

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



Thirty-second meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 19-23 June 2023

Species specific matters

Aquatic species

SHARKS AND RAYS (ELASMOBRANCHII SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. In Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *Conservation and management of sharks*, the Conference of the Parties:
 13. *DIRECTS the Animals Committee to periodically examine new information provided by range States on the implementation of the shark listings and other available relevant data and information;*
 14. *DIRECTS the Animals Committee to make species-specific recommendations, if necessary, on improving the conservation status of sharks and implementation of shark and ray listings;*
3. At its 19th meeting (CoP19; Panama City, 2022), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 19.222 to 19.227 on *Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)* which are presented in Annex 1 to this document.
4. Parties also adopted amendment proposals to include in Appendix II the family of Carcharhinidae (54 additional species), the family of Sphyrnidae (6 additional species), the family of Rhinobatidae (37 species) and the genus Potamotrygon (7 species). The new listings entered into force on 23 February 2023, except for the additional species of Carcharhinidae, which has an entry into effect delayed by 12 months and will enter into force on 25 November 2023.
5. Following the adoption of a new standard nomenclature references at CoP19 [see Resolution Conf 12.11 (Rev. CoP19)], the following nomenclatural changes have been made:

Mobulidae

- genus *Manta* was synonymized into genus *Mobula*;
- species *Mobula rochebrunei* is synonymized under *Mobula hypostoma*.

With these changes, the genus *Mobula* includes ten species: *M. alfredi*, *M. birostris*, *M. eregoodootenkee*, *M. hypostoma*, *M. japonica*, *M. kuhlii*, *M. mobular*, *M. munkiana*, *M. tarapacana*, and *M. thurstoni*.

Rhinidae

- species *Rhina ancylostoma* is now *Rhina ancylostomus*.

Implementation of Decisions 19.222 and 19.224

6. Pursuant to Decisions 19.222 and 19.224, the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2023/027](#) on 16 March 2023, inviting Parties to submit information related to conservation and management of sharks

and rays. Information was requested with a particular focus on the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs) and legal acquisition findings; identification and monitoring of CITES-listed shark products; stockpiles of commercial and/or pre-Convention shark parts and derivatives; and capacity-building needs to assist developing countries and small island developing states with reporting requirements. The Notification also requests copies of NDFs and conversion factors, which will be shared on the CITES website.

7. The following 24 Parties have submitted responses or copies of NDFs: Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, European Union, Guatemala, Honduras Indonesia, , Italy, Japan, the Maldives, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. A response was also received from Wildlife Conservation Society. The responses are contained as received in Annex 2 to the present document or, if only copies of NDFs were provided, links to the location on the CITES webpage are included; the Secretariat will submit an information document summarizing the content of these responses.
8. The Secretariat notes that 15 NDFs have been received. At the time of writing, 49 NDFs or guidance for making NDFs are available for Elasmobranchii species on the [CITES sharks and rays webpage](#), as well as the [CITES Virtual College NDF database](#). The Secretariat has also created a section on the portal for conversion factors used when estimating the catch live weight through converting recorded shark landings and trade, and will publish the conversion factors shared by Parties and relevant stakeholders on the webpage.
9. In fulfilment of paragraph b) of Decision 19.224, the Secretariat is providing information from the CITES Trade Database on commercial trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2000, sorted by species and by product. The overview is presented in Annex 3 to the present document and the raw data accessed on 28 April 2023 is presented as an Excel file in Annex 4. The main findings are:
 - a) The most commonly commercially traded species by number of records and by volume are *Isurus oxyrinchus* and *Carcharhinus falciformis*, listed in 2019 and 2017, respectively.
 - b) Over 7,000 metric tons of sharks and rays were reported to be commercially traded in 2020 and 2021, a sharp increase from 1,200 metric tons in 2019.
 - c) Fins are the most commonly commercially trade part (with *C. falciformis*, *Sphyrna lewini* and *I. oxyrinchus* as the top three). By volume, bodies and meat are the highest traded part (with *I. oxyrinchus* being the most common).

