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## **RESOLUTION 18/02**

### **ON MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BLUE SHARK CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION WITH IOTC FISHERIES**

**Keywords:** Blue shark, Catch limits, scientific research, reference points, data collection, catch reporting

**The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),**

RECALLING the Resolution 17/05 on the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC aims the sustainability of shark fisheries and the protection of sharks;

RECALLING the Resolution 12/01 on the implementation of the precautionary approach calls on IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) to apply the precautionary approach in accordance with Articles 5 and 6 of the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement;

RECALLING the Resolution 15/01 on the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence fixes the IOTC data record system;

RECALLING the Resolution 15/02 on the Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs) defines the catch and catch related information to be provided by CPCs to the IOTC secretariat;

RECALLING that United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries, adopted annually by consensus, since 2007 (62/177, 63/112, 64/72, 65/38, 66/68, 67/79, 68/71, 69/109, 70/75 and 71/123) calls upon States to take immediate and concerted action to improve the implementation of and compliance with existing regional fisheries management organisation or arrangement measures that regulate shark fisheries and incidental catch of sharks, in particular those measures which prohibit or restrict fisheries conducted solely for the purpose of harvesting shark fins, and, where necessary, to consider taking other measures, as appropriate, such as requiring that all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached;

CONSIDERING that pending the results of the new stock assessment, it is advisable to avoid an increase in levels of catches of blue shark while simultaneously adopt measures to improve data collection and monitoring of catches;

CONSIDERING that the average estimated catches of blue shark are much higher than the reported catches;

ADOPTS, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article IX of the IOTC Agreement, that:

1. To ensure the conservation of the blue shark (*Prionace glauca*) stock in the Indian Ocean, Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, (CPCs) whose vessels catch blue shark in the IOTC Convention Area shall ensure that effective management measures are in place to support the sustainable exploitation of this stock in line with IOTC's Convention objective by undertaking the following management measures:

***Recording, Reporting, and Use of the Catch Information***

2. In order to curb the level of unreported catches, each CPC shall ensure that its vessels catching blue shark in association with IOTC fisheries in the Agreement area record their catch in accordance with the requirements set out in the Resolution 15/01 on the recording of catch and effort data by fishing vessels in the IOTC area of competence or any Resolution superseding it.
3. CPCs shall implement data collection programmes that ensure improved reporting of accurate blue shark catch, effort, size and discard data to IOTC in full accordance with the Resolution 15/02 on the Mandatory statistical reporting requirements for IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (CPCs), or any Resolution superseding it.

4. CPCs shall include in their national Annual Reports to the Scientific Committee information on the actions they have taken domestically to monitor catches.

### ***Scientific Research***

5. CPCs are encouraged to undertake scientific research on blue shark that would provide information on key biological/ecological/behavioural characteristics, life-history, migrations, post-release survival and guidelines for safe release and identification of nursery grounds, as well as improving fishing practices. Such information shall be made available to the Working Party on Ecosystem and Bycatch and Scientific Committee through working documents and the national Annual Reports.
6. In light of the results of the next stock assessment of blue shark in 2021, the Scientific Committee shall provide advice, if possible, on options for candidate limit, threshold and target reference points for the conservation and management of this species in the IOTC Convention area.
7. The Scientific Committee shall also provide advice, at the latest by 2021, on potential management options for ensuring long-term sustainability of the stock, such as mitigation measures to reduce the mortality of blue shark, improving selectivity of fishing gears, spatial/temporal closures or minimum conservation sizes.

### ***Final Provisions***

8. Based on the review and the results of the next stock assessment, updated reported catch information by each CPC and taking into account the Scientific Committee's advice, the Commission shall consider, at its 2021 meeting, the adoption of conservation and management measures, which could include the catch limit for each CPC to be decided taking into account the most recent reported catch information or bycatch mitigation such as a ban on wire trace/shark line for blue shark as appropriate.