



FACT SHEET

REPORT: *MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON INTEGRATED RISK ASSESSMENT OF DATA-POOR PELAGIC ATLANTIC SHARKS*

ASSESSING THE OVERFISHING RISK FOR ATLANTIC PELAGIC SHARKS

- Many of the world's pelagic, or open ocean, shark and rays species are declining.
- Like most sharks, these species are known to be susceptible to overfishing because of low reproductive and growth rates.
- Pelagic longline fisheries for tuna and swordfish catch significant numbers of pelagic sharks and rays, and targeted shark fisheries are also growing due to declines in traditional target species and the rising value of shark fins and meat.
- Yet, a lack of data has prevented scientists from conducting reliable population assessments for most pelagic shark and ray species.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTING ATLANTIC PELAGIC SHARK POPULATIONS

Shark experts from around the world used an innovative assessment technique to rank Atlantic shark and ray species by overfishing risk in Atlantic pelagic longline fisheries. They developed the following recommendations for conserving Atlantic shark populations:

- **Bigeye thresher & longfin mako sharks:** ICCAT should prohibit catches of bigeye thresher and longfin mako sharks, two species with very high overfishing risk and very low reproductive rates, to ensure that population levels do not fall below healthy levels.
- **Oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, common thresher and silky sharks:** ICCAT should prohibit take of oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, common thresher and silky shark until there are sufficient data to determine fishing limits that maintain or rebuild their populations. Porbeagles should be given priority for stock assessment due to documented depletion.
- **Blue and shortfin mako:** ICCAT should carefully consider updated assessments for these two species, and strictly limit fishing to ensure that populations remain at or are rebuilt to healthy levels.
- **Smooth hammerhead & crocodile sharks:** ICCAT should encourage much needed research concerning smooth hammerhead and crocodile sharks as data for these species are particularly poor. ICCAT should prohibit catches of these species while more information is gathered. Their status should be revisited once sufficient data have been collected and used to determine fishing limits that rebuild and/or maintain populations at healthy levels.

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT)

ICCAT is an inter-governmental organization responsible for managing and conserving tunas and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean. ICCAT has increased its attention to pelagic sharks because these species are also caught in Atlantic tuna and swordfish fisheries and are increasingly targeted themselves.

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