



International Game Fish Association

Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum

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February 4, 2011

European Commission

DG MARE – Unit A2

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RE: European Commission consultation on amending the EU shark finning regulation

To whom it may concern:

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The International Game Fish Association (IGFA), is a 70 year old world renowned not-for-profit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical, angling practices through science, education, rule making and record keeping. IGFA accomplishes its mission by enlisting the voice of over 300 official IGFA representatives in nearly 100 countries, and more than 15,000 angler-members around the globe.

Many species of sharks are highly esteemed by recreational anglers for their beauty and vitality, and an ever increasing number of anglers are voluntarily releasing sharks that are caught in good condition. Furthermore, shark species have an important role in marine ecosystems and they are extremely vulnerable due to their specific life history traits as well as the high demand for their fins in the international shark fin trade. It is estimated that 26-73 million sharks are killed annually to support the global shark fin market.

The IGFA commends the EU for banning shark finning, but it is essential that the EU strengthens the ban and closes the loopholes which allow fins and bodies to be landed separately. Regarding amending the EU shark finning regulation, the IGFA supports the Commission's *Option 3: "fins remain attached,"* Landing sharks with fins naturally attached has proven to be a successful management practice and has been promoted by the 2007 United Nations General Assembly Sustainable Fisheries Resolution, the October 2008 IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolution, the 2010 Fish Stocks Agreement Review Conference on the Law of the Sea and a December 2010 Resolution by the European Parliament. Scientists, enforcement officials and conservationists have long supported the "fins-naturally-attached" policy and it is imperative that the European Union enact this policy as well.

The European Union is a major player in global shark fishing and it is time to become a leader in successful management of these important species.

Respectfully,

Rob Kramer
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