

4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Stock and Ecological Risks Assessment (SERAWG4)  
28 February - 04 March 2022 (online)

## Monitoring, Management and Impact Mitigation in the shark bycatch

*Relate to agenda item: 9.1*

Working paper  Info paper  Restricted

### Delegation of the European Union

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#### Abstract

This document supports the progress on teleost ERA describing current management approaches and short-term actions to be considered by SERAWG and SC Members.

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#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the SERAWG and SC:

1. Assess the proposed additional voluntary measures to minimise shark bycatch.
  2. Support the 2-days workshop in Tenerife (Spain) in 2023 to carry out an assessment of the stock status of the shark species involved in the SIOFA fisheries.
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## 1.- Introduction

In line with the 2021 SC Workplan and building upon discussions held at SIOFA SC5, SC6 and MOP8 meetings, this document aims at supporting the progress on teleost ERA describing current management approaches and short-term actions to be considered by SERAWG and SC Members.

## 2.- Current voluntary measures to avoid shark bycatch

The following precautionary measures to avoid high bycatch rates<sup>1</sup> in the only EU fishing vessel operating in SIOFA apply:

- (a) The first time that the total weight of the catch of deep-sea sharks is the greatest percentage by weight of the total catch, the vessel shall immediately move at least 3 nautical miles from any position of the previous set. In this case it shall be considered as by-catch<sup>2</sup> and the targeted fisheries species violation shall not apply.
- (b) If the same circumstance occurs in the second haul, it shall move at least 10 nautical miles and shall not return for at least 60 hours. In this case it shall also be considered as by-catch.
- (c) On return to the initial location after at least 60 hours, a trial haul of no more than 3 hours shall be made. If the total weight of the deep-sea shark catches is the greatest percentage by weight of the total catch, in this case it shall not be considered as directed fishing, but the vessel shall change position in accordance with paragraphs (a) and (b).

In line with MoP8 discussions (Para 53, MoP8 report), in 2021, the voluntary move-on rules (in the event that the sole EU vessel operating in the SIOFA area encountered deepwater sharks) were triggered a total of 90 times.

As mentioned above, the move-on rules consist of three steps. Step (a) was triggered 43 times, step (b) was triggered 47 times while step (c) was never triggered because the vessel did not return to the original point.

By areas, the voluntary move-on rules were triggered 88 times in Area 2, once in Area 3a and once Area 3b.

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<sup>1</sup> Directed fishing for deep-sea sharks listed in Annex I of CMM 2019/12 is prohibited

<sup>2</sup> The scientific observer onboard considers direct fishing as the species or group of species representing the largest percentage by weight of the total catch. This approach is used on a set-by-set level.

### 3.- Additional voluntary measures to minimise shark bycatch and support sustainable harvesting levels

The following additional measures to minimise the impact on other shark species are proposed to be implemented by the EU-vessel:

1. to have a 100 % scientific observer coverage on board;
2. to release all shark species listed as a “high risk” in Annex 1 of the CMM 2019/12 that are alive and in good condition.

### 4.- Roadmap for 2023

In line with the SIOFA Scientific Committee (SC8) to be held in the Canary Islands<sup>3</sup> (MoP8 Report, paras 235-236) it is proposed to the WG consideration to hold in advance of the SC8 a 2-days workshop in Tenerife (Spain) in 2023 to carry out an assessment of the stock status of the shark species involved in the SIOFA fisheries. In this regard, the EU is setting aside a Grant to support this workshop which would include venue, and the financing of external and independent expertise in support of scientific discussions.

An ad-hoc data call to all SIOFA members with fisheries related shark bycatches data would be advisable in order to obtain all data needed to carry out the assessment. This data call should include:

- Shark bycatch and effort by species and gear.
- Location of all sets where a shark bycatch has taken place.
- Total length by sex and species.
- Maturity stage by sex and species.

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<sup>3</sup> Headquarters of the [Spanish Institute of Oceanography \(IEO\) in Tenerife](#), Canary Islands, Spain