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**Proposed Amendments to the Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks  
(CMM 2022-04)**

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**WCPFC21-2024-05\_Rev01**  
**30 November 2024**

**Submitted by Canada**

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2019, WCPFC16 adopted a conservation and management measure for sharks (CMM 2019-04), that included a prohibition on shark finning (paragraph 7); a requirement to land sharks with fins naturally attached to the carcass (paragraph 8) or to take alternative measures (paragraph 9); along with reporting requirements on the implementation and enforcement, and a task to TCC to advise on the effectiveness of such alternative measures, and as appropriate, recommend changes (paragraph 11).

In 2022, WCPFC19 adopted a revised measure (CMM 2022-04) introducing strengthened provisions on gear requirements, safe handling and release guidelines, and additional research efforts. As it relates to fins naturally attached, CMM 2022-04 also extended the expiration date associated with paragraphs 8 and 9 from 2022 to 2024.

In 2023, TCC19 was unable to conduct the review as directed in paragraph 11 due to a lack of information currently available. Several CCMs raised the need for a clear process to evaluate the effectiveness of the alternative measures currently implemented under paragraph 9 of the measure to inform the review of this measure. As such, some CCMs committed to provide additional information ahead of TCC20 on the implementation of alternative measures under paragraph 9 to inform the review of the measure in 2024 (see paragraphs 377, 382-384 of the TCC19 Summary Report).

As TCC19 was unable to evaluate the effectiveness of the alternatives to fins naturally attached, WCPFC20 adopted the following recommendations related to CMM2022-04:

(712) The Commission directed CCMs who utilize alternative measures to the prohibition on finning in paragraph 7 of CMM 2022-04, to provide detailed information on the implementation and monitoring of those alternative measures in advance of TCC20, as directed in paragraph 11 of CMM 2022-04. The Commission also encourages CCMs to report to TCC20 any enforcement difficulties that they encountered in the case of the alternative measures and how they have addressed risks such as monitoring at sea, species substitution, etc. The Commission tasks the Secretariat to compile information with regards to the application of the provisions in paragraphs 8 and 9 of CMM 2022-04. The information provided shall be used by TCC20 and WCPFC21 to review the implementation of alternative measures.

(716) The Commission noted that limited information is currently available in regard to alternative measures currently implemented under paragraph 9 of the measure to inform the review of this measure, and TCC19 noted that it is not in a position to evaluate the effectiveness of such measures. TCC19 also noted that some CCMs have committed to provide additional information ahead of TCC20 on the implementation of alternative measures under paragraph 9 to inform the review of the measure in 2024.

Following substantial discussions at TCC20, the following outcomes were agreed on the review of the alternative measures to shark finning prohibition (CMM 2022-04):

43. TCC20 noted with concern, the difficulty that has been identified by some CCMs during HSBI inspections and aerial surveillance and, in some cases, port inspections, in verifying compliance with the alternative measures in paragraph 9 of the Shark Measure (CMM 2022-04) and noted the different views expressed by CCMs on the effectiveness and the enforceability of alternative measures, including those outlined in DP03 and DP06.

44. TCC20 agreed paragraph 9 on alternative measures needed improvement and encouraged CCMs to work together to bring a proposal to WCPFC21 in this regard.

45. TCC20 noted that many CCMs expressed concerns that the provisions in paragraphs 8 and 9 of CMM 2022-04 will expire at the end of the year and recommends that the Commission at WCPFC21 adopt an approach that ensures the effectiveness of these provisions of CMM 2022-04.

46. TCC20 recommended that WCPFC21 notes that, due to the lack of sufficient information, it has not been able to fully assess the effectiveness of alternative measures in paragraph 9 and reiterated the direction from the Commission at WCPFC20 and encouraged those CCMs that utilise alternative measures to submit detailed information to WCPFC21 in accordance with paragraph 11 on the implementation of alternative measures and how compliance has been monitored, to support the Commission's review of CMM 2022-04.

