



**SHARK ANGLING CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN
COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 27th July 2020 AT 7pm
AT THE CHAIRMAN'S HOUSE (SOCIALLY DISTANCED - DUE TO CORONAVIRUS)**

Present: B Woodman - Chairman, C Kelly - Secretary, P Davis, K Tapper, D Stone, M Collings, P Martin (via Skype)

Apologies: S Thomas, A McKay, S Ward

Minutes of last meeting: Approval proposed by P Davis and seconded by M Collings.

Matters Arising

1. Trophy Future Allocation Wording –

- a. The Committee discussed the following email and proposition from Dave Stone;

The committee's proposal to make **all** trophy awards the decision of the committee alone backed by convincing evidence of size, I myself do not agree with.

My reasons being that at the present time we have no standard method of estimating anywhere near accurately a shark in the water.

I also am not sure if this would include the Festival trophies and assume it would as the word "all" is in the proposal. This could create disputes and I cannot see how you could still run a daily kitty for the biggest shark of the day. If the Festival is not to be included, why the difference?

How would we now accurately enable anglers to join when some have strived for years to catch the elusive 75lb or now 70-inch shark. It is what being a member and its exclusivity is all about.

I love sharks as I would imagine everyone in the club does, and therefore would be agreeable to anything that would benefit the shark's wellbeing. I also greatly enjoy angling for sharks and some would say the stress caused by fighting a shark which has a hook in its jaws or possibly elsewhere being restrained from swimming freely in its own watery environment is detrimental to the shark's health.

However I am a member of the SACGB who's aims are to promote shark angling, and that involves catching them.

Trophies have been donated over the years for specific feats and I believe that if we change the criteria for that award any living person or close relative should be contacted and agree before any decision is made. The club would have the final say on any trophies where no person or relative can be contacted after sufficient attempts to communicate have failed..

If these changes were to come into being it would mean changing our rulebook and the wording for the definition of nearly all the clubs trophies.

Scientific investigations have been and are ongoing in the mortality rate of caught and released sharks and I would accept that in the past mortality rates may have been high due mainly to our ignorance of how fragile a shark out of water really is, but I would prefer to wait and see the results of any investigation into the catch and release mortality rates of a well-treated shark. My understanding of well treated, as an avid shark angler would be the use of a gate or sling, no tail rope, wetted deck prior to boarding, keep shark wet and slide back into the sea within 2 minutes, NOT hauled over the side, slapped on the hot deck, knelt on and then thrown unceremoniously over the side to possibly recover. The results of any mortality investigation achieved using data from well treated tagged sharks, I fervently believe would show a vast improvement in survival rate and provide greatly needed information to help scientists, marine biologists, ecologists, anglers and many others to provide a secure future for all sharks.

So with the best interest of the shark and in my humble opinion the members, **I should like to propose that the rules stay as they are with the addition of a 2 year temporary amendment that if a shark is not brought aboard and an acceptable form of measurement is used which would have to be approved by the**



committee, then that shark would enable the angler to contest for a trophy. In the event of a close run between visually estimated and boated and measured a decision would be made by the committee. The reason for this trial period is to encourage club members and skippers to experiment with various alternative methods of sizing a shark without the need to bring it on board. The committee to make appropriate awards for the best workable ideas.

Any trophy donator who is still alive reserves the right to retain the current awarding criteria during the trial period. They also reserve the right to remove the trophy if they disagree with the decision taken regarding trophy criteria at the end of the trial period. The purpose of this trial period is to create an opportunity for debate and experimentation regarding trophy and record award criteria. We would urge all to devote time to this as in the event you are lucky enough to bring a very large fish to the boat, where in the best interest of the shark it can't be brought aboard, you will want to be prepared to obtain suitable visually estimated data to support any claims you make.

Any shark boarded should be tagged, measured and released in accordance with the best practice, thus providing valuable information on sharks for future conservation programmes and decision making. This would show a positive approach by the members towards the wellbeing of all sharks we encounter and show that our thoughts as an angling club have conservation foremost in our minds.

Criteria for membership of the Club to remain as it is.

