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

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Twentieth meeting of the Animals Committee
Johannesburg (South Africa), 29 March-2 April 2004

Biological and trade status of sharks (Resolution Conf. 12.6 and Decision 12.47)

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

Members of the working group

Oceania (Chair);

Observers from Parties: Belgium, HKSAR-China, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, United States

Observers from inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations: European Commission, IUCN Shark Specialist Group, IFAW, The Ocean Conservancy (rapporteur), Defenders of Wildlife, OATA, Project Seahorse, Wildlife Conservation Society, Ornamental Fish International

The CITES Secretariat.

FAO attended the meeting as an observer only.

Terms of reference

a) Review documents AC20 Doc. 19 and Infs. 1-8 to assess progress with the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.6 and Decision 12.47.

b) Consider the adoption of standard names and codes for shark species in trade.

c) Review progress with the implementation of IPOA-Sharks.

d) Provide comments to proposals to include shark species in the Appendices of the Convention.

e) Formulate concluding statements on the relevant Decision and the Resolution for consideration at CoP13, and suggest amendments or modifications as appropriate.

Summary of discussions and recommendations

Shark Species Codes
Introducing AC20 Inf. 2, 3 & 4, Defenders of Wildlife noted that these sought to provide a system compatible with the World Customs Organization (WCO) six digit code system, were flexible and adaptable for species

and products, and could be expanded to provide information at any taxonomic level. Working Group members expressed appreciation for the progress on the codes, but cautioned against too complex a system and noted the need to liaise with FAO.

The following work plan was recommended to assist the Secretariat in implementation of Decision 11.151:

1) Liaison with the FAO Secretariat (April – May 2004)

    a) One or more members of the Working Group will brief FAO staff on Decision 11.151 and discuss any parallel work within the FAO Committee on Fisheries Sub-Committee on Fish Trade; and

    b) On behalf of the Secretariat, Working Group members will revise AC20 Inf. Docs. 2, 3 and 4 as necessary to match, if possible, trade and species code recommendations from FAO.

2) Consultation with WCO on process (June – July 2004)

    a) On behalf of the Secretariat, WG members will contact appropriate staff at WCO to discuss Decision 11.151 and current revision of harmonized trade codes.

    b) After consultation on timelines, submission protocol and desired input, WG members will further revise AC20 Inf. Docs. 2, 3 and 4 to match WCO needs. This may or may not involve proposing all species codes to WCO.

3) Secretariat liaison (August – September 2004)

    a) It was recommended that the Secretariat should formally respond to WCO's letter of 2003, submitting new versions of Inf. 2, 3 and 4 on behalf of CITES Parties. Further contact between the CITES Secretariat and WCO would be possible after this point.

    b) The Secretariat should update Parties at CoP13 and perhaps rescind Dec. 11.151 as complete.

FAO IPOA-Sharks implementation

IUCN introduced AC20 Inf. 5. Although twice as many states had reported progress towards implementation of the IPOA-Sharks than was the case two years ago, with particularly good progress by some African States noted, there was not much evidence of improved shark fisheries management. It was suggested that it was important for the Animals Committee to continue the review by determining whether species-specific catch and landings data collection activity and the monitoring and management of shark fisheries had improved. TRAFFIC (which had not been able to attend the Working Group) had suggested that the CITES Animals Committee focus its attention in future upon the 20 shark fishing States that are responsible for over 80% of world shark landings reported to FAO.

The Group recommended that the Animals Committee should submit AC20 Inf.5 on FAO IPOA-Sharks implementation to CoP13, following the incorporation of a few late responses to Notification 2003/068 requesting information from Parties, and continue to monitor implementation of the IPOA-Sharks. The Working Group expressed appreciation for the voluntary efforts of the IUCN Shark Specialist Group and urged consideration of financial support for future shark projects.