This proposal reflects Canada's position, as informed by its recent enforcement operations on the high seas of the Convention Area ([WCPFC-TCC20-2024-DP03](#)).

## SPECIAL REQUIREMENT ASSESSMENT 2013-06

*a. Who is required to implement the proposal?*

All CCMs would be required to implement the proposed revisions to the CMM. The proposed revisions eliminate the alternatives to fins naturally attached listed in paragraph 9.

*b. Which CCMs would this proposal impact and in what ways and what proportion?*

The proposed revisions would impact all CCMs who utilize the alternative measures to fins naturally attached in areas beyond national jurisdiction in the Convention Area.

*c. Are there linkages with other proposals or instruments in other Regional Fisheries Management Organizations or international organizations that reduce the burden of implementation?*

IATTC Resolution C-24-05 prohibits shark finning, and allows the use of alternative measures to fins naturally attached (see paragraphs 6 and 7).

*d. Does the proposal affect development opportunities of SIDS?*

No, the proposal does not affect development opportunities for SIDS or Participating Territories. We are not aware of any active SIDS or Participating Territories fisheries targeting sharks, nor any desire to develop targeted fisheries for sharks.

*e. Does the proposal affect SIDS domestic access to resources and development aspirations?*

No. See response to d.

*f. What sources, including financial and human capacity, are needed by SIDS to implement the proposal?*

SIDS and Participating Territories may need to implement the proposed amendments in their national legislation/licensing conditions or access agreements, and may need resources, financial and human capacity, to implement the provisions.

*g. What mitigation measures are included in the proposal?*

No amendment to the objective and scope of the measure, in particular paragraph 5, is being proposed.

*h. What assistant mechanisms and associated timeframe, including training and financial support, are included in the proposal to avoid a disproportionate burden on SIDS?*

No assistant mechanism or associated timeframe is included in the proposal, as the proposed revisions remove obligations from the current measure.



COMMISSION

~~NINETEENTH REGULAR SESSION~~ Twenty-First Regular Session

~~Da-Nang City, Vietnam~~ 28 November to 3 December 2024

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CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR SHARKS

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Conservation and Management Measure ~~2022-04~~ 2024-XX

*The Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC), in accordance with the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (the Convention);*

**Recognizing** *the economic and cultural importance of sharks in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC), the biological importance of sharks in the marine ecosystem as key predatory species, the vulnerability of certain shark species to fishing pressure, and the need for measures to promote the long-term conservation, management and sustainable use of shark populations and fisheries;*

**Recognizing** *the need to collect data on catch, effort, discards, and trade, as well as information on the biological parameters of many species, to enable effective shark conservation and management;*

**Recognizing** *further that certain species of sharks and rays, such as basking shark and great white shark, have been listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).*

**Adopts**, *in accordance with Article 5, 6 and 10 of the Convention, that:*

**I. Definitions**

1. (1) Sharks: All species of sharks, skates, rays and chimaeras (Class Chondrichthyes)
- (2) Full utilization: Retention by the fishing vessel of all parts of the shark excepting head, guts, vertebrae and skins, to the point of first landing or transshipment
- (3) Finning: Removing and retaining all or some of a shark's fins and discarding its carcass at sea

**II. Objective and Scope**

2. The objective of this Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) is, through the application of the precautionary approach and an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of sharks.
3. This CMM shall apply to: (i) sharks listed in Annex 1 of the 1982 Convention and (ii) any other sharks caught in association with fisheries managed under the WCPF Convention.

4. This measure shall apply to the high seas and exclusive economic zones of the Convention Area.
5. Nothing in this measure shall prejudice the sovereignty and sovereign rights of coastal States, including for traditional fishing activities and the rights of traditional fishers, to apply alternative measures for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing sharks, including any national plan of action for the conservation and management of sharks, within areas under their national jurisdiction. When Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories (CCMs) apply alternative measures, the CCMs shall annually provide to the Commission, in their Part 2 Annual Report, a description of the measures.

