

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



Twenty-fourth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva, (Switzerland), 20-24 April 2009

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS AND STINGRAYS
(AGENDA ITEMS 14.1-14.4)

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

Chair: Representative of Oceania (Mr Hay);

Members: Alternate representative of Asia (Mr Giam), Alternate representative of Europe (Mr O'Cruidain).

Parties: Canada, China, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain and the United States of America; and

IGOs and NGOs: Convention on Migratory Species, European Community, IUCN, Earthtrust, Ocean Conservancy, Ornamental Fish International, Species Management Specialists, Swan International, TRAFFIC and WWF.

Mandate

1. Regarding agenda item 14.1: *Activities concerning shark species of concern (Decision 14.107)*:
 - a) Examine the report of the shark intersessional group on the implementation of decision 14.107 in Annex 1 to AC24 Doc. 14.1 and the comments in Annex 2 to AC24 Doc. 14.1;
 - b) Work further on refinement of the list of shark species of concern;
 - c) Discuss the progress made in the implementation of Decision 14.107 and decide on future activities; and
 - d) Make recommendations to the Committee as appropriate.
2. Regarding agenda item 14.2: *Regional workshop on South American freshwater stingrays*:
 - a) Consider the outputs of the South American freshwater stingray workshop; and
 - b) Make any necessary species-specific recommendations to the Committee on improving the conservation status and regulation of international trade in these taxa.

3. Regarding agenda item 14.3: *Linkages between international trade in shark fins and meat, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing*:
 - a) Consider the report on linkages between the international trade in shark fins and meat and IUU shark fishing activities;
 - b) Discuss the progress made and propose follow-up actions to the Committee as appropriate; and
 - c) Make recommendations to the Committee as appropriate.
4. Regarding agenda item 14.4: *Other Animals Committee tasks related to Conservation and management of sharks*:
 - a) Examine:
 - i) The responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2008/058;
 - ii) The outcome of the *International expert workshop on non-detriment findings*; and
 - iii) Outputs of the *FAO Technical Workshop on the Status, Limitations and Opportunities for Improving the Monitoring of Shark Fisheries and Trade*; and
 - b) Make recommendations to the Committee as appropriate.

Recommendations

Mandate 1, agenda item 14.1: *Activities concerning shark species of concern (Decision 14.107)*

1. Resolution Conf. 12.6 on the Conservation and management of sharks directs the Animals Committee to examine information provided by range States in shark assessment reports and other available relevant documents, with a view to identifying key species and examining these for consideration and possible listing under CITES. Decision 14.107 directs the Animals Committee to continue activities specified under Resolution Conf. 12.6, including refinement of the list of shark species of concern, in collaboration with FAO, taking account of those referenced in Annex 3 to document CoP14 Doc. 59.1.
2. The Shark Working Group discussed document AC24 Doc. 14.1, submitted by the United States of America, and its commonalities with Annex IV of document AC24 Inf. 6, submitted by the FAO. The lists of priority shark species identified in these two documents and in Annex 3 of CoP14 Doc. 59.1 overlap significantly (Table 1); FAO and CITES both agree that it is necessary to take action to improve data collection, management, conservation and trade monitoring for these species, although it was noted that other species would likely have been identified in AC14 Inf.6 if additional FAO Members had attended the workshop. Parties are asked to note the preliminary analysis of requiem and pelagic sharks presented in document AC24 Doc. 14.1.
3. The Shark Working Group identified shark species whose status is affected by poor fisheries management and trade, which were also identified by the FAO workshop as priority species for monitoring fisheries and trade. For these species, the Working Group recommends Parties improve data collection, management and conservation, which could be implemented, enhanced and enforced through domestic, bilateral, RFMO, or other international measures, including under Resolution Conf. 12.6.
4. Possible future actions by the Animals Committee under Resolution Conf. 12.6 and Decision 14.107 were considered. These might include, where appropriate and if necessary, refinement of the list of species of concern, particularly if additional data become available.

Table 1: Shark species of concern listed in CoP 14 Doc 59.1 Annex 3.

Species listed in CoP14 59.1 and/or AC24 Doc.14.1.	FAO's list of primary species for monitoring of fisheries and trade¹	Action taken under CITES
Spiny dogfish shark <i>Squalus acanthias</i>	Nominated by Spain, Argentina, Japan	Considered and rejected for listing in Appendix II at CoP14; have entered range State consultation prior to consideration at CoP15
Porbeagle shark <i>Lamna nasus</i>	Nominated by Spain	
Freshwater stingrays Family Potamotrygonidae	-	Decision 14.109. New AC recommendations proposed.
Sawfishes Family Pristidae	Nominated by the United States of America	Listed in the CITES Appendices
Gulper sharks genus <i>Centrophorus</i>	Nominated by Sri Lanka	
School, tope, or soupfin shark <i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>	Nominated by Argentina	Decision 14.114 not yet implemented.
Guitarfishes, shovelnose rays Order Rhinobatiformes	Four species nominated by West African CSRP (<i>Commission sous-régionale des pêches</i>) (7 States)	
Requiem and pelagic sharks	Many species nominated	Some reviewed in AC24 Doc. 14.1
Devil rays Family Mobulidae	-	
Leopard sharks <i>Triakis semifasciata</i>	-	
Species reviewed in AC24 Doc 14.1		
Hammerhead sharks <i>Sphyrna</i> spp	Nominated by eight States & West African CSRP (7 States), China (Hong Kong SAR)	
Dusky shark <i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>	Nominated by the United States of America	
Thresher sharks <i>Alopias</i> spp	Nominated by Panama, Sri Lanka, Indonesia	
Shortfin mako <i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>	Nominated by Hong Kong, Spain, the United States of America, Japan	
Silky shark <i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>	Nominated by China (Hong Kong SAR), Sri Lanka, Indonesia	
Oceanic whitetip shark <i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	Nominated by Panama	
Blue shark <i>Prionace glauca</i>	Nominated by China (Hong Kong SAR), Spain, Panama, Ghana, the United States of America, Japan	
Sandbar shark <i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>	Nominated by China (Hong Kong SAR), the United States of America	
Bull shark <i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>	-	
Tiger shark <i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>	Nominated by Ghana	

¹ AC24 Inf. 6. Report of the FAO Technical Workshop on Status, Limitations and Opportunities for Improving the Monitoring of Shark Fisheries and Trade (Advance copy). *FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report* No. 897. Appendix IV: Provisional list of primary species of elasmobranchs for the monitoring of fisheries and trade.

Mandate 2, agenda item 14.2: South American freshwater stingray workshop (Decision 14.110)

1. The Shark Working Group discussed document AC24 Doc. 14.2, the interim draft report of the freshwater stingray workshop held the previous week. Issues raised included the shortage of data from many range States on the level of commercial exploitation for food and for ornamental markets, and on quantities of these products in international trade. The value and potential shortcomings of an Appendix III listing for these species was explored, as were the potential risks to the South American ornamental freshwater fish industry posed by captive breeding outside the region, and the potential for addressing these through restrictions on exports of adult stingrays for breeding purposes.
2. The Shark Working Group recommends that:
 - i) Range States take note of the workshop's findings and conclusions, and increase their efforts to improve data collection on the scale and impact of the threats facing stingray species and populations from collection for ornamental trade, commercial fisheries for food, and habitat damage.
 - ii) Range States consider implementing or reinforcing national regulations regarding the management and reporting of capture and international trade of freshwater stingrays for all purposes, including commercial fisheries for food and ornamental trade, and standardizing these measures across the region, for example through existing South American intergovernmental bodies.
 - iii) Range States be encouraged to consider the listing of endemic and threatened species of freshwater stingrays (Potamotrygonidae) in CITES Appendix III to support domestic management measures for species entering international ornamental trade and to improve and enhance trade data collection.

