

## **Shark and Sea Turtle Conservation Policy**

As a responsible member of the fishing community, we are aware that unintended bycatch poses a significant danger to non-target marine life. We recognize that most shark species are highly susceptible to overfishing, and many are considered threatened or endangered. Furthermore, we understand the wasteful practice of shark finning (the removal and retention of shark fins and discarding of the carcass at sea) contravenes many international rules and regulations; including those of all major regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs).

Sea turtles are also especially vulnerable to fishing related activities due to their habitats and shared food sources with target tuna species. Additionally, sea turtles are a long-lived marine animal and require lengthy timeframes to meet reproductive maturation. Several species of sea turtles, including green sea turtles and leatherbacks, are already considered vulnerable or endangered by the scientific community.

In order to protect these vulnerable animals, our company is committed to implementing measures to reduce the negative impacts of fishing on their populations. Our company recognizes the ISSF Skippers' Guidebook to Sustainable Longline Fishing Practices and acknowledges the best practices for mitigating bycatch, handling, and release of sharks and sea turtles<sup>1</sup>. All handling and release will be carried out under the supervision of trained crewmen who have undergone extensive training.

In order to better protect sharks and sea turtles, our company adheres to the following best practices at a minimum:

1. Does not actively target sharks
2. Does not set shark lines on buoys
3. Prohibits the use of wire traces
4. Prohibits the practice of shark finning and our policy is posted on the vessel for crew awareness
5. Do not retain oceanic whitetip or silky sharks
6. For other sharks that are landed, the carcass is retained with fins naturally attached or partially cut and tied to the shark
7. Record the species in the fishing logbook for all sharks and sea turtles that are landed
8. Use only circle hooks, and use as wide a hook as possible that maintains acceptable catch rates of market species to reduce hard shelled sea turtle catch rates where necessary
9. Use only monofilament lines
10. Use fish rather than squid for bait
11. When feasible, set hooks deeper than typical sea turtle-abundant depths (40-100m)
12. Do not engage in trading with fishing companies that do not observe the above practices
13. Promotes best practices for bycatch handling and release of sharks, turtles, cetaceans and birds and the fishery does everything possible to release these individuals alive

Please see the attached appendix for the vessels covered by this policy.

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 The guidebook is available for download at the following location <http://www.issfguidebooks.org/downloadable-guides>

