

Fishing Vessel Circular Letter No. 043
21 June 2022
Series: RFMO-2022

To: All Ship Owners, Operators, Deputy Registrars, Resident Agents, Representatives and other Stakeholders

Subject: **Prohibition on the Catching of North Atlantic Stock of Shortfin Mako Sharks Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries**

Reference: Issued in accordance with Part VIII, Section 50(1)(c) of the High Seas Fishing Act, 2013

Recommendation 21-09 by ICCAT on the Conservation of North Atlantic Stock of Shortfin Mako Caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries

Circular Superseded: 033 – Dated 08-January 2020

BACKGROUND:

Based on reports of ICCAT's Scientific Commission for Research and Statistics, Shortfin Mako sharks caught in the northern Atlantic is being overfished. In order to rebuild this stock, it is recommended that countries take relevant actions to strengthen their monitoring and data collection regime of this specie.

MANAGEMENT MEASURE ADOPTED BY ICCAT – Recommendation 21-09

In accordance with the recommendation adopted by ICCAT, countries shall implement a rebuilding programme for North Atlantic Shortfin Mako Sharks starting in 2022 to end overfishing immediately and gradually achieve biomass levels sufficient to support maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2070 with a probability of a range between 60 and 70% at least.

To this end, the conditions set out in ICCAT Recommendation 21-09 shall be applied by member countries with the aim to reduce total mortality (the sum of any retention, dead discards and post release mortality of live discards), to maintain mortality at sustainable levels to rebuild the stock and to establish a process to determine whether in any year there is a possibility for retention.

MANAGEMENT MEASURES ADOPTED BY BELIZE

In compliance with the recommendation, the harvesting, retaining on board, transshipping, and landing, whole or in part North Atlantic Shortfin Mako Sharks caught in the high seas in association with ICCAT fisheries in 2022 and 2023 **shall be prohibited**. Thereafter, and based on scientific advice, new measures shall be established to determine a permissible retention ratio in the future.

Vessel operators are instructed to utilize the Best Practices for the Safe Handling and Release of Sharks as published in our Fishing Vessel Notice 003-2022 on 16-May-2022 (Attached). This is necessary to ensure the prompt release of unharmed mako sharks and to improve survivability of live North Atlantic Mako Shark when brought alongside the vessel.

APPLICABILITY

This circular applies to all Belize flagged fishing vessels fishing for or intending to fish north Atlantic Shortfin Mako Sharks in the ICCAT Convention Area.

MAINTENANCE

Stakeholders shall ensure that this Circular is acknowledged and observed.

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Failure to comply with any Circular shall result in disciplinary actions taken in accordance with Belize's Sanction Regulations S.I. 32 of 2014

IMPLEMENTATION

This Circular shall be implemented with immediate effect.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information direct all inquiries about this Circular to the Director of High Seas Fisheries of the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit, Ministry of Finance, Government of Belize.

Issued by



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