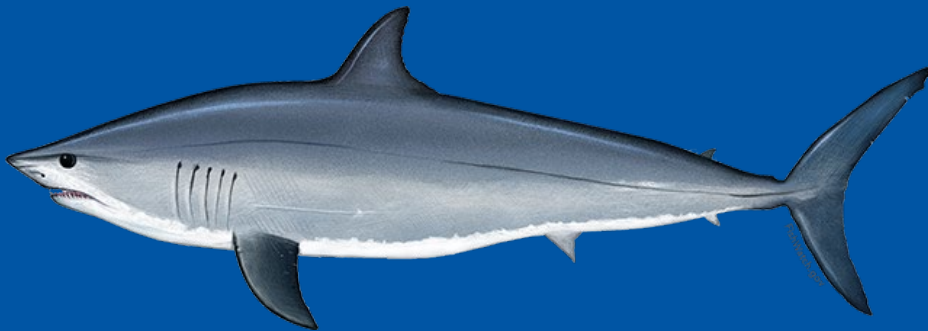


**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# Proposed Rule on Retention Limits for Shortfin Mako Sharks

Highly Migratory Species Management Division

April 27, 2022



# Outline

- Purpose and Need
- Background
- Proposed Measures and Alternatives
- Anticipated Timing
- Request for Public Comments



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# Purpose and Need for Action

- Implement shortfin mako shark management measures in Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS) fisheries based on the 2021 ICCAT recommendation (Rec. 21-09)
- Current HMS regulations allow retention of shortfin mako sharks in certain limited circumstances in HMS fisheries, but new ICCAT requirements were adopted in 2021



# Background: Stock Assessment and ICCAT Recommendations

- **2017** - ICCAT's scientific body, the SCRS, assessed the North Atlantic shortfin mako shark stock

Status: overfished and experiencing overfishing

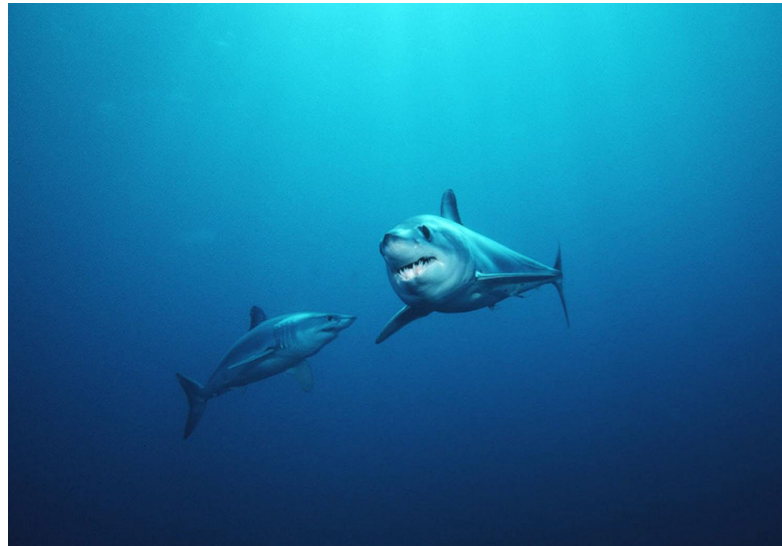
ICCAT adopted **Rec. 17-08** – measures to maximize live release, allow retention in certain limited circumstances, and improve data collection

- **2019** - SCRS completed stock assessment update, which provided rebuilding timeframe through 2070

SCRS recommended ICCAT adopt a non-retention policy “to accelerate the rate of recovery and to increase the probability of success”

# Background: Stock Assessment and ICCAT Recommendations continued

- **2019** - ICCAT adopted **Rec. 19-06** – maintained measures in Rec. 17-08 and called for additional measures to establish rebuilding plan
- **2021** – Additional needed measures adopted by ICCAT in **Rec. 21-09**



# ICCAT Rec. 21-09: Conservation of the North Atlantic Stock of Shortfin Mako Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries

- Prohibits retention of shortfin mako sharks in 2022 and 2023
- Limited retention of shortfin mako sharks may be allowed in 2023 and future years if fishing mortality is reduced
- Aims to limit fishing mortality to no more than 250 mt
- SCRS will calculate allowable retention (if any) each year after 2021

Individual retention allowances would be calculated based on overall retention allowance and average catches 2013-2016

- Additional measures



## Background: Domestic Implementation of Rec. 17-08

- **2018** – NOAA Fisheries took emergency action to immediately address overfishing and begin to rebuild the shortfin mako shark stock
- **2019** – NOAA Fisheries finalized Amendment 11, which allows retention in limited circumstances

Commercial: allow retention with pelagic longline gear only if shark is dead at haulback with electronic monitoring system on board

Allow retention with bottom longline or gillnet gear only if shark is dead at haulback

