



**ON THE CONSERVATION OF HAMMERHEAD SHARKS (FAMILY SPHYRNIDAE) CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION
WITH FISHERIES MANAGED BY IOTC**

SUBMITTED BY: EUROPEAN UNION, 05 APRIL 2013

Explanatory Memorandum

The international scientific community points out that: the hammerhead species: *Sphyrna lewini* and *S. zygaena*, should be ranked among the shark' species with the lowest productivity. It must also be noted that it is difficult to differentiate *S. lewini* and *S. zygaena* from other species of the family Sphyrnidae, without taking them onboard and that such action might jeopardize the survival of the captured individuals.

In addition, the ecological risk assessment made by the IOTC Scientific Committee notes that the species *Sphyrna zygaena* and *Sphyrna mokarran* are some of the most vulnerable to IOTC fisheries.

Therefore, an effective protection of these species needs to entail the prohibition of retaining onboard all species of the family Sphyrnidae.

Furthermore, the increasing level of shark catches in the Indian Ocean may have an irreversible negative impact on the stock of the above mentioned species, justifying a precautionary approach in their management. As a result, fishing vessels should be prohibited from retaining on board, transshipping, landing, storing, selling or offering for sale any part or whole carcass of the above mentioned species.

The Working Party on Ecosystems 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.

RESOLUTION 13/XX
ON THE CONSERVATION OF HAMMERHEAD SHARKS (FAMILY SPHYRNIDAE) CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH FISHERIES MANAGED BY IOTC

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 hammerhead sharks of the family *Sphyrnidae* are caught as bycatch in the IOTC area of competence;

NOTING that the Working Party on Ecosystems 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;

NOTING that the ecological risk assessment made by the IOTC Scientific Committee recognises the species *Sphyrna zygaena* and *Sphyrna mokarran* as within the most vulnerable to IOTC fisheries;

BEARING IN MIND that hammerhead sharks of the family *Sphyrnidae* can be easily distinguished from other shark species and can therefore be released before they are taken on board of the vessel;

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

ADOPTS, in accordance with the provisions of Article IX, paragraph 1 of the IOTC Agreement, the following:

1. Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (hereafter referred to as CPCs) shall prohibit fishing vessels flying their flag and operating in IOTC managed fisheries to retain on board, tranship, land or store any part or whole carcass of hammerhead sharks of the family *Sphyrnidae*, with the exception of paragraph 5.
2. CPCs shall require fishing vessels flying their flag to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, hammerhead sharks of the family *Sphyrnidae* when brought alongside for taking onboard the vessel. However, CPCs should encourage their fishers to release these species if recognized on the line before bringing them on-board the vessels.
3. CPCs shall encourage their fishers to record incidental catches as well as live releases. These data shall be kept at the IOTC Secretariat.
4. CPCs shall, where possible, implement research on hammerhead sharks of the family *Sphyrnidae* taken in the IOTC area of competence, in order to identify potential nursery areas. Based on this research, CPCs shall consider time and area closures and other measures, as appropriate.
5. Scientific observers shall be allowed to collect biological samples (vertebrae, tissues, reproductive tracts, stomachs, skin samples, spiral valves, jaws, whole and skeletonised specimens for taxonomic works and museum collections) from hammerhead sharks of the family *Sphyrnidae* taken in the IOTC area of competence that are dead at haulback, provided that the samples are a part of a research project approved by the Scientific Committee/the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB). In order to obtain the approval, a detailed document outlining the purpose of the work, number of samples intended to be collected and the spatio-temporal distribution of the sampling effect must be included in the proposal. Annual progress of the work and a final report on completion shall be presented to the WPEB/Scientific Committee.

6. The CPCs, especially those targeting sharks, shall submit data for sharks, as required by IOTC data reporting procedures.