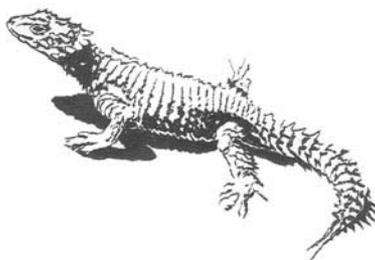


CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



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

BIOLOGICAL AND TRADE STATUS OF SHARKS
REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been prepared by the Chairman of the intersessional working group and the Chairman of the IUCN/SSC Shark Specialist Group (SSG).

Background

2. At its 12th meeting (CoP12, Santiago, 2002), the Conference of the Parties adopted Resolution Conf. 12.6 on Conservation and management of sharks and three new Decisions related to sharks. Decision 12.47 is directed to the Animals Committee (AC). Decisions 12.48 and 12.49, and Decision 11.151, which remains in effect, are directed to the Secretariat but are also directly relevant to the work of the AC.
3. The Decisions are as follows:

Directed to the Animals Committee

12.47 The Chairman of the Animals Committee shall maintain the liaison established with the Secretary of the Committee on Fisheries of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, to monitor the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks). The Chairman of the Animals Committee shall report on progress with the implementation of IPOA-Sharks at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Secretariat

11.151 The Secretariat shall continue to liaise with the World Customs Organization to promote the establishment and use of specific headings within the standard tariff classifications of the Harmonized System to discriminate between shark meat, fins, leather, cartilage and other products.

12.48 The Secretariat shall transmit to FAO the concerns of the Conference of the Parties regarding the lack of progress in implementing the IPOA-Sharks, and urge FAO to take steps to encourage the implementation of the IPOA-Sharks by States and regional fisheries management organizations.

12.49 The Secretariat shall encourage CITES authorities of Parties to obtain information on IPOA-Sharks implementation from their national fisheries departments and report on progress at future meetings of the Animals Committee.

4. The Secretariat reported at the 19th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC19, Geneva, August 2003) that it had complied with Decision 12.48 and presented the response from the FAO Department of Fisheries (Annex 2 to document AC19 Doc. 18.2). The Secretariat had also issued Notification to the Parties No. 2003/051 on conservation and management of sharks, with 30 September 2003 as the deadline to submit information. Following this, the World Customs Organization (WCO) sent a request for information on scientific names and product categories for sharks in trade. The working group was asked to examine this request.
5. The Chairman informed participants in AC19 that he had, in compliance with Decision 12.47, also liaised with the Secretary of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and that FAO had agreed to keep him informed of progress with the implementation of IPOA-Sharks.
6. A working group on sharks was established at AC19 with the following terms of reference, drawn from the four elements of Resolution Conf. 12.6 directing the AC to:
 - a) *continue activities specified under Decision 11.94 (carried over to Decision 12.47) beyond the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and to report on progress at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties;*
 - b) *critically review progress towards IPOA-Sharks implementation (NPOA-Sharks) by major fishing and trading nations, by a date one year before the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES;*
 - c) *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;*
 - d) *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 these species.*
7. The following tasks were agreed at AC19:
 - a) A Notification to the Parties to be sent by the Secretariat comprising a structured questionnaire prepared by the working group requesting information on progress with National Plans of Action, the International Plan of Action and Stock Assessment Reports;
 - b) Ongoing activities including:
 - i) improving liaison with fishery agencies at the national level; and
 - ii) establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding with FAO;
 - c) SSG to analyse and report on responses to Notifications to the Parties Nos. 2003/051 and 2003/068 and to compile a list of 'key species' from available documents (completion of these tasks was conditional on the availability of human resources within the short time available);
 - d) The establishment of an intersessional working group to progress these issues;
 - e) Establishment of a process to make species-specific recommendations at CoP13; and
 - f) Provision to WCO of standard names of product categories and scientific names of species in trade following examination of the Hong Kong Customs system of harmonized codes.

8. The following progress has been made.
- a) Notification to the Parties No. 2003/068, containing the questionnaire, was distributed by the Secretariat on 18 November 2003 with a deadline for comments of 15 December 2003. AC representatives were requested by the Chairman of the intersessional working group to encourage responses to the questionnaire from their region.
 - b) Responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2003/051 that had already been received and 14 additional responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2003/068 have been sent to the SSG. Questionnaires were still being received on 28 January 2004 and more responses are known to be still in preparation.
 - c) The intersessional working group is not fully active as a group, although most of the tasks assigned to it are underway within the SSG and the Secretariat with the assistance of the Chairman and email contact has been made with all members, requesting input for discussions at AC20.
 - d) A list of species in trade has been drafted and is presented in document AC20 Inf. 2.
 - e) The Hong Kong system of harmonized codes was submitted for consideration by the intersessional working group, and is regarded as suitable for the WCO.
 - f) The SSG has developed a database of responses to the Notifications and a template for recording answers to the questionnaire circulated with Notification to the Parties No. 2003/068. The responses received from the Secretariat have been entered in a database, together with another six questionnaires sent directly to the SSG by its members. Some of these were official responses, others not. The relatively small number of responses received so far and the late submission of many questionnaires mean that it has not yet been possible for the SSG to provide the critical review of IPOA implementation that was requested in time for the deadline for submission of documents to AC20, but progress with the analysis will be reported on at the meeting.

Issues for consideration

9. The Animals Committee is invited to consider recommending the adoption of the harmonized codes system used by Hong Kong to distinguish between shark meat, fins, leather, cartilage and other products.
10. The AC is invited to consider recommending the adoption of standard scientific names of species in trade as recommended by the IUCN Shark Specialist Group.
11. The AC is invited to recommend that the working group continue its work to make species-specific recommendations at the 13th and subsequent meetings of the Conference of the Parties, if necessary, to improve the conservation status of sharks and the regulation of international trade in these species.
12. The AC members and the working group are requested to consider what information they can bring to assist in making species-specific recommendations at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.
13. In this regard, the Committee is asked to consider document AC20 Inf. 1 *White Shark* *Carcharodon carcharias: status and management challenges* as a model information source for developing possible recommendations for other species.
14. The AC is invited to review progress on the critical review of IPOA implementation undertaken on behalf of the Committee by the SSG.