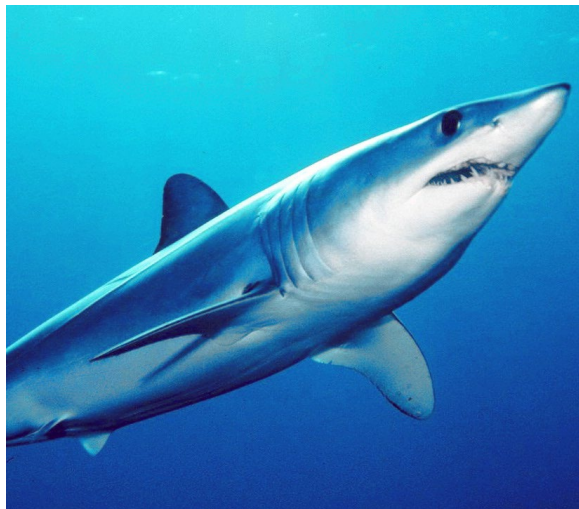
Recreational: increased minimum size limit to 71 inches fork length (FL) for males and 83 inches FL for females

Expanded circle hook requirement

# Background: Impacts of Domestic Management

- Prior to the 2017 stock assessment, U.S. catch represented approximately 14%, on average, of total North Atlantic shortfin mako shark catch
- By 2020, U.S. catch was reduced to approximately 3% of total catch

Reduction of 90% from 2013-2017 average catch





# Proposed Measures

- Preferred Alternative 2: Flexible shortfin mako shark retention limit with a default limit of zero in commercial and recreational HMS fisheries
- Retention limit of zero would be in place unless changed after consideration of regulatory criteria and consistent with any ICCAT retention allowance under Rec. 21-09
- Retention limit would apply to:
  - Recreational HMS permit holders
  - Commercial vessels issued a Directed or Incidental shark limited access permit using pelagic longline, bottom longline, or gillnet gear
  - Existing prohibition on commercial retention by other gear types would remain in place

# Proposed Measures continued

- During the fishing year, NOAA Fisheries could increase the shortfin mako shark retention limit from the default, and/or subsequently decrease the retention limit, for the commercial fishery, the recreational fishery, or both

Based on consideration of the inseason trip limit adjustment criteria and to extent retention is allowed by ICCAT

- Research and sampling of shortfin mako sharks would continue to be allowed under exempted fishing permits (EFPs) and scientific research permits (SRPs)

Applications would be considered on a case-by-case basis

Only non-lethal sampling would be permitted on shortfin mako sharks that are alive at haulback

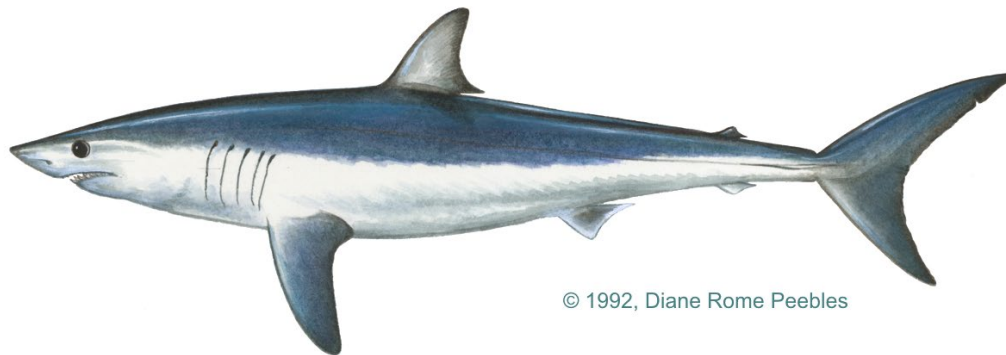
# Other Alternatives Analyzed

- Alternative 1: No action  
Maintain Amendment 11 measures
- Alternative 3: Prohibit retention of shortfin mako sharks  
Add species to the HMS prohibited sharks list
- Concluded Alternatives 1 and 3 would not be consistent with purpose of this action



# Anticipated Timing

- Proposed rule published April 11, 2022 (87 FR 21077)
- Comment period ends May 11, 2022
- Intend to publish final rule in June 2022
- ICCAT will hold a Panel 4 intersessional meeting in November 2022 to test and confirm the appropriateness of the approach in Rec. 21-09 for allowing retention and to discuss possible retention for 2023



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# Request for Public Comments

- Comment period closes on **May 11, 2022**
- Please submit comments at <https://www.regulations.gov> (Search “NOAA-NMFS-2022-0015”)
- Action webpage:  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/proposed-changes-atlantic-shortfin-mako-shark-retention-limits>
- For more information contact:  
Carrie Soltanoff ([carrie.soltanoff@noaa.gov](mailto:carrie.soltanoff@noaa.gov)) or  
Guy DuBeck ([guy.dubeck@noaa.gov](mailto:guy.dubeck@noaa.gov))