### III. **FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of sharks**

6. CCMs should implement, as appropriate, the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA). For implementation of the IPOA, each CCM should, as appropriate, include its National Plan of Action for sharks in Part 2 Annual Report.

### IV. **Full utilization of shark and prohibition of finning**

7. CCMs shall take measures necessary to require that all sharks retained on board their vessels are fully utilized. CCMs shall ensure that the practice of finning is prohibited.
8. In order to implement the obligation in paragraph 7, ~~in 2022, 2023 and 2024,~~ CCMs shall require their vessels to land sharks with fins naturally attached to the carcass.
9. Notwithstanding paragraph 8, in ~~2022, 2023 and 2024,~~ 2025, 2026, and 2027, CCMs may authorize their vessels to implement one of the ~~take~~ alternative measures ~~as~~ listed below to comply with paragraph 7. [Authorized vessels must have [100%][20%] monitoring coverage using observers and/or electronic monitoring.] CCMs shall report a list of vessels authorized to use the alternatives by January 1 of each year.

These alternatives shall be applied as soon as practicable and before sharks are stored in fish holds to ensure that individual shark carcasses and their corresponding fins can be easily identified by inspectors on board the vessel at any time:

~~(1) Each individual shark carcass and its corresponding fins are stored in the same bag, preferably biodegradable one;~~

(1) Each individual shark carcass is bound to the corresponding fins using rope or wire;

(2) Identical and uniquely numbered tags are attached to each shark carcass and its corresponding fins in a manner that inspectors can easily identify the matching of the carcass and fins at any time. Both the carcasses and fins shall be stored on board in the same hold.

~~Notwithstanding this requirement, a CCM may allow its fishing vessels to store the carcasses and corresponding fins in different holds if the fishing vessel maintains a record or logbook that shows where the tagged fins and correspondingly tagged carcasses are stored, in a manner that they are easily identified by inspectors.~~

10. ~~In case that a CCM wishes to allow its fishing vessels operating on the high seas to use any measure other than the three alternatives in paragraph 9 (1)–(3), it shall present it to TCC. If TCC endorses it, it shall be submitted to the subsequent annual meeting for endorsement.~~
11. All CCMs shall include in their Part 2 Annual Report, using the template provided in Annex 2, information on the implementation of the measures in paragraphs 8 and ~~or paragraph 9~~ as applicable, including [1) how authorized vessels meet their required monitoring coverage;] 2) how compliance is enforced at sea and in port, including how possible risks such as disproportionate fin counts, high grading and species substitution have been addressed; and 3) an explanation of why the fleet has adopted its fin-handling practice. ~~for review by TCC. The report by CCMs shall contain a detailed explanation of implementation of paragraph 8 or paragraph 9 as applicable including how compliance has been monitored.~~
12. ~~CCMs are encouraged to report~~ shall provide information to TCC on any enforcement difficulties encountered in the case of the alternative measures, from observer, electronic monitoring, aerial, boarding, and landing inspection reports.
13. The TCC shall review and discuss the reports submitted in accordance with Paragraphs 11 and 12 in 2025, 2026, and 2027. TCC23 shall, taking into account, the outcomes from these reports and discussions, advise the Commission on the effectiveness of the measures set out in paragraph 9 as alternatives to the obligation contained in paragraph 7 and recommend measures for consideration and possible adoption at the 202~~3~~7 annual meeting of the Commission. [If sufficient information is not provided to TCC to assess the effectiveness of the alternative measures set out in paragraph 9, paragraph 9 will expire in 2027.]
14. CCMs shall take measures necessary to prevent their fishing vessels from retaining on board (including for crew consumption), transshipping, and landing any fins harvested in contravention of this CMM.
15. CCMs shall take measures necessary to ensure that both carcasses and their corresponding fins are landed or transshipped together, in a manner that allows inspectors to verify the correspondence between an individual carcass and its fins when they are landed or transshipped.

