
**ON THE CONSERVATION OF OCEANIC WHITETIP SHARK CAUGHT IN ASSOCIATION
WITH FISHERIES IN THE IOTC AREA OF COMPETENCE**

SUBMITTED BY THE EU

Background

The international scientific community points out that: (a) the oceanic whitetip shark has been ranked as one of the five species with the highest degree of risk in an ecological risk assessment; (b) it has high at vessel survival and constitutes a small portion of the shark catch; (c) it is one of the easiest shark species to identify; and (d) that a significant proportion of the species catch is composed of juveniles, justifying a precautionary approach in their management.

In addition, it must be noted that a minimum size length should be implement to protect juveniles but a limitation in the size length may cause enforcement difficulties and that such action might jeopardize the survival of the captured individuals.

Therefore, an effective protection of these species should be coupled with the prohibition of retaining on board oceanic whitetip sharks.

In addition, the Working Party on Ecosystem and Bycatch recognized that full stock assessments on sharks may not be possible due to data limitations. It is therefore essential that appropriate data is collected, at least for the most vulnerable species in order to carry out a stock assessment.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC),

CONSIDERING that oceanic whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) are caught as by-catch in the IOTC area of competence,

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that (a) the oceanic whitetip shark has been ranked as one of the five species with the highest degree of risk in an ecological risk assessment; (b) it has high at-vessel survival and constitutes a small portion of the shark catch; (c) it is one of the easiest shark species to identify; and (d) that a significant proportion of the species catch is composed of juveniles,

FURTHER CONSIDERING that a minimum size length should be implement to protect juveniles but a limitation in the size length may cause enforcement difficulties,

ADOPTS, in accordance with the provisions of Article IX, paragraph 1, of the Agreement establishing the IOTC, the following:

1. Contracting Parties, and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (hereafter referred to as CPCs) shall prohibit retaining onboard, transshipping, landing, storing, selling, or offering for sale any part or whole carcass of oceanic whitetip sharks in any fishery.
2. CPCs shall record through their observer programs the number of discards and releases of oceanic whitetip sharks with indication of status (dead or alive) and report it to IOTC.