

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Twenty-eighth meeting of the Animals Committee  
Tel Aviv (Israel), 30 August-3 September 2015

Interpretation and Implementation of the Convention

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS

(Agenda item 17)

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

- Chair: Representative of Oceania (Mr. Robertson) and Alternate Representative of Asia (Mr. Ishii);
- Animals Committee: Alternate Representative of Asia (Mr. Giam);
- Parties: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, European Union, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Thailand, United States, Vietnam.
- IGOs and NGOs: Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNEP-WCMC, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Abercrombie and Fish, BLOOM Association, Defenders of Wildlife, Earth Negotiation Bulletin, Humane Society International, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Manta Trust, Pew Charitable Trusts, Project AWARE Foundation, Seamarc Pvt Ltd, Society for Wildlife and Nature (SWAN) International, Stony Brook Research Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, TRAFFIC International and Wildlife Conservation Society.

Mandate

1. Taking account of the presentations and discussions in plenary, the working group shall:
  - a) consider document AC28 Doc. 17.1.1 submitted under Agenda items 17.1 [Implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP16)], including the recommendations made therein;
  - b) examine the information provided by range States in response to Notification 2015/027 and other relevant data; and
  - c) advise on the reporting by the Animals Committee on progress on shark and ray activities to the 17th Conference of the Parties, which should also contain an analysis of information provided by range States on trade and other available relevant data and information, and if necessary, species specific recommendations for improving the conservation status of sharks.
2. The working group shall make recommendations accordingly for the Animals Committee to consider.

## Report:

Documents, including late submissions, were provided by Argentina, Canada, China, Colombia, EU, Fiji, Greece, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Singapore, Spain and USA. Short additional presentations were provided by Australia, Brazil, Chile, Peru and the Republic of Korea.

Verbal reports were received on several shark implementation workshops, and some written outputs considered, including the Dakar Action Plan and the Casablanca and Xiamen Declarations. The outputs of the latter three regional workshops, posted in the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal, were agreed by 32 CITES Parties and had several common issues of relevance to the Animals Committee. These are summarised in an annex to this report for the attention of Parties.

Implementation challenges identified and discussed included identification; preparation of NDFs; permitting exports; artisanal/small scale fisheries; and bycatch mortality of CITES-listed species.

The Animals Committee acknowledged with appreciation Germany's generous funding that has enabled the Secretariat to appoint a marine species officer to support the implementation of CITES for marine species.

The Animals Committee acknowledged the very important support of Parties, especially Japan and the European Union, FAO and NGOs for capacity building activities, the development of identification tools (e.g. iSharkFin), and other aspects of implementation of the recent shark and ray listings.

The Animals Committee thanked Germany and Japan for sharing with the Animals Committee their approaches for undertaking NDFs, and Australia for making their NDFs available through the CITES Shark and Ray Portal.

## **Recommendations:**

### **Non-detriment findings and conservation issues**

The Animals Committee **encourages** Parties, in the spirit of improving capacity, sharing information, and improving knowledge of regional harvest levels, to make their NDFs available to the Secretariat for posting on the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal.

The Animals Committee **encourages** Parties to take up Germany's offer to present NDF guidance at training workshops and to share feedback on the use of the guidance.

The Animals Committee **encourages** Parties to take note of the different approaches to making NDFs and the examples provided in the Sharks and Rays Portal.

The Animals Committee **notes** the availability of the rapid management-risk assessment (M-risk) method (AC27 Inf. 6) that could support the development of NDFs and be used to identify stocks and species of concern, and further **notes** that examples of the application of this methodology are available [e.g. in document AC28 Inf. 27 (Rev.)].

### **Collaboration with other relevant UN Bodies**

The Animals Committee **congratulates** the Secretariat, FAO and CMS on their ongoing collaboration to date in relation to the implementation of the shark and ray Appendix II listings agreed at CoP16 and **requests** that this collaboration be continued and expanded.

**Recognising** that several species of sharks and rays are listed in the Appendices of CITES and CMS, the Animals Committee **asks** the Standing Committee to remind Parties that CMS Parties should normally not be able to issue legal acquisition findings under CITES for the products of those species (e.g. Manta rays) listed in Appendix I of CMS. The Standing Committee **should remind** Parties that some RFMOs have conservation and management measures for sharks taken in their fisheries, including prohibitions on the retention or landing of certain CITES-listed shark and ray species. The Animals Committee **requests** the Secretariat to provide on the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal clear and regularly updated information on these additional measures for CITES-listed species.

