

ON A SCIENTIFIC AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK ON THE CONSERVATION OF SHARK SPECIES AND ON THE PROTECTION OF HAMMERHEAD SHARKS (FAMILY SPHYRNIDAE) CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH FISHERIES MANAGED BY IOTC

SUBMITTED BY: EUROPEAN UNION, 30 APRIL 2014

Explanatory Memorandum

The international scientific community points out that: i) 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.

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.

It seems therefore imperative that the Scientific Committee recommends or advises on the specific measures to be taken by the IOTC Commission in order to protect and ensure sustainability of hammerhead sharks of the family Sphyrnidae.

Taking into account of the vulnerability of hammerhead sharks of the family Sphyrnidae and the indications of likely depletion of these stocks in the Indian Ocean, provisional measures ensuring 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.

These measures shall be evaluated in 2017 by the IOTC Scientific Committee to deliver more appropriate advice on the conservation and management of these stocks for the consideration of the Commission.

RESOLUTION 14/XX

ON A SCIENTIFIC AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK ON THE CONSERVATION OF SHARK SPECIES AND ON THE PROTECTION OF HAMMERHEAD SHARKS (FAMILY SPHYRNIDAE) CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH FISHERIES MANAGED BY IOTC

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

RECALLING 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 recognised 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 undertaken by the IOTC Scientific Committee recognises the species *Sphyrna zygaena* and *Sphyrna mokarran* as two of the most vulnerable shark species 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 paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that:

1. The Commission shall determine the shark species that are subject to IOTC Conservation and Management Measures, including prohibition to retain on board, tranship land or store any part or whole carcass according to the IOTC Scientific Committee's (SC) recommendation or advice.
2. The SC recommendation or advice shall be conducted taking account of:
 - a) Full stock assessments on sharks, stock assessment and Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs) by fishing gears, using available best scientific data/information;
 - b) Trend of fishing effort by fishing gear on each shark species;
 - c) Effective IOTC Conservation and Management Measures for certain fishing gears with high risk by shark species;
 - d) Priority in shark species with high risk;
 - e) Review of practical implementation of prohibition to retain on board of shark species;
 - f) Feasibility of implementation of prohibition to retain on board including identification of shark species;
 - g) Impact and bias of IOTC Conservation and Management Measures of sharks on fishing operations and sharks data/information collected and reported by CPCs;

- h) Further improvement of level for sharks data/information submitted by CPCs, particularly developing CPCs.
3. Notwithstanding paragraphs 1 and 2, CPCs shall prohibit, as an interim pilot measure, all fishing vessels flying their flag and on the IOTC Record of Authorised Vessels, or authorised to fish for tuna or tuna-like species managed by the IOTC on the high seas to retain onboard, tranship, land or store any part or whole carcass of hammerhead sharks of the family Sphyrnidae with the exception of paragraph 7.
 4. CPCs shall require fishing vessels flying their flag and on the IOTC Record of Authorised Vessels or authorised to fish for tuna and tuna-like species managed by the IOTC on the high seas to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, of 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 recognised on the line before bringing them onboard the vessels.
 5. CPCs shall encourage their fishers to record incidental catches as well as live releases of hammerhead sharks of the family Sphyrnidae. These data shall be kept at the IOTC Secretariat.
 6. 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 other measures, as appropriate.
 7. 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 IOTC Scientific Committee (SC)/the IOTC 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 SC/WPEB.
 8. The CPCs, especially those targeting sharks, shall submit data for hammerhead sharks, as required by IOTC data reporting procedures.
 9. The provisional measures stipulated in this Resolution shall be evaluated in 2017 by the IOTC Scientific Committee to deliver more appropriate advice on the conservation and management of the stocks for the consideration of the Commission.