

November 9, 2017



Melanie Virtue
Head, Aquatic Species Team
UNEP / CMS Secretariat
United Nations Premises
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn, Germany

Dear Ms. Virtue:

As representatives of cooperating partner organizations for the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Memorandum of Understanding for Migratory Sharks (Sharks MoU), we are writing to request your assistance in drawing CMS Parties' attention to critical decisions with respect to **shortfin mako sharks** taking place at the upcoming meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) (November 14-22 in Marrakech, Morocco).

As you know, the shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) was listed under CMS Appendix II in 2008, signaling Parties' commitment to collaborate regionally toward conservation of the species. Now, a new ICCAT population assessment has revealed alarming trends for Atlantic shortfin mako populations. In particular, the North Atlantic stock has been depleted, and overfishing continues. In order to have a reasonable chance (54% probability) of rebuilding by 2040, North Atlantic catches must be cut to zero. Accordingly, ICCAT's scientific body has recommended a "**complete prohibition of retention**" as an immediate step to stop overfishing and begin recovery. Measures to minimize discard mortality have also been advised, as *additional* steps. High post-release survival rates (70%) make retention bans effective for dramatically reducing mako mortality.

South Atlantic mako population status is less clear. The SCRS recommends that annual shortfin mako catches from this ocean not exceed ~2000t. We assert, however, that a retention ban is also prudent in this case, given the uncertainty, species' vulnerability, enforcement challenges, and lessons from the North.

The upcoming ICCAT meeting is a critical opportunity for securing overdue shortfin mako safeguards. We therefore respectfully **request that the CMS Secretariat send notices to the [30 CMS Parties](#) that are also members of ICCAT to remind them of their 2008 commitment to mako shark conservation.**

We hope that – with your help -- CMS Parties will work to ensure science-based ICCAT action for makos, in line with the CMS listing and Sharks MoU, as well as other commitments to sound shark conservation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sonja Fordham in black ink.

Sonja Fordham
Shark Advocates International

Handwritten signature of Ania Budziak in black ink.

Ania Budziak
Project AWARE

Handwritten signature of Ali Hood in black ink.

Ali Hood
Shark Trust

Handwritten signature of Rebecca Regnery in black ink.

Rebecca Regnery
Humane Society International

Handwritten signature of Ian Campbell in black ink.

Ian Campbell
World Wildlife Fund

cc. Andrea Pauly, Associate Programme Officer, Aquatic Species