Implementation of Decision 19.223

10. The Secretariat has estimated that a total budget of USD 130,000 (Notification to the Parties [No. 2023/024](#) on *Status of funding for the implementation of valid Decisions after CoP19*) would be needed to support the Decisions on *Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)*. The Secretariat has also received a request from Yemen for technical support on the making of non-detriment findings and is looking for funding to provide this support.
11. In implementation of Decisions 19.132 to 19.134 on *Non-detriment findings*, work on “NDFs for marine or aquatic species, including regional implications for shared species, introduction from the sea, and NDFs for marine or aquatic invertebrates” is currently ongoing. This will result in draft guidance on the making of NDFs for aquatic species that can be applied to Elasmobranchii species, which will be discussed at the second international workshop on non-detriment findings referred to in Decision 19.132 to be held at the end of 2023 (see document [PC26 Doc. 17/AC32 Doc. 16](#) for further details).
12. The Conference of the Parties also adopted Decisions 19.135 to 19.139 on *Non-detriment findings for specimens of Appendix-II species taken from areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ)*, which will consider the specificities of making NDFs for specimens taken from ABNJ, taking into account the outcomes of the second international workshop on non-detriment findings (referred to in paragraph 11). The majority of specimens of Appendix-II species taken from ABNJ are Elasmobranchii spp. More details on the implementation of these Decisions can be found in the AC32 compendium.
13. The Secretariat will soon undertake a further study as per Decision 19.223, paragraph c), on the apparent mismatch between the trade in products of CITES-listed sharks recorded in the CITES Trade Database and what would be expected against the information available on catches of listed species building on the study “entitled *Missing sharks: A country review of catch, trade and management recommendations for CITES-*

listed shark species". The studies and proposed solutions will be presented for review by the Animals Committee at its 33rd meeting.

14. With regard to the collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as per Decision 19.223, paragraph d), the Secretariat needs to raise the required funds to carry out the work. It will also initiate discussions with FAO to explore if some work can be carried out under other areas of current cooperation.

Implementation of Decision 19.226

21. As directed by the Conference of the Parties in paragraph d) of Decision 19.226, the Standing Committee shall, in consultation with the Animals Committee, discuss challenges related to the transport of biological samples for research and data collection purposes in the context of fisheries management, including in the context of the provisions on introduction from the sea in Resolution Conf. 14.6 (Rev. CoP16) and make recommendations to CoP20.
22. At its 76th meeting (SC76; Panama City, November 2022), the Standing Committee established a working group on sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.) (see summary record [SC76 SR](#)). The membership was confirmed in Notification to the Parties [No. 2023/036](#) and the mandate of the working group is available on the CITES website. The United States of America is the chair of the working group.
23. The Secretariat proposes that the Animals Committee's leads on sharks and rays represent the Animals Committee in the Standing Committee's intersessional working group associated with the implementation of paragraph d) of Decision 19.226.

Recommendations

24. The Animals Committee is invited to:
 - a) consider this document and the scientific elements in its Annexes and make recommendations as appropriate for consideration by the Standing Committee; and
 - b) consider the proposal by the Secretariat in paragraph 23 that the Animals Committee's leads on sharks and rays represent the Animals Committee in the Standing Committee's intersessional working group to fulfill the implementation of paragraph d) of Decision 19.226.

DECISIONS ON SHARKS AND RAYS (*ELASMOBRANCHII SPP.*)
ADOPTED BY THE 19TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES

Directed to Parties

19.222

Parties are encouraged to:

