

27 July 2016

CoP17 Doc. 88.3
Annex 12

Mr. John E Scanlon
Secretary General
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
International Environment House
Chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine
Geneva, Switzerland

Subject: Information relevant to the proposals for listing marine fish species at COP17

Dear Mr. Scanlon,

With reference to your letter of 12 May 2016, I am writing to respond to your request for information relevant to the proposals to list marine species of fish on Appendix II of CITES at the upcoming 17th Conference of Parties (COP17). In particular, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) has designated four of these species, i.e. the silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) and the three thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp.) as key shark species and as such undertakes data collection and assessment of them. In addition, WCPFC's Twelfth Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC12) which begins next week will consider whether the devil rays (*Mobula* spp.) should be designated as key species.

As I believe you are already aware through reference to the proponents' proposal for the silky shark, WCPFC conducted a stock assessment for this species in 2013 as well as an indicator analyses in 2011. We also conducted an updated indicator analysis in 2015 which covered silky sharks which can be accessed on our website (<https://www.wcpfc.int/node/21719>) but which is not mentioned in the proponents' proposal.

Regarding thresher sharks, both the 2011 and 2015 indicator analyses covered these species, but due to a lack of species-specific catch records, most of the analyses were undertaken at the genus level. WCPFC, with assistance from the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (Common Oceans) Tuna Project, is currently preparing a sustainability status assessment for the bigeye thresher shark (*Alopias superciliosus*) which will analyse the latest available data for this species from the Pacific. We will soon produce a report that evaluates sustainability risk as the ratio of current impacts from fisheries to a maximum impact sustainable threshold (MIST) reference point based on population productivity.

We aimed to publish this report in time for review by SC12 but unfortunately we have fallen a few weeks behind schedule. Nevertheless yesterday we published the introduction, data description and methods on our website (<https://www.wcpfc.int/node/27550>) as an SC12 Information Paper. We aim to produce the full report in the next few weeks and will notify you as soon as it is publicly available.

Finally, as devil rays are not WCPFC key species we have not included them in our elasmobranch analyses to date. However, in order to assist SC12 in evaluating whether they should be designated as WCPFC key species at SC12, our Scientific Services Provider has prepared a paper which shows distribution and unstandardized catch rate plots (much of it at the genus level due to missing species identifications). This paper is now available on our website (<https://www.wcpfc.int/node/27475>).

I trust these documents will prove useful for COP17's considerations. Please contact Dr Shelley Clarke (shelley.clarke@wcpfc.int), Technical Coordinator-Sharks and Bycatch, with any questions or if you need any further information.

Sincerely,



Feleti Penitala Teo, **OBE**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR