

## **RESOLUTION REGARDING CITES LISTING FOR RHINO RAYS & MAKO SHARKS**

American Elasmobranch Society  
July 2019  
Snowbird, Utah

**WHEREAS** Wedgefishes (family Rhinidae) and giant guitarfishes (family Glaucostegidae) (collectively called rhino rays) have been identified by the IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG) as the world's most threatened marine fish, with all but one species classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List;

**WHEREAS** the IUCN SSG in March 2019 changed the global Red List classification for shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) and longfin mako sharks (*Isurus paucus*) from Vulnerable to Endangered, signaling elevated extinction risk;

**WHEREAS** international trade in products from rhino rays and mako sharks is a significant driver of overexploitation of these species in many parts of the world;

**WHEREAS** national and international conservation measures for these species are lacking;

**WHEREAS** all wedgefish, giant guitarfish, and mako shark species have been proposed for listing on CITES Appendix II at the next Conference of Parties (CoP) in August 2019;

**WHEREAS** listing under Appendix II to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) can promote species conservation through permitting systems to track international trade and controls aimed at ensuring that exports are sourced from fishing operations that are legal and sustainable;

**WHEREAS** the United States (U.S.) is a CITES Party and has not yet announced positions on the pending elasmobranch listing proposals; and

Whereas Canada is a CITES Party and has announced tentative support for the rhino ray listing proposals and tentative opposition to the mako listing proposal;

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED*** that the American Elasmobranch Society urges the governments of the U.S. and Canada to support the proposals to list wedgefishes, giant guitarfishes, and mako sharks on CITES Appendix II at the 18<sup>th</sup> CoP in August 2019.

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

American Elasmobranch Society

July 2019

Snowbird, Utah

**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 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** ICCAT shark scientists in 2019 found that the overfished North Atlantic shortfin population is subject to continued overfishing, will decline for at least the next 15 years, needs substantial reductions in fishing mortality to begin rebuilding, and is projected to be unable to recover by 2070 under ICCAT's current (2017) management measure;

**WHEREAS** the ICCAT scientists found that an annual total catch of zero (including discards) has a 53% probability of rebuilding the population by 2045, and recommend that ICCAT prohibit retention of North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks, as it has for other shark species;

**WHEREAS** ICCAT scientists also recommend additional measures to minimize incidental mortality of shortfin makos, noting that post-release survival for this species can reach 75%.

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED*** that the American Elasmobranch Society urges the U.S. and Canadian governments to immediately enact prohibitions on the retention of North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks along with measures to minimize discard mortality, in line with ICCAT scientific advice, and to work to secure a new ICCAT mako measure at the 2019 annual meeting that mandates the same safeguards for other vessels fishing the population.