

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



Twenty-seventh meeting of the Animals Committee
Veracruz (Mexico), 28 April – 3 May 2014

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

INFORMATION ON SHARKS AND FRESHWATER STINGRAYS

1. The attached information document has been submitted by China^{*}. It related to agenda items 22 and 23.

^{*} *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*



**The Endangered Species Import and Export
Management Office of the People's Republic of China**

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April. 10th, 2014

To:

Mr. David Morgan,
Chief of Scientific Services of the CITES Secretariat
Email: David.MORGAN@cites.org

Subject: Information on sharks and freshwater stingrays to be submitted for the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee

Dear Mr. Morgan,

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude for your continuous support to the implementation of CITES in China.

According to Notification No. 2013/056, Parties are encouraged to report their new information on trade and other available relevant data and information, analyses at the meetings of CoP and information on implementation of NPOA-Sharks or regional plans to the CITES Secretariat by 31 January 2014. We are so sorry that the letter from us is so overdue. However we still hope the follow information will be helpful.

Principle view on the conservation and management of Shark species

China recognizes that sharks play an important role in marine ecosystem, and are also important fishery resources. Since sharks are being caught as target or by-catch species by various types of fisheries in range states, China shares the view that shark catches should be properly managed and hence adverse impact on shark resources should be minimized.

Fisheries and Implementation of NPOA-Sharks

China's marine fisheries with shark catch include fishing fleets operating in domestic and distant waters. The domestic fisheries incidentally catching sharks include trawl, gillnet, and others which operate in Bohai Sea, Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea. The distant fisheries incidentally catching sharks and those operating high seas (e.g. tuna fishery) and exclusive economic zones of other coastal countries (e.g. through fishery cooperation). All shark species associated with these fisheries are covered by the NPOA-Sharks. The states of fisheries and species subject to NPOA-Sharks are monitored and analyzed through various programs. However, most of the monitoring works are conducted for the distant water fisheries with regard to tuna-RFMOs.

Scientific community working on shark resources consists mainly of Scientists and experts from various fisheries research institutes and universities, in particular the Shanghai Ocean University (SHOU) which is the research center for China's distant water fishery including sharks and other species covered by regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs). For stock assessment, the following data for sharks is being collected by China Oversea Fisheries Association (COFA) and SHOU:

- (i) Catch statistical data provided by commercial fishing companies;
- (ii) Logbook data recorded on fishing vessels;

- (iii) Scientific data collected by observers on board fishing/carrier vessels; and
- (iv) Landing data at the landing ports in China.

China scientists have been working collaboratively with foreign scientists, in particular scientists and staff from tuna RFMOs, to conduct biological sampling, data collection, and stock assessments of sharks in high seas.

Management and Conservation Measures

Fisheries operating on domestic and distant water in China are placed under the jurisdiction of the central or local governments pursuant to laws and regulations associated with fisheries. Entry into those fisheries is limited under license systems. Majority of shark landing are caught as by-catch, e.g. by distant water tuna longline fishery.

In 2006, the “Program of Action on the Conservation of Living Aquatic Resources of China” was promulgated by State Council, which serves as the guideline in regulating the exploitation and conservation of marine and freshwater living resources, including sharks. The document highlighted the conservation of marine animals, combating IUU, reduction of overcapacity of fishing.

China is member to four tuna-RFMOs, i.e., ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC and IATTC, for areas where sharks are caught incidentally in longline and purse seine fisheries. China is obliging its fishers to comply with all the conservation and management measures adopted by RFMOs as conditions for granting the fishing licences.

Shark line is banned to deploy in the longline fishery. Circle hooks in long line fishing gear are encouraged to equip.

Public education for shark conservation

Enhancing social awareness on FAO IPOA-Sharks and China’s NPOA-Sharks among not only fishers but also the general public is a very important factor in promoting sustainable utilization and conservation of shark resources.

Several activities have been initiated in China, such as preparation and distribution of leaflets and posters for species identification. Training sessions are held in order to abide by resolutions for sharks adopted by tuna-RFMOs.

Information and Recommendation from Hong Kong SAR

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China has no fisheries targeting on sharks. Most of the shark products consumed here are imported. Currently, Hong Kong SAR has not entered any Plan of Action or regional plan regarding sharks.

Nevertheless, Hong Kong SAR agree that good fisheries management measures are important to effective enforcement of CITES control over listed species. For example, statutory products documentation and certification schemes as mentioned in the Food And Agriculture Organization’ report (2010) can help ensuring legality and traceability of every shipment of shark products and thus facilitate export and import control by the trading parties.

The CITES Secretariat announced that it has summarized all the received information related to sharks to the CITES website (CITES Notification to Parties No. 2013/054). However, we are not aware of any information on Parties adopting the aforesaid certification schemes. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to urge exporting state to adopt such schemes and provide such information if adopted.

Practical and effective identification methods of shark fins based on readily recognizable characteristics are essential to enforcement of CITES control. However, in the CITES website on sharks, there is only one shark fin identification guide which covers only the unprocessed dorsal fins

of newly listed shark species. While fins of other body parts of shark and processed fins with external features removed are also common in trade. In view that effective date of control is drawing near, the CITES Secretariat should urge parties and relevant organizations to develop practical and effective identification guide for various commodities of fins of the newly listed shark species.

Information and Recommendation from Macao SAR

There is no export or fishery of Shark specimens in Macao SAR, while all import and re-export are subject to permit control. Identification materials should be provided to front-line enforcement officials. To participant training course on Capacity building organized by Mainland and Hong Kong SAR, we aim to improve differentiation skills of our enforcement officials.

Because of the institutional changes on fishery management lately, our submission of this information is delayed. I apologize for the late submission. And I appreciate it a lot if you could make this information exposed before and at the AC27.

Thank you again for your great support.

Sincerely yours,

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