The Group highlighted the need for capacity building efforts in developing countries and high seas fisheries for implementation of the IPOA-Sharks, as addressed in Res. Conf. 12.6. Further support from FAO for initiatives such as training workshops and species identification manuals was urgently needed. It was noted that requests for support from FAO would normally carry greater weight if made directly by FAO Members. The observer from FAO informed the meeting that the Organization would continue in its efforts to encourage implementation of the IPOA-Sharks with the resources available to it, and to cooperate with CITES as appropriate.

Species Specific Recommendations

Pursuant to Res. Conf. 12.6, the Shark Working Group of the Animals Committee considered AC20 Inf. 1, 6, 7, 8, 19, 21, 22 & 23. The Working Group offers the following species-specific recommendations aimed at improving the conservation and management status of sharks and regulation of international trade in these species. These recommendations are offered separately and distinct from the CITES listing process, regardless of the outcome of pending and future listing proposals. The members of the Working Group are not in a position to provide endorsement or rejection of shark listing proposals; range States will respond separately to the proposals.

Spiny Dogfish Shark *Squalus acanthias*

Germany introduced AC20 Inf. 7, the draft spiny dogfish listing proposal, annotation and decision, requesting and receiving feedback from participants. The problem of identification of fins of this species in trade was noted. These are a by-product of the fisheries that are driven by international trade demand for meat (which is traded under the species name). It was suggested that because the fins are not readily recognisable as a spiny dogfish product, they might not need to be covered by a CITES listing. The Secretariat advised that this should not be an impediment to listing. It was suggested that an annotation might exclude the fins. The Shark Working Group reviewed the technical merits of Germany's draft proposal, and most members agreed that spiny dogfish appeared to meet the criteria for listing in CITES Appendix II. The Working Group concluded that the conservation and management status of the species is unfavourable in most regions, with many Northern Hemisphere populations severely depleted, and recommends the following:

- Range States and Regional Fishery Management Organizations should take steps to improve data collection and management for spiny dogfish. In particular, the U.S. and Canada are encouraged with urgency to work together to link existing assessment programs and establish bilateral, science-based management measures for spiny dogfish.

- Parties that are Member States of the European Union are encouraged with urgency to seek and implement, via national and EU level measures, scientific advice on developing a conservation plan that allows the rebuilding of the relevant stocks.

- In regions where information on stock status is poor, Range States are encouraged to develop precautionary and adaptive management measures to ensure that spiny dogfish catches are sustainable.

- Parties are encouraged to report dogfish catches, landings and trade data to FAO and to train customs officials in using existing spiny dogfish codes.

The Shark Working Group noted AC20 Inf. 22, Conservation and Management Status of Spiny Dogfish Shark (*Squalus acanthias*). The Group encouraged cross-reference with Germany's listing proposal and submission of an updated version of Inf. 22 to CoP13 by the IUCN.

Porbeagle Shark *Lamna nasus*

Germany introduced AC20 Inf. 6, the draft porbeagle listing proposal and resolution, requesting feedback from participants. In response to a question on whether the species was caught in target or bycatch fisheries, it was noted that it is both a target species and a highly valuable retained component of multispecies fisheries that may primarily target other species. The term bycatch is inappropriate for such a valuable species that may make the fishery of other target species economically viable. It was also noted that porbeagle can be released alive from longlines. The Shark Working Group reviewed the technical merits of Germany's proposal and most members agreed that the porbeagle shark appears to meet the criteria for listing in CITES Appendix II.

The Working Group concluded that North Atlantic populations have been severely depleted and noted that quotas in European Community waters apply only to non-EU fleets through access agreements. As these quotas greatly exceed total landings by these states, they are not considered to be an effective management measure in this case. The Working Group recommended the following:

- ICCAT members are encouraged to collect and report data on catches and discards of porbeagle sharks, as per ICCAT Resolution 95-2, which has yet to be fulfilled, and undertake stock assessments in order to develop management recommendations. Other relevant Regional Fishery Management Organizations are encouraged to establish and implement similar programs. (Mexico advised that the ICCAT resolution may have been implemented).

- The US and Canada are encouraged to enhance existing management for their shared porbeagle stock by establishing a cooperative, bilateral research and fisheries management program.

- The World Customs Organization (WCO) is encouraged with urgency to establish a harmonized international code for porbeagle sharks.

White Shark *Carcharodon carcharias*

The Wildlife Conservation Society introduced AC20 Inf. 1, 19 and 23, noting evidence of population declines in this low abundance, high value species that is sought after for trophies and enters trade as curios and fins. The constraints of the current Appendix III listing regarding controlling trade were noted and the Working Group suggested that the draft listing proposal be amended to explain how uplisting would improve trade monitoring. The Shark Working Group concluded that conservation and management status of white sharks is unfavourable in some regions and that some of the international agreements listed in AC20 Inf.1 aimed at improving the conservation of this species are not being sufficiently implemented.

The Working Group recognized that AC20 Inf. 1 included information additional to that presented in Australia's proposal that might be of value to Parties and to the FAO assessment process. The Working Group encourages Australia to consider incorporating it into their proposal. The representative of Oceania agreed to transmit these comments to Australia.

The group reviewed the technical merits of Australia's white shark proposal and most members agreed that the species appears to meet the listing criteria for inclusion in Appendix II.

Freshwater Stingrays Family Potamotrygonidae

IUCN introduced AC 20 Inf. 8 on South American freshwater stingrays, submitted by the Management Authority of Brazil. These species are very valuable in the international aquarium trade as well as being used for food locally. There is concern that illegal trade is underway. Aquarium trade exports are regulated by Brazil through quotas, but apparently not in neighbouring states, creating management challenges for shared stocks. The Chair advised that CITES listing of species is difficult if there is not adequate protection within the proponent range State. The observer from Ornamental Fish International offered assistance with reviewing species in trade outside Brazil. The observer from OATA suggested that a study of the real economic benefits to local communities of trade in specimens for aquaria be undertaken, adjusted for purchasing power parity at all stages in the marketing chain. The Working Group noted that the document would benefit from the inclusion of more species abundance, distribution and trend data once the updated Red List Assessments are available.

The Working Group recommended that:

- Range States for these species jointly examine cross border trade that may be facilitating illegal trade and consider an Appendix III listings, where appropriate, to control illegal exports.

- The document be revised, with the addition of more species abundance, distribution and trend data, and submitted to COP13 or AC21.

Identification of other key species

IUCN introduced AC 20 Inf. 21, a review of the Shark Specialist Group's (SSG) progress with assessing the threatened status of sharks. The SSG has so far assessed ~25% of taxa. AC 20 Inf. 21 identifies taxa that are threatened globally or regionally, usually as a result of unsustainable fishing. Many of these species enter international trade. The Shark Working Group noted that there is considerable overlap between these species and the ~70 species listed in Paragraph 16, Oceanic Sharks, of Annex 1, Highly Migratory Species,

of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as requiring international cooperation to ensure the conservation and optimum utilization of such species. These are: *Hexanchus griseus*, *Cetorhinus maximus,* Family Alopiidae, *Rhincodon typus,* Family Carcharhinidae, Family Sphyrnidae, and Family Isurida [an old name for Family Lamnidae].

A selection of taxa from these two sources is listed in Table 1: a provisional list of some key species and higher taxa of sharks. These represent a small proportion of the approximately 1,100 living species of chondrichthyan fishes (sharks, skates, rays and chimaeras) and the species in UNCLOS Annex 1. Additional columns in the table indicate why these taxa were selected by the SSG; a combination of factors including:

- listed on UNCLOS,
- listed or proposed for listing on Appendices of CITES or the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS),
- shared or high seas stocks (thus requiring joint management by fishing States for successful sustainable management),
- declining as a result of unsustainable levels of exploitation,
- included on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species,
- effectiveness of management, and/or
- entering international trade.