The Festival awards to remain for measured sharks but more communication between skippers and anglers on each day to prevent unnecessary boarding of sharks. e.g. 80 inch long Blue Shark already caught it would be pointless boarding any other Blue Sharks that are obviously smaller that day. Sponsor for tags to be found ASAP or provide our own.

Proposal seconded by Ian Harbage

- b. The Committee discussed the following email and proposition from Paul Martin;

Further to last months discussion about releasing fish at the side of the boat and trophy claims I wanted to propose an idea I had. Currently , if I am correct, if anyone wishes to claim a world/British record, they have 2 weeks with which to put a claim forward where as anyone can put a claim in for a club trophy right up until the 30th of September for that season.

I propose that if we gave people a 4 week period from catching the fish to put in a claim in, we could discuss any trophy claims at each monthly meeting. A 4 week period would still allow people to get any video or photographic evidence from other anglers/skippers (instantly now via email/Bluetooth/ social media) or still allow the option of snail mail.

This information for best fish could be uploaded to the league table and then would reduce to need to boat a fish which was a qualifier but fell short of the current leader. There would be no need to name the person or port, just the weight or estimated weight of the fish. It would also mean less hassle at the end of the season for the committee when sorting out the winners for the season.

Most club members I know are well aware of which trophies they are able to claim for so they hopefully should be on board with this. Even if the option of visually estimated claims doesn't go through at the AGM (and I truly hope it does) this could still be proposed to the members as a step towards better shark welfare.

K Tapper seconded this proposition for distribution to the club members.

- c. The Committee discussed the following email from Simon Thomas;

Regarding the proposal by Dave Stone, can I suggest a compromise which may also help going forward. If we use visual estimation for all trophies for porbeagle, thresher and mako (probably not relevant) as there is no easy way to currently board a big one safely.

For Blues, I am ok with Dave's suggestions and accept that the original proposal might be seen as a step too far by members.



If we are still going with measure on board for blue sharks, could we also Ask for information on additional information to length and girth measurements, such as the Length from nose to front of dorsal Fin to enable the development of measure in the water techniques for the future. This shouldn't be compulsory but would be of huge use going forward as would be information on the sex of catches. We can then use this data to enable us to evolve the release at side of boat and there is a valid scientific use for length data to assess stock status. I believe that there is a requirement for a door on boats fishing the festival and if we can also use the festival to gather important scientific data and to evolve our methods of handling at the same time, then I believe that any potential chance of harm to the fish is outweighed by the benefit to the species in the future. We have to be cautious about initiating our own tagging study as it needs to have a well-defined purpose. The NOAA tagging program that many of us tag for is massive and the data set is a valuable asset which has a proven worth. Would starting our own program be of any value above that of the NOAA program. Much as I would love a coordinated UK tagging program, such a program needs to be uk wide to be of any scientific use.

The secretary stated that S Thomas' request had been put in the Newsletter, due out this week, regarding gathering information.

It was agreed that the two propositions would be forwarded to members to vote at the AGM. It was also agreed that the NOAA tagging program would continue to be used for the foreseeable future.

P Martin left the meeting.

Lucky Run Club

- The Winner of the July draw was Bob Woodman winning £70.00

New Business

- AGM 2020 – The Secretary reminded the Committee that the AGM would be held on 24th August in the bottom bar, under social distancing guidelines. This would mean fewer members would be able to attend.

Any Other Business

- Angling Heritage – Keith Armishaw. The secretary read an email from Keith Armishaw who is interested in archiving the clubs documents and film footage etc. The Committee agreed to meet Mr Armishaw to discuss this further. Contact to be made with the old Archivist, D Clark, to gain any information that he may have.
- Shark Trust – Best Practise poster. The secretary showed the Committee the new poster from the Shark Trust which had been adjusted further to the Committee's instructions.
- P Davis stated that, compared to this time last year, catch numbers were down. At this time in 2019 – 428 sharks had been caught, this year only 267 had been caught. The qualifier numbers were also down.

There were no further matters to discuss.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

Date of Next Meeting – 24th August 2020, 7pm at Looe Social Club, Bottom Bar, following AGM