



GHANA TUNA ASSOCIATION

Public Shark Finning Policy

Introduction

Globally, incidental shark captures in purse seine fisheries are not as common as in longline fisheries. However, there is still a significant issue within these net fisheries due to the non-selective nature of the fishing gears, and potential risk to vulnerable shark and ray populations. The slow growth rates, late maturation, low fecundity, and long life spans of these animals means that the removal of individuals from a population can have cascading effects on the food web. Sharks also suffer from stress during the handling and release procedure of becoming caught in fishing gear. This stress induces dangerous concentrations of chemicals into the blood of the shark, which can lead to death even after it has been released from the vessel alive. Therefore, any sharks that are not retained by the vessel should be released using the safest and most efficient methods.

Shark finning is the practice of retaining shark fins and discarding the remaining carcass while at sea. The practice is against the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and its International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks, as well as the resolutions of a number of other international marine bodies, all of which call for minimising waste and discards. There are major uncertainties about the total quantity and species of sharks caught, and shark finning has added to this problem. As part of the new MSC Fisheries Standard (v3.0), there is a new requirement that all sharks that are retained by a fishing vessel must have their fins naturally attached (FNA) to the carcass. This means that sharks will not be accepted upon landing if there are no fins attached to the body. Therefore, the companies operating in the Ghana pole and line tuna fishery would like to highlight the actions being taken by the fishery to prevent shark finning onboard its vessels.

Public policy

The Ghana Tuna Association (GTA) make this public policy stating that shark finning is prohibited aboard all vessels and does not occur. GTA adopts the "fins naturally attached" rule for sharks aligned with the requirements of the new MSC Fisheries Standard (v3.0), and the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) Conservation Measure 3.1(c). Any sharks that are retained, stored, and landed will be reported and shark fins must be naturally attached to the carcass. For storage capacity and space, partially cutting the fins to fold them around the body is acceptable.

However, all fins must remain attached to a large part of the carcass. Shark carcasses with fins artificially attached to the body, via ropes, wire, or other unnatural materials will constitute a violation of this policy. Any sharks that are landed should be photographed to be used as evidence of compliance with the policy. No shark species that are prohibited by national law or RFMO regulations will be landed.

All shark handling and release will be carried out by trained crewmen as per the ISSF guidebook. This includes best practice handling and release methods to ensure both crew and shark safety during release procedures.

On behalf of the Participant (GTA):

Signature: _____

Name and job title: Samuel Boye Ayertey

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