The Shark Working Group discussed the list of taxa in Table 1. Views were expressed that it was either too long (including some taxa that may be of relatively low priority for the development of recommendations by the Animals Committee under Res. Conf. 12.6 or are already listed on the Appendices), or too short (excluding additional key species that required recommendations for improving their conservation status and the regulation of international trade in their products). Inclusion of Table 1 was eventually agreed to, provided that its purpose was made clear. Despite the wording of Res. Conf. 12.6 directing the Animals Committee to examine key species 'for consideration and possible listing under CITES', Table 1 was not intended to provide a comprehensive species list for this purpose. The list and the recommendations below were offered separately and distinct from the CITES listing process, regardless of the outcome of any pending or future listing proposals. It was noted that the Shark Specialist Group's initial review of the threatened status of sharks would not be completed until 2005 at the earliest and would be followed by further reviews as additional data became available. The Table should, therefore, be considered as a provisional first list of key species requiring special attention from Parties (additional lists of key species and recommendations should be produced for future meetings of the Animals Committee). Effective management of these species could preclude the need for future CITES listings.

The Shark Working Group had insufficient time to develop recommendations for all key taxa in Table 1, but focused on some of those considered to be of particularly high conservation priority by some Group members (lack of recommendations for other species does not mean that they are not also in need of conservation or management measures). The following are listed in taxonomic order, excluding those species already reviewed above.

Sawfishes Family Pristidae

This entire family is being classified by IUCN as Critically Endangered. Records are now extremely rare, but products (particularly fins and rostra) are valuable and still enter trade in small quantities. The Working Group recommended that Parties that are or have been range states for Pristidae undertake, as a matter of urgency, a review of the status of these species in their coastal waters, rivers and lakes, and, if necessary, introduce conservation and trade measures to reduce extinction risk. (The US has already listed smalltooth sawfish as Endangered and prohibited all take of the species within its 200 mile EEZ).

Gulper sharks Genus *Centrophorus*

These species live in low productivity deep ocean environments. They have low growth, reproductive and metabolic rates and are long-lived, even more so than other deepwater sharks. Fisheries are driven by international demand for liver oil and meat and result in extremely rapid stock depletion. An FAO Deep Sea Workshop in December 2003 had recommended that "a precautionary approach to the management of these and other deepsea species is absolutely essential" (including monitoring of catches, landings and trade at species level, preparation of good identification guides, improved use of observers, and development of

standard carcass forms to improve reporting, which should include both species and their products). The Working Group recommended that Parties support this approach.

School, tope, or soupfin shark *Galeorhinus galeus*
These sharks, valued for their meat and fins, are (or have been) important in target and multispecies fisheries in temperate waters world-wide. Most stocks are shared between several Range States, and in most regions are seriously depleted. Only a small number of States have achieved successful management of this biologically-vulnerable species. The Working Group recommended that Range States request FAO's assistance with developing a capacity building workshop for this species in order to train managers from developing States and other States where coastal shark fisheries are not being managed. This would also serve as a case study for the management of other coastal shark fisheries. This was drawn to the attention of the FAO observer.

The Shark Working Group identified the following three taxonomic groups that contain a significant proportion of species subjected to unregulated unsustainable fishing pressures, leading to severe stock depletion, and whose high value products enter international trade in large numbers:

- **Requiem sharks Genus *Carcharhinus***
- **Guitarfishes, Shovelnose rays Order Rhinobatiformes**
- **Devil rays Family Mobulidae**

They recommended that Range States pay particular attention to the management of fisheries and trade in these taxa, including undertaking reviews of their conservation and trade status. It was noted that many of the Carcharhinid sharks were high seas pelagic species that could only be managed through the joint efforts of States, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and other international bodies.

