



NOAA FISHERIES International Affairs



2017 Report to Congress¹

The United States will work with the three nations identified in this report to encourage them to take action to address their IUU fishing activities.

The High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act (the Act) directs the United States to:

- strengthen international fisheries management organizations, and to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and bycatch of protected living marine resources (PLMRs);
- improve the conservation of sharks;
- promote improved monitoring, control, and surveillance for high seas fisheries and those managed by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs);
- improve the effectiveness of RFMOs through adoption of IUU vessel lists, port state controls, market-related measures, and the adoption of measures to prohibit the removal of any shark fins and discarding of the carcasses at sea; and
- build capacity in other countries to ensure sustainable fisheries and regulatory enforcement.

The Act also requires the United States to identify nations to Congress for IUU fishing, and/or bycatch of PLMRs or shark catch on the high seas for nations that do not have regulatory measures comparable to the United States. Identification is the first step in a three step process. Through recent amendments, the Act now allows an analysis of three years of data for IUU fishing, bycatch, and shark catch on the high seas.

Identification: Nations engaged in IUU fishing, and/or bycatch of protected resources, or shark catches on the high seas identified in the Report to Congress.



Consultation: United States works collaboratively with identified nations on actions to address the activities for which they were identified.



Certification: Certification decisions issued based on the actions of the nations.



The two-year consultation process encourages nations to take action to address the activities for which they were identified. Nations identified for having vessels engaged in IUU fishing are required to take appropriate corrective action to address the activities described in the biennial report. Nations identified for having vessels engaged in bycatch or shark catch on the high seas are required to adopt regulatory programs in the relevant fisheries comparable in effectiveness to U.S. programs, and to establish management plans for the applicable species.

Based on information provided by nations during the consultations, the United States issues a certification decision which is published in the next Report to

Congress. A positive certification is issued if the nation has provided evidence of actions that address the activities for which it was identified. If the nation cannot demonstrate sufficient action has been taken, a negative certification may be issued and could result in U.S. port restrictions for fishing vessels of that nation, and import restrictions on certain fish or fish products. The United States actively works with our international partners to achieve the goals of the Act in a cooperative and transparent manner.

Next Steps

In the 2017 Report to Congress, three nations were identified as having vessels reported to be engaged in IUU fishing activity during 2014-2016. The United States is holding consultations with the identified nations to encourage them to take action to address these activities. In the 2019 Report to Congress, now due June 1, 2019, the United States will issue new identifications, as well as certification decisions for the nations identified in 2017.

Changes to the identification process

As discussed above, recent amendments to the Moratorium Protection Act extended the timeline for identification for sharks, bycatch and IUU fishing to three years. For the 2019 Report to Congress, the United States will identify nations for IUU fishing, bycatch of protected living marine resources and for shark catch on the high seas based on activity during 2016-2018. We are working with our international partners to inform them of these updates.

For more information on our efforts to combat IUU fishing and protect marine resources globally, please visit www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ia or contact Kristin Rusello at kristin.rusello@noaa.gov.

¹Link to full report: www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ia/slider_stories/2017/01/2017biennialreport.pdf

