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**ON THE CONSERVATION OF THRESHER SHARKS (FAMILY ALOPIIDAE)  
AND OF HAMMERHEAD SHARKS (FAMILY SPHYRNIDAE) CAUGHT IN  
ASSOCIATION WITH FISHERIES IN THE IOTC AGREEMENT AREA**

**SUBMITTED BY EUROPEAN UNION**

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**Background:**

The international scientific community points out that: i) the hammerhead species: *Sphyrna lewini* and *Sphyrna zygaena*, should be ranked among the species with the lowest productivity, and ii) the bigeye thresher shark (*Alopias superciliosus*) is particularly endangered and vulnerable. Moreover, the increasing level of shark catches in the Indian Ocean might have an irreversible negative impact on the stock of the above mentioned three species, justifying a precautionary approach in their management.

In addition, it must be noted that it is difficult to differentiate *S. lewini* and *S. zygaena* from other species of the family Sphyrnidae and *Alopias superciliosus* from other species of the family Alopiidae, without taking them on board and that such action might jeopardize the survival of the captured individuals.

Therefore, an effective protection of these species should be coupled with the prohibition of retaining on board all species of family Alopiidae and all species of the family Sphyrnidae.

In addition, the Working Party on Ecosystem and Bycatch recognized that full stock assessments on sharks may not be possible due to data limitations. It is therefore essential that appropriate data is collected, at least for the most vulnerable species in order to carry out a stock assessment.

**Content:**

The resolution proposal seeks to enforce conservation measures for thresher sharks and hammerhead sharks caught in the IOTC agreement area.

**The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),**

RECALLING that the IOTC Resolution 05/05 concerning the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC;

CONSIDERING that thresher sharks of the family Alopiidae and hammerhead sharks of the family Sphyrnidae are caught as by-catch in the IOTC Agreement area;

NOTING that at its 2009 Meeting of the Working Party on Ecosystem and Bycatch recognized that full stock assessments on sharks may not be possible because of data limitations and that it is essential that some stock assessment evaluation should be carried out;

NOTING that the international scientific community points out that the hammerhead sharks of the species *Sphyrna lewini* and *Sphyrna zygaena* are ranked among the species with the lowest productivity and the bigeye thresher shark (*Alopias superciliosus*) is particularly endangered and vulnerable;

CONSIDERING that it is difficult to differentiate between the various species of thresher sharks and hammerhead sharks without taking them on board and that such action might jeopardize the survival of the captured individuals;

AGREES to adopt the following Resolution in conformity with the Article V of the Agreement for the Establishment of the IOTC:

1. Fishing Vessels flying the flag of a CPC are prohibited from retaining on board, transshipping, landing, storing, selling or offering for sale any part or whole carcass of thresher sharks and hammerhead sharks of all the species of the families Alopiidae and Sphyrnidae.

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2. CPCs shall require vessels flying their flag to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, thresher sharks and hammerhead sharks when brought along side for taking on board the vessel.
  3. CPCs shall ensure that vessels flying their flag avoid areas where interactions with species of thresher sharks and hammerhead sharks of all the species of the families Alopiidae and Sphyrnidae may occur.
  4. CPCs shall also require that incidental catches as well as live releases shall be recorded to the IOTC secretariat.
  5. Recreational and sport fishing shall release alive all caught animals of thresher sharks and hammerhead sharks of all the species of the families Alopiidae and Sphyrnidae; all releases shall be recorded and reported with geographic references and photos. Information on estimated size and sex shall be reported as well. In no circumstances specimen shall be retained on board, transshipped, landed, stored, sold or offered for sale. The CPCs shall ensure that both recreational and sport fishermen carrying out fishing with high risk of catching thresher sharks are equipped with instruments suitable to release alive the animals.
  6. CPCs shall, where possible, implement research on sharks of the species *Alopias* spp and *Sphyrna* spp, in the Convention area in order to identify potential nursery areas. Based on this research, CPCs shall consider time and area closures and other measures, as appropriate.
  7. The Contracting Parties, Co-operating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or fishing Entities, especially those directing fishing activities for sharks, shall submit data for sharks, as required by IOTC data reporting procedures (including estimates of dead discard and size frequencies), in advance of the 2011 Scientific Committee meeting..