- a) in accordance with Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *Conservation and management of sharks*, provide brief information (with an executive summary not exceeding 200 words, if the report exceeds four pages) to the Secretariat, in particular on any national management measures that prohibit commercial take or trade and respond to the Notification called for in Decision 19.224;
- b) in accordance with their national legislation, provide a brief report (with an executive summary not exceeding 200 words, if the report exceeds four pages) to the Secretariat about the assessment of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives for CITES-listed species stored and obtained before the entry into force of the inclusion in CITES in order to control and monitor their trade, if applicable;
- c) respond to the Notification called for in Decision 19.224 and share available national conversion factors used when estimating live catch weight by species, fishery, and product form for more accurate reporting of shark and ray trade data by Parties and indicate whether and how these are used in the development of their non-detriment findings (NDFs);
- d) in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.7 (Rev. CoP15) on *Transit and transshipment*, inspect, to the extent possible under their national legislation, shipments of shark parts and derivatives in transit or being transhipped, to verify presence of CITES-listed species and verify the presence of a valid CITES permit or certificate as required under the Convention or to obtain satisfactory proof of its existence;
- e) seek external funding for a dedicated marine species officer and consider seconding staff members with expertise in fisheries and the sustainable management of aquatic resources to the Secretariat;
- f) in accordance with Resolution Conf. 11.3 (Rev. CoP19) on *Compliance and enforcement*, actively collaborate to combat illegal trafficking in sharks and ray products by developing mechanisms for coordination between source, transit, and destination countries; and
- g) consider if they are likely to be key beneficiaries from the guidance document(s) reviewed under Decision 19.226, paragraphs a) and b); if so, these Parties are strongly encouraged to participate in any Standing Committee working groups established to address Decision 19.226.

Directed to the Secretariat

19.223

Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall

- a) continue to provide capacity-building assistance for implementing Appendix-II shark and ray listings to Parties, especially developing countries and small island developing states, upon request;
- b) liaise with relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Arrangements (RFMO/As) to identify opportunities for capacity-building with the same organizations, possibly in the form of attending meetings (where the RFMO/A permits such attendance) or by directly liaising with the Secretariat of the organization to provide this information to its membership and/or the provision of training. The aim

of this exercise would be to share information to improve the knowledge of CITES in the workings of each relevant RFMO/A;

- c) conduct a further study to look into the apparent mismatch between the trade in products of CITES-listed sharks recorded in the CITES Trade Database and what would be expected against the information available on catches of listed species, building on the study c and share both studies with proposed solutions to resolve this issue to the Animals Committee and Standing Committee, in a timely manner;
- d) collaborate closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to:
 - i) verify that information about Parties' shark management measures is correctly reflected in the shark measures database developed by FAO (<http://www.fao.org/ipoa-sharks/database-of-measures/en/>) and if not, support FAO in correcting the information;
 - ii) compile clear imagery of wet and dried unprocessed shark fins (particularly, but not exclusively, those from CITES-listed species) along with related species level taxonomic information to facilitate refinement of iSharkFin software developed by FAO;
 - iii) conduct a study analysing the trade in non-fin shark products of CITES-listed species, including the level of species mixing in trade products and recommendations on how to address any implementation challenges arising from the mixing that may be identified; and
- e) bring the results of activities in this present Decision to the attention of the Animals Committee or Standing Committee, as appropriate.

19.224

The Secretariat shall:

- a) issue a Notification to the Parties, inviting Parties to:
 - i) in accordance with Resolution Conf 12.6 (Rev. CoP18) on *Conservation and management of sharks*, provide concise (with 200 word executive summary, if the report exceeds four pages) new information on their shark and ray conservation and management activities, in particular:
 - A. the making of NDFs;
 - B. the making of legal acquisition findings (LAFs);
 - C. the identification and monitoring of CITES-listed shark-products in trade, in source, transit, and consumer Parties;
 - D. recording stockpiles of commercial and/or pre-Convention shark parts and derivatives for CITES Appendix-II elasmobranch species and controlling the entry of these stocks into trade; and
 - E. capacity-building needs to assist developing countries and small island developing states with reporting requirements; and
 - ii) share with the Secretariat their non-detriment findings (NDFs) and conversion factors used when estimating catch live weight through converting recorded shark landings and trade, where available, to post in the sharks and rays web portal;
 - iii) in accordance with Resolution Conf. 11.17 (Rev. CoP19) on *National reports*, highlight any questions, concerns or difficulties Parties are having in writing or submitting documentation on authorized trade data (e.g. which units are used in reporting trade) for the CITES Trade Database;

- b) provide information from the CITES Trade Database on commercial trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2010, sorted by species and, if possible, by product;
- c) invite non-Party, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organization observers to support Parties by providing concise information related to the above;
- d) disseminate new or existing guidance identified by the Standing Committee on the control and monitoring of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives pursuant to Decision 19.226, paragraph b);
- e) share information concerning capacity-building needs of developing countries including the possibility of training workshops; and
- f) collate this information for the consideration of the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee.