**V. Minimizing bycatch and practicing safe release**

16. For longline fisheries targeting tuna and billfish, CCMs shall ensure that their vessels comply with at least one of the following options:
  - (1) do not use or carry wire trace as branch lines or leaders; or
  - (2) do not use branch lines running directly off the longline floats or drop lines, known as shark lines. See Annex 1 for a schematic diagram of a shark line.

17. The implementation of the measures contained in paragraph 14 above shall be on a vessel by vessel or CCM basis. Each CCM shall notify the Commission of its implementation of paragraph 14 by March 31, 2021 and thereafter whenever the selected option is changed.
18. Starting on January 1, 2024, between 20 N and 20 S, CCMs shall ensure that their longline vessels targeting tuna and billfish do not use, or if carrying, must stow wire trace as branch lines or leaders and do not use shark lines or branch lines running directly off of the longline floats or drop lines (see Annex 1 for schematic diagram of a shark line).
19. For longline fisheries targeting sharks, CCMs shall develop and report their management plans in their Part 2 Annual Report.
20. The Commission shall adopt and enhance bycatch mitigation measures and develop new or amend, if necessary, existing Shark Safe Release Guidelines<sup>1</sup> to maximize the survival of sharks that are caught and are not to be retained. Where sharks are unwanted bycatch they should be released alive using techniques that result in minimal harm, taking into account the safety of the crew. CCMs should encourage their fishing vessels to use any Commission adopted guidelines for the safe release and handling of sharks.
21. CCMs shall ensure that sharks that are caught and are not to be retained, are hauled alongside the vessel before being cut free in order to facilitate a species identification. This requirement shall only apply when an observer or electronic monitoring camera is present, and should only be implemented taking into consideration the safety of the crew and observer.
22. Beginning on January 1, 2024, for sharks that are caught by longline vessels and are not retained, CCMs shall require their fishing vessels to release these sharks, as soon as possible, taking into consideration the safety of the crew and observer, using the following guidelines:
  - (1) Leave the shark in the water, where possible; and
  - (2) Use a line cutter to cut the branchline as close to the hook as possible.
23. Development of new WCPFC guidelines or amendment to existing guidelines for safe release of sharks should take into account the health and safety of the crew.

## **VI. Species specific requirements**

24. Oceanic whitetip shark and silky shark
  - (1) CCMs shall prohibit vessels flying their flag and vessels under charter arrangements to the CCM from retaining on board, transshipping, storing on a fishing vessel or landing any oceanic whitetip shark, or silky shark, in whole or in part, in the fisheries covered by the Convention.

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<sup>1</sup> The Commission adopted at WCPFC15 Best Handling Practices for the Safe Release of Sharks (other than Whale Sharks and Mantas/Mobulids)



(2) CCMs shall require all vessels flying their flag and vessels under charter arrangements to the CCM to release any oceanic whitetip shark or silky shark that is caught as soon as possible after the shark is brought alongside the vessel, and to do so in a manner that results in as little harm to the shark as possible, following any applicable safe release guidelines for these species.

(3) Subject to national laws and regulations, and notwithstanding (1) and (2), in the case of oceanic whitetip shark and silky shark that are unintentionally caught and frozen as part of a purse seine vessels' operation, the vessel must surrender the whole oceanic whitetip shark and silky shark to the responsible governmental authorities or discard them at the point of landing or transshipment. Oceanic whitetip shark and silky shark surrendered in this manner may not be sold or bartered but may be donated for purpose of domestic human consumption.

(4) Observers shall be allowed to collect biological samples from oceanic whitetip sharks and silky shark caught in the Convention Area that are dead on haulback in the WCPO, provided that the samples are part of a research project of that CCM or the SC. In the case that sampling is conducted as a CCM project, that CCM shall report it in their Part 2 Annual Report.

