

## **RESOLUTION REGARDING THE NORTH ATLANTIC SHORTFIN MAKO**

American Elasmobranch Society  
June 2018  
João Pessoa, Brazil

**WHEREAS** the U.S. and Canada are Parties to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), ranking 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, respectively, for recent (2011-2016) landings of the North Atlantic shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*);

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

**WHEREAS** a 2017 shortfin mako assessment by ICCAT's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) revealed that the North Atlantic population is both in an overfished state and being overfished, and that drastic reductions in fishing mortality are required to reverse the decline;

**WHEREAS** the SCRS found that “*Only a 0t annual catch will rebuild the stock by 2040 with a 54% probability,*” and advised that, to stop overfishing and have a 50% chance of rebuilding the population by 2040, “*the most effective immediate measure is a complete prohibition of retention;*”

**WHEREAS** the SCRS also recommended additional measures to minimize incidental mortality of shortfin makos, noting that post-release survival for this species can reach 70%;

**WHEREAS** ICCAT Parties agreed in 2017 to immediately enact management measures for the North Atlantic shortfin mako, review progress at the November 2018 ICCAT annual meeting, and initiate a rebuilding plan for the stock in 2019.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED*** that the American Elasmobranch Society urges the U.S. and Canadian governments to institute prohibitions on the retention of the North Atlantic shortfin mako along with measures to minimize discard mortality, in line with ICCAT scientific advice, and to work at the 2018 annual meeting of ICCAT to encourage other major mako fishing nations to do the same, as the first step toward the ICCAT rebuilding plan for this population.

## **RESOLUTION REGARDING THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANIZATION**

American Elasmobranch Society  
June 2018  
João Pessoa, Brazil

**WHEREAS** the United States (U.S.) and Canada are Parties to the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO);

**WHEREAS** Greenland sharks (*Somniosus microcephalus*) are taken primarily as incidental catch in a variety of Northwest Atlantic fisheries, and also targeted by vessels from Greenland and Iceland to supply demand for dried and fermented meat;

**WHEREAS** the NAFO Scientific Council (SC) will complete in June a two-year process, initiated by the U.S., to review Greenland shark status and develop advice for precautionary management for consideration by Parties at the NAFO annual meeting in September 2018;

**WHEREAS** scientists at the 2017 NAFO SC meeting recognized Greenland sharks' extreme longevity (estimated at hundreds of years) and low fecundity;

**WHEREAS** the Northwest Atlantic population of thorny skate (*Amblyraja radiata*) is a straddling stock classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as Vulnerable off the east coast of Canada and Critically Endangered off New England;

**WHEREAS** the NAFO total allowable catch (TAC) for skates has been set above the level advised by the NAFO SC since it was established and the population is not recovering well;

**WHEREAS** the NAFO SC will provide advice on NAFO skate limits, based on an updated stock assessment of thorny skates, for consideration by NAFO Parties at the 2018 annual meeting;

**WHEREAS** Amendments to the NAFO Convention that took effect in 2017 commit Parties to modern fishery management principles aimed at preventing overfishing, ensuring long-term sustainability, heeding scientific advice, applying the precautionary approach, minimizing incidental catch, and preserving biological diversity.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED*** that the American Elasmobranch Society urges the U.S. and Canadian governments to work to secure at the 2018 NAFO annual meeting precautionary measures in line with advice from the NAFO Scientific Council and the amended NAFO Convention, specifically: measures to protect and minimize discard mortality of Greenland sharks, and a skate TAC with a high probability of rebuilding the region's thorny skate population.

## **RESOLUTION REGARDING FLORIDA LAND-BASED RECREATIONAL SHARK FISHING**

American Elasmobranch Society

June, 2018

João Pessoa, Brazil

**WHEREAS** poor handling and release techniques by land-based recreational anglers cause unnecessary physiological stress to sharks;

**WHEREAS** removing sharks from the water and/or dragging them onshore during release can result in permanent damage, particularly to gills;

**WHEREAS** studies show that using circle hooks can significantly reduce post-release mortality of sharks, and as such are increasingly required by federal fishery regulations;

**WHEREAS** hammerhead sharks are particularly susceptible to capture stress and post-release mortality;

**WHEREAS** Florida has prohibited the landing and possession of 26 shark species, including three locally occurring large hammerhead species (*Sphyrna lewini*, *S. mokarran*, *S. zygaena*), based largely on serious Northwest Atlantic population declines;

**WHEREAS** hammerhead sharks are still targeted by recreational fishers in Florida despite these sharks' protected status, and are not prohibited species in adjacent state and federal waters;

**WHEREAS** Florida regulations mandate that prohibited shark species be released "free immediately alive and unharmed" and prohibit delaying release to measure or pose for photographs with them;

**WHEREAS** the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is considering stronger restrictions on land-based shark fishing.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED*** that the American Elasmobranch Society urges the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to develop, strictly enforce, and promote (for adjacent jurisdictions) regulations to minimize post-release mortality of sharks, particularly hammerheads, including requirements for shark anglers to use circle hooks and release prohibited sharks immediately (cutting the line, if necessary), while keeping gills submerged at all times.