Directed to the Animals Committee, in collaboration with relevant organizations and experts

19.225 The Animals Committee, in collaboration with relevant organizations and experts, shall:

- a) continue to develop guidance and review outcomes from the proposed international expert workshop on NDFs to support the making of NDFs for CITES-listed shark species, in particular in data-poor, multi-species, small-scale/artisanal, and non-target (by-catch) situations, and for shared and migratory stocks, and introduction from the sea;
- b) review the information submitted by the Secretariat under paragraph e) of Decision 19.223 and paragraph f) of Decision 19.224 and;
- c) report the outcomes of its work under the present Decision to the Standing Committee for incorporation into the joint report to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Directed to the Standing Committee

19.226 The Standing Committee shall:

- a) review the revised *Rapid Guide on the making of legal acquisition findings*, and related assessments as they relate to trade in CITES-listed shark species caught in areas beyond national jurisdiction (including introductions from the sea), and determine if more specific guidance is needed for CITES-listed-shark species, including engagement with RFMOs and any capacity-building which might support their role in the making of LAFs and related assessments;
- b) develop new guidance or identify existing guidance on the control and monitoring of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives, in particular for specimens caught prior to the inclusion of the species in Appendix II;
- c) review the FAO's on-going guidance on Catch Document Schemes, Port State Measures and any other measures to reduce Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing;
- d) in consultation with the Animals Committee, discuss challenges related to transport of biological samples for research and data collection purposes in the context of fisheries management including the context of the provisions on introduction from the sea in Resolution Conf 14.6 (Rev. CoP16) and make recommendations to CoP20; and
- e) report its findings under the present Decision to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

19.227

The Standing Committee shall:

- a) review the comments and recommendations provided by the Parties, the Animals Committee and the Secretariat under Decisions 19.222 to 19.225; and
- b) prepare a report with any necessary recommendations for improving the implementation of the Convention for sharks and rays for consideration by the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

OVERVIEW OF THE CITES TRADE DATA ON CITES-LISTED SHARK AND RAY SPECIES

Aggregate CITES trade records for Elasmobranchii spp. were downloaded from the CITES Trade Database for the period 2000-2022 on 28 April 2023. The Secretariat notes that, when interpreting the available CITES trade data, the Committee should take into account the increase in the number of species listed on the Appendices over time¹. The dataset contains records from 2000 to 2022, but only includes 4 records for 2022 as the deadline for the submission of 2022 annual reports is 31 October 2023. The dataset uses the standard nomenclature references adopted at CoP19 and records of *Manta* species has been updated to *Mobula* species and *Rhina ancylostoma* is recorded as *R. ancylostomus*.

The database contained 3,400 aggregate trade records of Elasmobranchii spp. Of these, 125 records are of Appendix I; 2,051 are of Appendix II; and 1,224 are of Appendix III species. Considering only Appendix-II species, 1,088 records are reported as being traded for commercial purposes (purpose code T) and the majority of the commercial trade is reported with source code “W”, followed by “O” and then “X”.