The Animals Committee **recommends** that the Secretariat continues to expand its collaboration with FAO and RFBs, and post relevant studies and reports related to the conservation and management of CITES-listed shark species on the Sharks and Rays Portal.

The Animals Committee **recommends** that the CITES Secretariat, FAO, and interested Parties and international organizations collaborate to report progress on implementation of the CITES shark and ray listings to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the FAO's Committee on Fisheries in 2016, and to the CITES CoP 17, also in 2016.

The Animals Committee **directs** the Secretariat to **draw to the attention** of Parties and FAO, in the context of the finalisation of FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines), that CITES listed species occur in small scale fisheries and that NDFs will need to be prepared if the products of those fisheries enter international trade.

### **Regional Cooperation**

The Animals Committee **recommends** that the Secretariat seek funding to address some of the important issues raised at regional implementation meetings (Casablanca, Dakar and Xiamen) that are found in Annex 1 to this report.

The Animals Committee **urges** Parties that are also Members of Regional Fisheries Bodies to work through the respective mechanisms of these RFBs, particularly where sharks are taken pursuant to Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) fisheries, and to adopt and implement conservation and management measures for CITES-listed shark species, if they have not yet done so.

The Animals Committee **urges** all Parties that are also Members of Regional Fisheries Bodies to encourage the RFBs to make CITES-listed species a priority for data collection, data collation and stock assessments, and to provide these data to their Members.

The Animals Committee **urges** Parties to cooperate regionally with research, stock assessments, data sharing, and analysis, to help Parties to develop legal acquisition findings and NDFs for shared stocks.

The Animals Committee **urges** Parties to continue to cooperate regionally on training initiatives for CITES Authorities, fisheries staff and Customs officers, in cooperation with the CITES and FAO Secretariats.

### **New information for consideration by AC 29**

The Animals Committee **directs** the CITES Secretariat issue a notification similar to 2015/027, **requesting** Parties to provide new information prior to AC 29 on their national legislation and shark and ray activities.

The Animals Committee **directs** the Secretariat to post a list of CITES Parties that have adopted stricter domestic measures for CITES-listed shark and ray species, the species that are covered in this way, the dates of these measures, and links to the measures, including:

- Legal protection for CITES-listed shark and ray species;
- Zero quotas for CITES-listed shark and ray species;
- Parties to CMS that have agreed to protect CMS Appendix I species;
- Members of RFMOs with measures that prohibit retention, landing, or trade of CITES-listed species.

The Animals Committee **requests** the Secretariat to provide a summary of the information from the CITES trade database on levels of trade since September 2014 in its report to AC 29.

### **Identification and traceability issues**

Recognising that improving traceability from catch to consumer is critical, the Animals Committee **urges** the CITES Secretariat to work with FAO to explore extending the existing iSharkFin tool to the identification of dried and skinned shark fins; and with the World Customs Organization to expand Customs Codes for species and product categories.

The Animals Committee **urges** Parties to share knowledge of the techniques for DNA testing of shark species to allow rapid and cost-effective identification of shark products.

The Animals Committee **recommends** the Standing Committee recognises the broad issues of identification and traceability and prioritizes those issues, during the deliberations of the Standing Committee's Intersessional Working Group on the Conservation and Management of Sharks and in its report to SC66.

### **Bycatch of species listed in the CITES Appendices**

The Animals Committee **urges** Parties and Regional Fisheries Bodies to develop and improve methods to avoid bycatch of sharks and rays (particularly where retention, landing, and sale of these species is normally prohibited under CMS or RFMO requirements) and reduce their mortality, including by exploring gear selectivity and improved techniques for live release.

### **Small-scale and artisanal fisheries**

Recognising that CITES-listed species (particularly hammerhead sharks) form an important component of small-scale fisheries catches, the Animals Committee **encourages** Parties to exchange information on how the impact of artisanal fishing on total mortality is taken into consideration in the development of NDFs.

