

## **Statement on the conservation status of the shortfin-mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)**

The Brazilian Society for the Study of Elasmobranchs (SBEEL), brings together experts from different fields including: research institutes, public and private universities, civil society, government agencies, research promotion agencies and the productive sector, all devoted to the study of varied aspects of sharks and rays with the objective of generating support for the implementation of public policies aimed at sustainable management and conservation.

### **Considering:**

- The shortfin-mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) represents about 6% of pelagic sharks caught by longline fleets that operates in the South Atlantic and is exceptionally valued for its meat (besides the fins). Recent studies show that this species is a primary target for some fleets and that the catches are mostly of immature individuals.
- In the last global assessment conducted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2019, the shortfin-mako shark was classified as Endangered (EN, <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/39341/2903170>);
- In the last Brazilian evaluation conducted by the Ministry of the Environment (MMA) in 2017, under the authority of the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio) and with the significant participation of specialists, many of whom are members of SBEEL, the shortfin-mako shark was categorized as Critically Endangered (CR), with researchers inferring at least 80% population reduction through past data and future projections until the year 2040 (the government has not yet officially released the results);
- Brazil is a signatory member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS);
- Brazil has successfully supported the inclusion of the shortfin-mako shark in CITES Appendix II in 2019 and in CMS Appendix II in 2008;
- ICCAT scientists in 2019 pointed out that the North Atlantic shortfin-mako population, which is subject to continuous overfishing, will decrease for at least the next 15 years and needs substantial reductions in fishing mortality to begin to rebuild, with the projection of being unable to recover by 2070, under current management measures (2017) mandated by ICCAT;
- ICCAT scientists indicated in 2019 that a total annual catch of zero (including discards) has a 53% likelihood of rebuilding the population by 2045, and recommended that ICCAT ban the retention of North Atlantic makosharks, as it has with other species of shark;
- ICCAT scientists noted that the post-release survival of shortfin-mako sharks can reach 75%, indicating that a ban can be particularly effective in achieving significant reductions in fishing mortality;
- Ten ICCAT signatory countries proposed a ban in the North Atlantic in 2019, with a 2001 t quota in the South Atlantic, receiving support from six other signatories, as well as NGOs and scientists;
- Brazil is an influential member of ICCAT and has not yet publicly expressed a position on ICCAT's proposals for fishing limits for shortfin-mako sharks in the Atlantic;



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- South American delegates to ICCAT have disregarded important regional information and recommendations on the species, including works published in peer-reviewed journals, conservation status assessments in other spheres (ICMBio, State Environmental Foundations) and SBEEL statements;
- In Brazil, there are no fisheries statistics since at least 2007 and it must be considered that, exceptionally for elasmobranchs, national statistics have been deficient for decades;
- The control of fishing effort, monitoring of landings and eventual catch quotas, as well as adequate inspection have always presented great challenges for the adequate management and conservation of fish stocks, especially elasmobranchs (there is no systematic data collection or monitoring program since 2007; enforcement agencies lack enough work force to supervise fishing areas);
- ICCAT is currently considering action on shortfin-mako sharks through online negotiations, and there is already a proposal in favor of protecting the species led by Canada with Senegal and the United Kingdom.

**Urges that:**

- The Brazilian government immediately promotes the adoption of the Canadian proposal aimed at banning the retention of the North Atlantic shortfin-mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) as part of the ICCAT 2020 virtual negotiations, in line with Brazil's conservation commitments to CITES and CMS;
- The Brazilian government immediately promotes the update and dissemination of the national red list, with the update of the conservation status of the shortfin-mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) whose results have been available since 2017 (NT to CR);
- The Brazilian government expresses its opposition to any quota for the South Atlantic, considering that in the current scenario of fisheries management in Brazil there are no conditions to properly monitor or inspect landings and, instead, a prohibition on retention should be established for the South as well as North Atlantic.

It should also be noted that the national fisheries statistics program, including the mandatory presence of on-board observers in fleets where there is significant interaction with elasmobranchs is of fundamental importance, and needs to be resumed. In addition, it is essential that the recovery plans discussed in multiple fora (e.g. Brazilian sharks NPOA, SBEEL meetings) be implemented. SBEEL, through its Board and Council, is available to provide additional clarifications that are deemed necessary, as well as to discuss mechanisms to assist in the interpretation and implementation of these recommendations.