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EU PROPOSAL ON SILKY SHARKS

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EUROPEAN UNION
PROPOSAL FOR A CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE
FOR SILKY SHARKS

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

In accordance with the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean;

Recognizing the ecological and cultural significance of sharks in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO);

Noting that the stock assessment undertaken for Silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) shows declining standardized catch rates in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, along with a clear finding that the stock of this low productivity species is overfished, and that overfishing is occurring.

Recognizing that the stock assessment also concluded that the species was predominantly caught as by-catch in the WCPO, and that the greatest impact on the stock is attributed to bycatch from the longline fishery, but there are also significant impacts from the associated purse seine fishery which catches predominantly Juvenile individuals.

Further noting the Scientific Committee's recommendation that; The Commission should consider measures directed at by-catch mitigation as well as measures directed at targeted catch to improve the status of the silky shark population.

Adopts the following measures in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (Convention):

1. Members, Cooperating Non-Members and Participating Territories (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, ~~selling or offering for sale~~ any silky shark, in whole or in part, in the fisheries covered by the Convention.
2. CCMs shall require all vessels flying their flag and vessels under charter arrangements to the CCM to release any 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.
3. CCMs shall estimate, through data collected from observer programs and other means, the number of releases of silky shark, including the status upon release (dead or alive), and report this information to the WCPFC in Part 1 of their Annual Reports.

4. The Commission shall consider the special needs of Small Island Developing States and Territories, including supplying species identification guides for their fleets and develop guidelines and training for the safe release of sharks.
5. Observers shall be allowed to collect biological samples from silky sharks that are dead on haulback in the WCPO, provided that the samples are part of a research project approved by the Scientific Committee. In order to get approval, a detailed document outlining the purpose of the work, number of samples intended to be collected and the spatio-temporal distribution of the sampling effort must be included in the proposal. Annual progress of the work and a final report on completion will be presented to the Scientific Committee.
6. CMM's and the Scientific Committee shall continue work on bycatch mitigation measures and live release guidelines to avoid the initial catch of this species wherever possible, and maximize the number of incidentally caught individuals that can be released alive.