Additional Recommendations
In addition to the above species-specific recommendations, the Shark Working Group urges:

- The development, adoption and implementation of new international instruments, regional agreements and regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) for the conservation and management of sharks, particularly on the high seas where the provisions of the Fish Stocks Agreement need to be implemented for sharks.
- The adoption of science-based shark conservation standards as a prerequisite for EU partnership agreements for fishing outside EU waters.
- FAO and RMFOs be requested to consider recommendations for activities and guidelines to reduce mortality of listed and endangered species of sharks in bycatch and target fisheries, and to develop waterproof shark identification guides for fishermen, to improve shark species identification and data collection.
- CITES consider the development of a waterproof field identification guide for CITES-listed species of shark.

Work Program for Sharks Under CITES (Resolutions, Decisions)
The Chair reviewed the related mandate under Res. Conf. 12.6 and Decision 12.47, and asked the Secretariat whether new language was needed for the consideration of COP13. The Secretariat suggested that the Resolution might not need revision, but that if the text requires updating, this could be taken up by the AC or CoP 13. The Working Group agreed to report back to the Animals Committee that the actions directed to the Animals Committee and Secretariat in Decisions 12.47, 12.48 and 12.49 have now been completed and that Parties should be informed accordingly.

The Working Group recognised that Res. Conf. 12.6 directs the Animals Committee to make species-specific recommendations at the 13th meeting and subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties if necessary on improving the conservation status of sharks and the regulation of international trade in the key species that it has identified. It therefore suggested that the list of taxa in Table 1 and associated recommendations would benefit from further work, possibly including the identification and prioritisation of additional key species. The Working Group recommended that this could be achieved during an intersessional shark workshop and asked the Animals Committee to recommend this and other appropriate means to fulfil the requirements of Res. Conf. 12.6 up to and beyond COP13.

Table 1. Provisional list of some key shark species identified under Res. Conf. 12.6 by the 20th Meeting of the Animals Committee.

This Table is not intended to provide a comprehensive species list for consideration and possible listing under CITES. It is offered separately and distinct from the CITES listing process, regardless of the outcome of any pending or future listing proposals and represents a provisional first list of key species requiring special management attention from Parties. Effective management of these species could preclude the need for future CITES listings.

Species name	UNCLOS	CITES/CMS	Shared stocks	Declining	IUCN Red List *	Management **	International trade
Hexanchus griseus Bluntnose sixgill shark	Yes		?	Yes	NT	No	?
Squalus acanthias Spiny dogfish		Consultation for CITES II	Yes	Yes	NT (VU/EN)	Some	Yes
Genus *Centrophorus*, Gulper Sharks (~10 species)			Yes	Yes	DD–CR	Mostly none	Liver oil (meat?)
Family Squatinidae Angel Sharks (~20 species)			Some	Yes (some)	LC–EN	Mostly none	?
Rhincodon typus Whale shark	Yes	CITES II CMS II	Yes	Yes	VU	Mostly none	Yes
Family Odontaspididae, Sand tigers (3 species)			Yes	Yes	DD–VU, (NT–CR)	Mostly none	Fins, aquaria
Genus *Alopias*, Thresher sharks (3 species)	Yes		Yes	Yes	DD under review (NT)	Mostly none	Meat and fins
Cetorhinus maximus Basking shark	Yes	CITES II	Yes	Yes	VU (EN)	Mostly none	Fins
Carcharodon carcharias Great white shark	Yes	CITES III & consultation I, CMS I & II	Yes	Yes	VU	Some	Jaws and fins
Genus *Isurus* Mako sharks (2 species)	Yes		Yes	Yes	DD under review (NT)	Mostly none	Meat and fins
Lamna ditropis Salmon shark	Yes		Yes	In NW Pac?	DD	Mostly none	Meat and fins
Lamna nasus Porbeagle shark	Yes	Consultation for CITES II	Yes	Yes	NT (VU–EN)	Mostly none	Meat and fins
Galeorhinus galeus School/tope/soupfin shark			Yes	Yes	VU (NT–EN)	Mostly none	Meat and fins
Genus *Mustelus* Smoothhound sharks (25 species)			Yes	Some	LC–VU	Mostly none	Meat
Family Carcharinidae (12 genera, 54 species)	Yes						
Genus *Carcharinus* (31 species, including:)	Yes						
Carcharhinus albimarginatus Silvertip shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	DD (under review)	None	Fins
Carcharhinus amblyrhynchoides Graceful shark	Yes		?	Yes	NT	None	Fins
Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos Gray reef shark	Yes		?	Yes	NT	Mostly none	Fins
Carcharhinus amboinensis Pigeye or Java shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	DD (NT)	None	Fins
Carcharhinus brachyurus Bronze whaler	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT (LC,DD,VU)	Mostly none	Fins
Carcharhinus brevipinna Spinner shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT (VU)	Mostly none	Fins and meat