## 25. Whale shark

(1) CCMs shall prohibit their flagged vessels from setting a purse seine on a school of tuna associated with a whale shark if the animal is sighted prior to the commencement of the set.

(2) CCMs shall prohibit vessels flying their flag and vessels under charter arrangements to the CCM from retaining on board, transshipping, or landing any whale shark caught in the Convention Area, in whole or in part, in the fisheries covered by the Convention.

(3) For fishing activities in Parties to Nauru Agreement (PNA) exclusive economic zones, the prohibition in paragraph (1) shall be implemented in accordance with the Third Arrangement implementing the Nauru Agreement as amended on 11 September 2010.

(4) Notwithstanding sub-paragraph (1) above, for fishing activities in exclusive economic zones of CCMs north of 30 N, CCMs shall implement either this measure or compatible measures consistent with the obligations under this measure. When CCMs apply compatible measures, the CCMs shall annually provide to the Commission, in their Part 2 Annual Report, a description of the measure.

(5) CCMs shall require that, in the event that a whale shark is incidentally encircled in the purse seine net, the master of the vessel shall:

(a) ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure its safe release.; and

(b) report the incident to the relevant authority of the flag State, including the number of individuals, details of how and why the encirclement happened, where it occurred, steps taken to ensure safe release, and an assessment of the life status of the whale shark on release.

(6) In taking steps to ensure the safe release of the whale shark as required under sub-paragraph (5)(a) above, CCMs shall encourage the master of the vessel to follow the WCPFC Guidelines for the Safe Release of Encircled Whale Sharks (WCPFC Key Document SC-10)<sup>2</sup>.

(7) In applying steps under sub-paragraphs (1), (5)(a) and (6), the safety of the crew shall remain paramount.

(8) The Secretariat shall report on the implementation of this paragraph on the basis of observer reports, as part of the Annual Report on the Regional Observer Programme.

## VII. Reporting requirements

26. Each CCM shall submit data on the WCPFC Key Shark Species<sup>3</sup> for Data Provision in accordance with Scientific Data to be Provided to the Commission (WCPFC Key Document Data-01).
27. CCMs shall advise the Commission (in their Part 2 Annual Report) on implementation of this CMM in accordance with Annex 2.

## VIII. Research

28. CCMs shall as appropriate, support research and development of strategies for the avoidance of unwanted shark captures (e.g. chemical, magnetic and other shark deterrents), safe release guidelines, biology and ecology of sharks, identification of nursery grounds, gear selectivity, assessment methods and other priorities listed under the WCPFC Shark Research Plan.
29. The SC shall periodically provide advice on the stock status of key shark species for assessment and maintain a WCPFC Shark Research Plan for the assessment of the status of these stocks. If possible, this should be done in conjunction with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.
30. ~~In 2024, and commencing periodically thereafter, the~~ The SC shall periodically review the impact of fishing gear on sharks that are not retained, including oceanic whitetip shark and silky shark, inside and outside of the area between 20 N and 20 S, and provide advice on potential mitigation measures that would benefit such shark species.

## IX. Capacity building

31. The Commission should consider appropriate assistance to developing State Members and participating Territories for the implementation of the IPOA and collection of data on retained and discarded shark catches.

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<sup>2</sup> Originally adopted on 8 December 2015. The title of this decision was amended through the Commission decision at WCPFC13, through adopting the SC12 Summary Report which contains in paragraph 742: "SC12 agreed to change the title of 'Guidelines for the safe release of encircled animals, including whale sharks' to 'Guidelines for the safe release of encircled whale sharks'."

<sup>3</sup> The WCPFC Key Shark Species for Data Provision are designated per the Process for Designating WCPFC Key Shark Species for Data Provision and Assessment (WCPFC Key Document SC-08) and are listed in Scientific Data to be Provided to the Commission (WCPFC Key Document Data-01).