### **Species-specific issues**

The Animals Committee **recommends** that the Standing Committee recognises problems of species identification, look-alike issues, and traceability raised by Parties at the Animals Committee, including for:

- i) the Manta rays and closely related *Mobula* rays, and **reminds** Parties that these species may not normally be exported by CMS Parties because they are all listed in Appendix I of CMS; and
- ii) the hammerhead sharks, and **urges** Parties to endeavor to identify hammerhead sharks to species level in fisheries and landings data.

**Declaration and action plan recommendations from three recent regional CITES shark workshops available on the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal.**

**Casablanca Declaration**<sup>1</sup> from a workshop attended by: Democratic Republic of the Congo, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria and Senegal

**Dakar Action Plan**<sup>2</sup> from a workshop attended by: Benin, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

**Xiamen declaration**<sup>3</sup> from a workshop attended by: China, Hong Kong (China), Macao (China), India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan (as an observer), Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Yemen

**Recommendations *inter alia* relevant to the Animals Committee:**

Casablanca declaration	Actions	Suggested Methodologies
ESTABLISH OR STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT REGIME FOR SHARK FISHERIES (short term)	<p>Promote the conservation and management of sharks through the adoption of minimum precautionary measures to address known sources of mortality.</p> <p>Improve the monitoring and reporting of catch and trade data</p> <p>Compile available knowledge on biological, ecological and economic aspects of the listed species</p>	<p>Establish, as appropriate, closed nursery and or reproduction areas, gear regulations to minimize discards, min. sizes, restriction of access (licenses), fiscal measures, etc.</p> <p>Strengthen human resources and logistic means</p> <p>Conduct baseline studies, incorporate local knowledge and other approaches for data poor situations</p>
STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT REGIME FOR SHARK FISHERIES (Mid-term)	<p>Development and implementation of National Plan of Action (NPOA) for sharks.</p> <p>Improve regional cooperation and coordination through exchange of information and harmonization of management measures.</p> <p>Promote co-management approaches to fisheries.</p> <p>Improve the monitoring and reporting of catch and trade data</p> <p>Improve knowledge on biological, ecological and economic aspects of the listed species</p>	<p>Development of annual programme for the implementation of the NPOA-Sharks</p> <p>Establishment of national and regional working groups through existing RFBs.</p> <p>Strengthen existing professional fishers organizations</p> <p>Create or strengthen mechanisms for stakeholder participation in decision-making</p> <p>Training in the identification of shark species and products in trade</p> <p>Production of field guides and other materials/ tools to facilitate the identification of specimens in catches and in trade</p> <p>Increase the level of attention to sharks in national research priorities (graduate programs,</p>

<sup>1</sup> Casablanca, Morocco, 13 February 2014 (CITES/FAO)

<sup>2</sup> Dakar, 12-14 August 2014 (NOAA/SSN)

<sup>3</sup> Xiamen, China, from 13 to 15 of May 2014 (CITES/FAO)

1. The term "shark" is taken to include all species of sharks, skates, rays and chimeras (Class Chondrichthyes)
2. At the end of each activity the following abbreviations are used to indicate the time frame for implementation:

		research grants, etc)
IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT OF FISHERIES SECTOR IN CITES PROCESSES	Ensure appropriate technical expertise at CITES meetings.	Consider the participation of fisheries officers as observers in Animals Committee, CITES Working Groups and CoP

<b>Dakar Action Plan</b>		
<b>Issues</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Activities to address identified needs</b>
Objective 1. Ensure that relevant national authorities in the region have a good understanding of CITES requirements and their implementation		1.2. Develop procedures and training on how to make non-detriment findings for CITES-listed shark and ray species.
Objective 2. Obtain proper identification of CITES-listed shark and ray species and identification tools for sharks and ray species when caught and landed, and when in trade.		2.1. Create/distribute shark and ray identification guides and work towards the standardized reporting of shark and ray species landed in log books and other records.  2.2. Develop methods to identify CITES-listed shark species parts and products that will be exported or imported (fin identification guides, other necessary identification guides, genetic identification techniques)  2.3. Provide training for relevant personnel on the use of identification guides and techniques.
Objective 4. Enhance the implementation of the requirements of CITES through tracking procedures, data-collection, data reporting and scientific research		4.1. Improve the collection and reporting of standardized data on CITES-listed and other shark and ray species that are caught and landed to assist CITES Parties in making the findings needed for export of CITES-listed shark species.  4.2. Develop a chain of custody or traceability system to track CITES-listed shark and ray species products from catches to export.  4.3. Develop regional harmonized species-specific customs/tariff codes for CITES-listed shark and ray species and improve the collection of trade data on CITES-listed and other shark and ray species.  4.4. Develop a harmonized regional approach for making legal acquisition findings for CITES-listed shark and ray species (legal origin and sourcing) taking into account port state measures.  4.5. Conduct stock or ecological risk assessments of CITES-listed shark and ray species.  4.6. Develop protocols when relevant to share data relative to shared stocks.