* Where a range of Red List assessments are given for species groups, these refer to different taxa within these groups. Where a range is provided for a single species, these refer to the global assessment (with regional assessments in brackets). See key on next page.

** Effective shark management or conservation activity is limited to only a few states (there is no space to provide details here) and there is no dedicated or effective shark fisheries management on the high seas.

Table 1 continued.

Species name	UNCLOS	CITES/CMS	Shared stocks	Declining	IUCN Red List *	Management **	International trade
Carcharhinus falciformis Silky shark	Yes		Yes	1 stock >90%	LC (under review)	None	Fins
Carcharhinus galapagensis Galapagos shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT (DD)	None	Fins
Carcharhinus leucas Bull shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT	Mostly none	Fins
Carcharhinus limbatus Blacktip shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT (VU)	Mostly none	Fins and meat
Carcharhinus longimanus Oceanic whitetip shark	Yes		Yes	1 stock >99%	NT (under review)	None	Fins
Carcharhinus melanopterus Blacktip reef shark	Yes		?	Yes	NT	Mostly none	Fins
Carcharhinus obscurus Dusky shark	Yes		Yes	1 stock >80%	NT (VU)	Mostly none	Fins
Carcharhinus perezi Caribbean reef shark	Yes		?	?	NE	Mostly none	Fins
Carcharhinus plumbeus Sandbar shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT	Mostly none	Fins
Galeocerdo cuvier Tiger shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT	Mostly none	Fins
Genus *Glyphis* River sharks (6 species)	Yes		?	Yes	EN–CR	Mostly none	Jaws, fins
Genus *Negaprion* Lemon sharks (2 species)	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT, VU (EN)	Mostly none	Fins
Prionace glauca Blue shark	Yes		Yes	Yes	NT (under review)	None	Fins
Family Sphyrnidae. Hammerheads (8 species)	Yes		Most	Most	LC, DD, NT (3) NE (3)	Mostly none	Fins
Batoid fishes (skates and rays)							
Family Pristidae, Sawfishes (7 species)			Some	Yes	All CR	Mostly none	Fins and rostra
Order Rhinobatiformes: Guitarfishes, Shovelnose rays (~57 species)			Some?	Yes	Most NE, some threatened	Mostly none	Fins are top quality
Dipturus batis Common Skate			Some	Yes	EN (CR) under review	Unmanaged	?
Family Potamotrygonidae Freshwater Stingrays (16-18 species)			Some	Yes	DD, under review	Partial	Ornamental
Genus *Mobula*, Devil rays (9 species)			Some	Yes	NT (2), VU (1), NE (6)	Unmanaged	Gill rakers
Manta birostris Manta Ray			Yes	Yes	DD/VU	Unmanaged	Gill rakers

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Key to Red List Assessments

NE :	Not Evaluated	NT :	Near Threatened	
LC :	Least Concern	VU :	Vulnerable	)
DD :	Data Deficient (many of these will be reviewed in 2004)	EN :	Endangered	) Threatened
		CR :	Critically Endangered	)