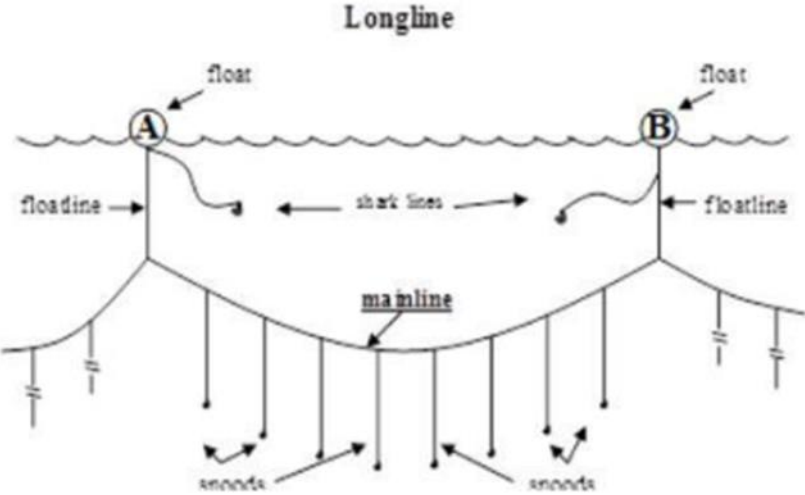
32. The Commission shall consider appropriate assistance to developing State Members and participating Territories for the implementation of this measure, including supplying species identification guides for their fleets and guidelines and training for the safe release of sharks, and including, in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention, in areas under national jurisdiction.

**X. Review**

33. On the basis of advice from the SC and/or the TCC, the Commission shall review the implementation and effectiveness of this CMM, including species specific measures, taking into account, inter alia, any recommendation from the SC or TCC, ~~in 2024~~, ~~in 2027~~ and amend it as appropriate.

34. This CMM replaces CMM 20~~19~~~~22~~-04 .

Annex 1. Schematic diagram of a shark line



**Annex 2:** Template for reporting implementation of this CMM

Each CCM shall include the following information in Part 2 of its annual report:

1. Description of alternative measures in para 5, if applicable
2. Results of their assessment of the need for a National Plan of Action and/or the status of their national Plans of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks, as appropriate
3. Details of National Plan of Action, as appropriate, for implementation of IPOA Sharks in para 6 that includes:
  - (1) details of NPOA objectives; and
  - (2) species and fleet covered by NPOA as well as catches thereby
  - (3) measures to minimize waste and discards from shark catches and encourage the live release of incidental catches of sharks;
  - (4) work plan and a review process for NPOA implementation
4. With respect to paras 9 and 11:
  - (1) Whether sharks or shark parts are retained on board their flag vessels, and if so, how they are handled and stored
  - (2) In case that CCMs retain sharks and choose to apply a requirement for fins to be naturally attached to carcasses
    - Their monitoring and enforcement systems relating to this requirement
  - (3) In case that CCMs ~~retain sharks and choose to~~ apply measures other than a requirement for fins to be naturally attached to carcasses
    - Their monitoring and enforcement systems relating to this requirement
    - A detailed explanation of why the fleet has adopted its fin-handling practice;
5. The management plan in para 17 that includes:
  - (1) specific authorizations to fish such as a license and a TAC or other measure to limit the catch of shark to acceptable levels;
  - (2) measures to avoid or reduce catch and maximize live release of species whose retention is prohibited by the Commission;
6. A report on sampling programs for oceanic whitetip sharks and silky shark as a CCM project as referred to in para 22 (4)
7. Estimated number of releases of oceanic whitetip shark and silky shark caught in the Convention Area, including the status upon release (dead or alive), through data collected from observer programs and other means.
8. Description of compatible measures as referred to in para 23 (4)
9. Any instances in which whale sharks have been encircled by purse seine nets of their flagged vessels, including the details required under para 23 (5)(b).