Mandate 3, agenda item 14.3: Linkages between international trade in shark fins and meat, and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (Decision 14.117)

1. The Shark Working Group discussed document AC24 Doc. 14.3 and document AC24 Inf. 2, submitted by Australia, prepared and presented to the Working Group by TRAFFIC. These conclude, *inter alia*, that the key impediment to better understanding and quantification of this issue is lack of species-specific data on shark catch (landings and discards) and trade, and the difficulty of reconciling available catch, production and trade data. The meeting agreed that IUU fishing was an important issue and that improved data and tracking of products was required.
2. The Shark Working Group recommends continued research to improve understanding of the situation and identify the linkages between international trade in shark fins and meat, and IUU fishing. It is necessary to improve the collection of catch and trade data at the lowest taxonomic level possible (ideally by species). In this context, close cooperation with FAO and RFMOs is encouraged in order to further clarify the nature of IUU fishing. In addition, studies of trade in shark meat, including prices in major fish markets, are also encouraged in order to better identify the shark products that are driving IUU fishing.
3. The Shark Working Group noted the FAO Guidelines on Responsible Fish Trade². These contain recommendations of direct relevance to the work of FAO and CITES on the topic of sharks. Therefore, the Shark Working Group recommends that the CITES Animals Committee discuss with FAO any benefits that may be gained by discussing elements of Article 11.2.2 of these Guidelines, for example catch and trade certification schemes (paragraphs 8 & 9), with the involvement of representatives from Parties, relevant regional fisheries organisations and the fishing industry, the shark product industry, retailers and the IUCN Shark Specialist Group.

² FAO (2009). *Responsible Fish Trade*. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries No. 11. FAO, Rome, Italy. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/011/i0590e/i0590e00.pdf>

Mandate 4, agenda item 14.4: *Other Animals Committee tasks related to Conservation and management of sharks*

1. The Shark Working Group examined the results of Notification to the Parties No. 2008/058 and the outcomes of the NDF Workshop. TRAFFIC tabled a copy of a presentation to the Non Detriment Workshop regarding the development of NDF for fish species. Spain reported that it had made available as Inf. Doc. 5 a report on *Sharks: Conservation, Fishing and International Trade*. This suggests some fundamental considerations when making NDF for shark species and proposes some general guiding principles. Copies are available from the Spanish Scientific Authority.
2. The conclusions of the report of the FAO workshop chaired by the United States of America and Japan (AC24 Inf. 6¹) were reviewed and its findings, which include many of the conclusions that appear in Documents of the CITES Animals Committee and Conference of Parties, were endorsed by the Shark Working Group. The report outlines possible reasons for the poor implementation of the FAO IPOA-Sharks. Suggestions for improving this situation include greater use of existing management measures and regulations, adopting a more pragmatic, step-by-step approach when developing and implementing National Shark Plans, and improving stakeholder participation.
3. The Shark Working Group recommends that Parties which are shark fishing States but have not yet implemented a National Shark Plan (NPOA) develop their own NPOAs at the earliest opportunity and take steps to improve research and data collection on both fisheries and trade as a first step towards their Shark Plans. Parties should also improve their outreach to RFMOs. This may be achieved by greater consultation between the Fisheries and Environment Departments of Contracting Parties, in order to ensure that CITES' recommendations are discussed by these bodies.

Other matters

1. FAO tabled a list of FAO's activities on sharks.
2. The observer from the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species summarised the activities on sharks underway within CMS (including through MoUs and Joint Work Programmes with CITES and FAO). Some CMS Parties are currently negotiating an MoU for a global shark instrument, backed by an Action Plan, to promote the collaborative management of migratory shark species. The intention is to promote global integration of conservation and management actions in coordination with other instruments (including FAO, RFMOs and CITES). The third meeting to negotiate the MoU is to be held in the Philippines in 2009. Range States do not need to be Party to CMS in order to engage in this process or to become signatories to the MoU.