
- b. This should also be pursued for other commercially fished sharks regardless of whether fished by industrial or coastal fisheries in the respective RFMO.
- c. Support the setting of total mortality limits and allocation of quotas between CPCs for commercially fished sharks as an interim measure or first step, based on catches of the last 3 years, in the absence of a recent stock assessment.

Fins Naturally Attached



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LDAC requests the Commission to fight for the adoption of ‘Fins Naturally Attached’ without exceptions at all RFMOs

- a. The EU has been a pioneer in ensuring full utilization of sharks through the adoption of its Regulation (EU) No 605/2013 (so-called “Shark Finning Regulation”).
- b. In the past the EU has either sponsored or co-sponsored several proposals to replace outdated finning bans, requiring that all sharks be landed with their fins naturally attached. Unfortunately, these proposals so far have repeatedly failed mainly due to the opposition from Japan and China.
- c. The LDAC insists on the necessity to conduct bilateral meetings, including outside of the fisheries field, with Japan, Republic of Korea, China, and Chinese Taipei ahead of RFMO meetings to find a solution so that they will not block the adoption of ‘fins naturally attached’ again.
- d. The LDAC also recommends that the EU insists on requesting CPCs opposing their proposal for ‘Fins Naturally Attached’ to demonstrate with scientific evidence the efficiency of alternative systems they claim to have in place.
- e. The LDAC requests the European Commission to demonstrate leadership by annually resubmitting such proposals until a satisfactory resolution is reached. If consensus is not achieved, the Commission should be prepared to justify and in collaboration with other friendly CPCs advocate for a vote, highlighting that ample time for negotiation and discussion has been provided, despite opposition from a few Contracting Parties.

Mortality Reduction of Unwanted Bycatch



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LDAC supports research and implementation of effective bycatch mitigation measures for all unwanted shark bycatch.

- a. The LDAC recommends strengthening measures necessary to ensure that all fleets minimize and where possible eliminate by-catch and increase post-capture survival.
- b. Existing by-catch avoidance mitigation measures must be consistently enforced by all fleets.
- c. Mortality reduction of IUCN critically endangered and endangered sharks such as oceanic whitetip sharks, hammerhead sharks, mako sharks, thresher sharks, porbeagle sharks, and of sharks that are highly vulnerable to overfishing such as silky sharks are to be prioritized at all RFMOs, specifically in the absence of conclusive stock assessments.
- d. Mitigation measures are required for **all** gear types and must include specific mortality reduction measures also for gillnets

Create a Level Playing Field



LDAC urges the Commission to create a level playing field for shark conservation at all RFMOs

- a. The LDAC underlines that the lack of compliance with shark-related CMMs and reporting in all RFMOs and overfishing of shark stocks by several CPCs must end immediately to prevent stocks from collapsing and to allow rebuilding of overexploited stocks.
- b. This must be committed to by all CPCs and not only by EU fleets. In the event of repeated non-compliance with shark-related CMMs, the EU engages bilaterally with the concerned third countries, including through IUU dialogues.
- c. The LDAC reminds that trade measures may have to be taken to address issues of non-compliance. For this reason, it appears of paramount importance for the LDAC to increase collaboration with CITES and shark experts.
- d. The LDAC calls for no longer tolerating exceptions from shark CMMs and related requirements including reporting requirements and retention bans for coastal and /or artisanal fleets.
- e. Exemptions from retention bans should be strictly limited to subsistence fishing activities provided, that measures are in place preventing any part of such catch entering the international trade and that all catches are reported to the RFMOs.

Follow Scientific Advice



LDAC encourages the Commission to follow the science and scientific advice if available,

- a. for the adoption of conservation and management measures for sharks and rays considering their role in the marine ecosystems.
- b. for the adoption of total allowable mortality limits (TACs) and (temporary) retention bans when needed
- c. in the absence of clear scientific advice or whenever data is lacking or insufficient for a specific ocean or ocean area
- d. to adopt and implement precautionary measures and follow best practice already existing in other RFMOs
- e. to adjust total mortality limits in view of the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystem and stocks

Apply Precautionary Approach



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The LDAC recognizes the need to adopt the necessary measures to ensure stocks are restored to levels capable of producing MSY in line with art 2(2) of the CFP and the importance of maintaining or rebuilding shark stocks into the green quadrant of the Kobe plot (i.e. not overfished and not undergoing overfishing) with a probability of at least 60%.

- a. Priority should be given to the rebuilding of stocks of critically endangered and endangered species, with a high probability, and within the shortest possible time
- b. A probability of at least 60% is widely adopted for the sustainable management of tuna and other target species and should therefore also be applied for the management of shark stocks, in line with a precautionary approach, while a higher probability may be needed for certain sharks such as shortfin mako

Total Mortality Reporting & Compliance



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The LDAC is concerned by the constant lack of compliance from CPCs with reporting requirements for sharks, whether caught as a target species or as a bycatch and recognizes the need to strengthen data collection.

- a. Good knowledge on total mortality is essential for stock assessments and the sustainable shark management. This is essential and must be better enforced at all CPCs
- b. LDAC therefore emphasizes the need for full reporting of shark landings, dead discards and live releases of all sharks at species level by
ALL CPCs,
ALL gear, and
ALL fisheries
- c. LDAC urges the Commission to strongly advocate for improving and enhancing observer programs, including through electronic monitoring program (EMS) and/or onboard observers at all RFMOs and for all fleets, to better understand how many sharks and which specimens are discarded back at sea alive or dead.

The Urgency of Shark Conservation



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CITES IFS & NDFs are now required for most pelagic sharks



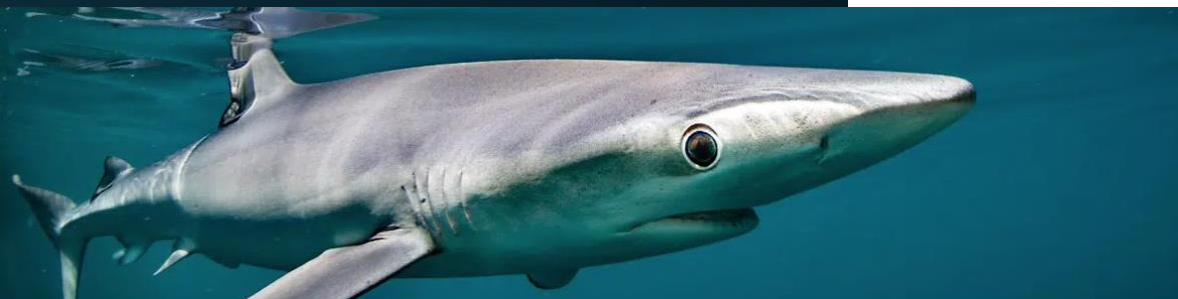
Fisheries benefit from long-term sustainability, healthy ecosystems and healthy shark stocks



EU needs to be a role model to drive improvement at RFMOs



Joint interests of NGOs and fisheries



Thank You



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