		4.7. Set up a regional DNA research laboratory.
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<b>Xiamen Declaration</b>		
<b>Issues</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Activities to address identified needs</b> ST =short term (1-2 years) MT= medium term (3-5 years) LT= long term (5+ years)
<b>ACTION 1: IMPROVEMENT OF DATA COLLECTION</b>		
1. Scientific information to support assessment and management of shark and ray fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of fisheries data (catch, discards, effort) in particular in areas with high species diversity, small-scale fisheries and limited human capacity</li> <li>• Lack of spatio-temporal data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct more training courses and workshops on biology, taxonomy, ecology and stock assessment of sharks and rays (ST)</li> <li>• Support the data collection through logbook and/or observer programs and others as feasible (ST)</li> <li>• Encourage the use of local knowledge (ST)</li> <li>• Record all landing data of CITES listed species at species level (ST/MT)</li> <li>• Carry out stock assessments at regional levels (MT)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of biological information, stock structure, nursery grounds and habitats of sharks and rays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve knowledge of sharks and rays through research and fisheries monitoring (ST)</li> <li>• Collect biological information on sharks (ST)</li> <li>• Develop field guides for sharks and rays, using pre-existing material (ST)</li> <li>• Encourage the use of local knowledge (ST)</li> <li>• Support data collection through fishery independent surveys (MT)</li> <li>• Collect information on survival rates of released fish (MT)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of socio-economic information on fishers and traders of sharks and rays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect basic socio-economic information on relevant shark fisheries and trade (ST)</li> <li>• Conduct comprehensive socio-economic assessments and analysis of shark and ray fisheries and trade (MT)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of data and information on utilization, marketing and trade of sharks and rays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the supply chains of the different products and derivatives of sharks and rays in trade (ST)</li> <li>• Conduct marketing and trade assessments (MT)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of adequate shark fisheries management (as a basis for NDFs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance training and capacity building (ST)</li> <li>• Provide sufficient funding (ST)</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Lack of collaboration on research and data sharing on migratory or straddling sharks and rays species</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited research on shared shark and ray resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile a list of existing regional data, information and experts on sharks and rays (ST)</li> <li>• Develop regional data sharing mechanisms (MT)</li> <li>• Carry out regional joint shark research and assessments (MT/LT)</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTION 3: STRENGTHENING CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES</b></p>		
<p><b>3. Technical difficulties in applying fisheries management measures to the CITES listed species</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties in live release of non-target species</li> <li>• Difficulties in controlling and reducing overfishing and fishing capacity</li> <li>• Difficulties in reducing the bycatch of sharks and rays</li> <li>• Lack of enforcement of management measures</li> <li>• Lack of implementation of management plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop guidelines and techniques for the safe release of live specimens incidentally caught (ST)</li> <li>• Develop appropriate species-specific gears and/or bycatch -reduction-devices (BRDs) to reduce bycatch of sharks and rays listed in CITES appendices (MT)</li> <li>• Develop and implement shark management plans (MT)</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Lack of effective regional shark management measures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of appropriate legislation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop effective regional management measures for CITES listed elasmobranchs (ST/MT)</li> <li>• Develop regional management plans for elasmobranchs (MT)</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTION 4: ENHANCING TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING/HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT</b></p>		
<p><b>1. Lack of capacity in the species identification of shark and ray products</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many products and derivatives from different species cannot be readily differentiated (look-alike species or some highly processed products)</li> <li>• Lack of officers with taxonomic competence for the identification of fresh and processed sharks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide user friendly guides for non-experts (ST/MT)</li> <li>• Train customs officials and all other actors in the supply chain in the use of shark identification tools (MT)</li> </ul>