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22 August 2012

NZ Sport Fishing Council submission on the proposal to protect the oceanic whitetip shark

NZ Sport Fishing Council

1. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council appreciates the opportunity to submit feedback on a proposal to the oceanic whitetip shark. The Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) released their proposals on 18 July with submissions due by 22 August 2012.
2. NZSFC representatives are available to discuss this submission in more detail if required. We look forward to positive outcomes from this review and would like to be kept informed of future developments. Our contact is Roz Nelson, secretary@nzsportfishing.org.nz.
3. The NZ Sport Fishing Council is a national sports organisation with over 32,000 affiliated members from 57 clubs nationwide.
4. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council is committed to ensuring that sustainability measures and management controls are designed and implemented to achieve the Purpose and Principles of the Fisheries Act 1996.

Summary of NZSFC Submission

5. The New Zealand Sport Fishing Council supports the MPI proposal to prohibit the taking of oceanic whitetip sharks in New Zealand fisheries waters and by New Zealand flagged vessels operating on the high seas, a joint proposal with the Department of Conservation.
6. The NZSFC acknowledges that whitetip shark was historically considered one of the two most abundant oceanic sharks, along with blue shark. Oceanic whitetips are now listed as a highly migratory species by UNCLOS, and listed as a key shark species by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). As a WCPFC member nation New Zealand has an obligation to prohibit all utilisation of whitetips and require the release of any specimen caught.
7. The NZSFC supports meaningful consultation on, and the subsequent creation of, new regulations using the Fisheries Act 1996 in conjunction with the Wildlife Act, to give effect to the prohibition of taking whitetip sharks.
8. The Council is not aware of any recreational targeting or capture of oceanic whitetip sharks. The NZSFC is aware that ocean-going recreational vessels have sighted oceanic whitetip sharks on rare occasions.