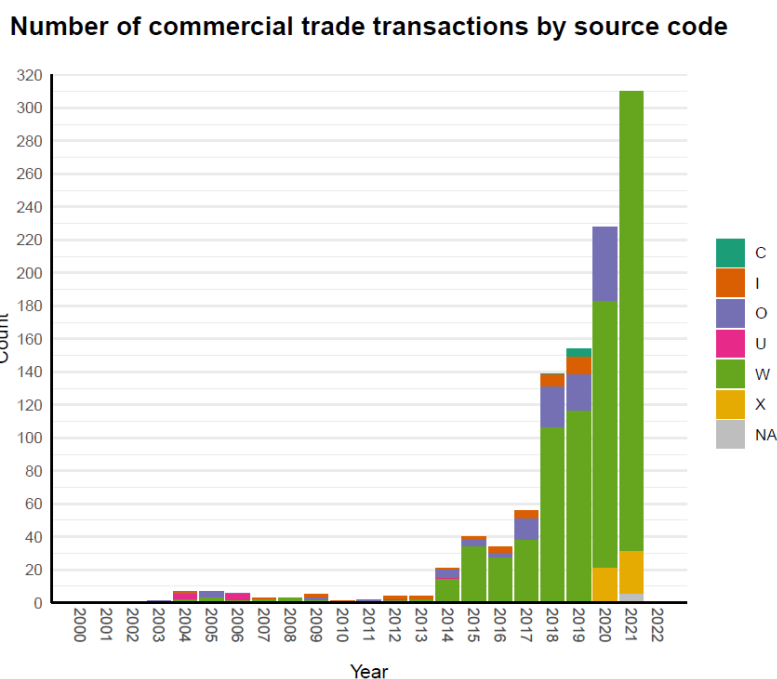


Figure 1. Number of annual recorded commercial trade transactions (including re-exports) in species of sharks and rays listed in CITES Appendix II.

¹ History of listings in effect of Elasmobranchii spp. on CITES Appendices and corresponding number of species included in the Appendices from 2000-2019. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of species (Arabic numbers) listed by Appendices (Roman numbers) in each year.

- 2000 (III: 1): *Cetorhinus maximus* -> Appendix III (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- 2001 (III: 2): *Carcharodon carcharias* (Appendix III, Australia)
- 2003 (II: 2, III: 1): *Cetorhinus maximus*, *Rhincodon typus* -> Appendix II
- 2005 (II: 3, III: 0): *Carcharodon carcharias* -> Appendix II
- 2007 (I: 5, II: 4, III: 0): *Pristidae* spp. -> Appendix I, except *Pristis microdon* -> Appendix II
- 2012 (I: 5, II: 4, III: 2): *Lamna nasus* -> Appendix III (Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); *Sphyrna lewini* -> Appendix III (Costa Rica)
- 2013 (I: 6, II: 3, III: 2): *Pristis microdon* -> Appendix I
- 2014 (I: 6, II: 10, III: 0): *Sphyrna lewini*, *S. mokarran*, *S. zygaena*, *Lamna nasus* -> Appendix II; *Carcharhinus longimanus* -> Appendix II; *Manta* spp. -> Appendix II
- 2017 (I: 6, II: 23, III: 24): *Alopias* spp., *Carcharhinus falciformis*, *Mobula* spp. -> Appendix II; *Potamotrygon* spp. -> Appendix III (Brazil); *Paratrygon aiereba*, *Potamotrygon constellata*, *P. magdalenae*, *P. motoro*, *P. orbigny*, *P. schroederi*, *P. scobina*, *P. yepezi* -> Appendix III (Colombia)
- 2019 (I: 6, II: 41, III: 24): *Isurus oxyrinchus*, *I. paucus*, *Glaucostegus* spp., *Rhinidae* spp. -> Appendix II
- 2022 (I: 6, II: 147, III: 18): *Carcharhinidae* spp., *Sphyrnidae* spp., *Rhinobatidae* spp., *Potamotrygon* spp. -> Appendix II

After excluding confiscated (source code I) and pre-Convention (source code O) specimens, a total of 854 commercial trade records remain in the dataset and this dataset was used to provide information on commercial trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2010. Both export and re-export transactions are retained and therefore include some redundancies in the transactions.

Trade based on number of records

Based on the number of trade transactions, *Isurus oxyrinchus* (179 records) and *Carcharhinus falciformis* (117 records) make up the largest portion of commercial trade in CITES-listed shark species, noting that they were only listed in 2019 and 2017, respectively. The species in the genus *Sphyrna* (*S. lewini* [113 records]; *S. zygaena* [61 records]; and *S. mokarran* [53 records]), listed in 2014, are the next highest recorded trade. The makeup of species in commercial trade over time is shown in Figure 2.

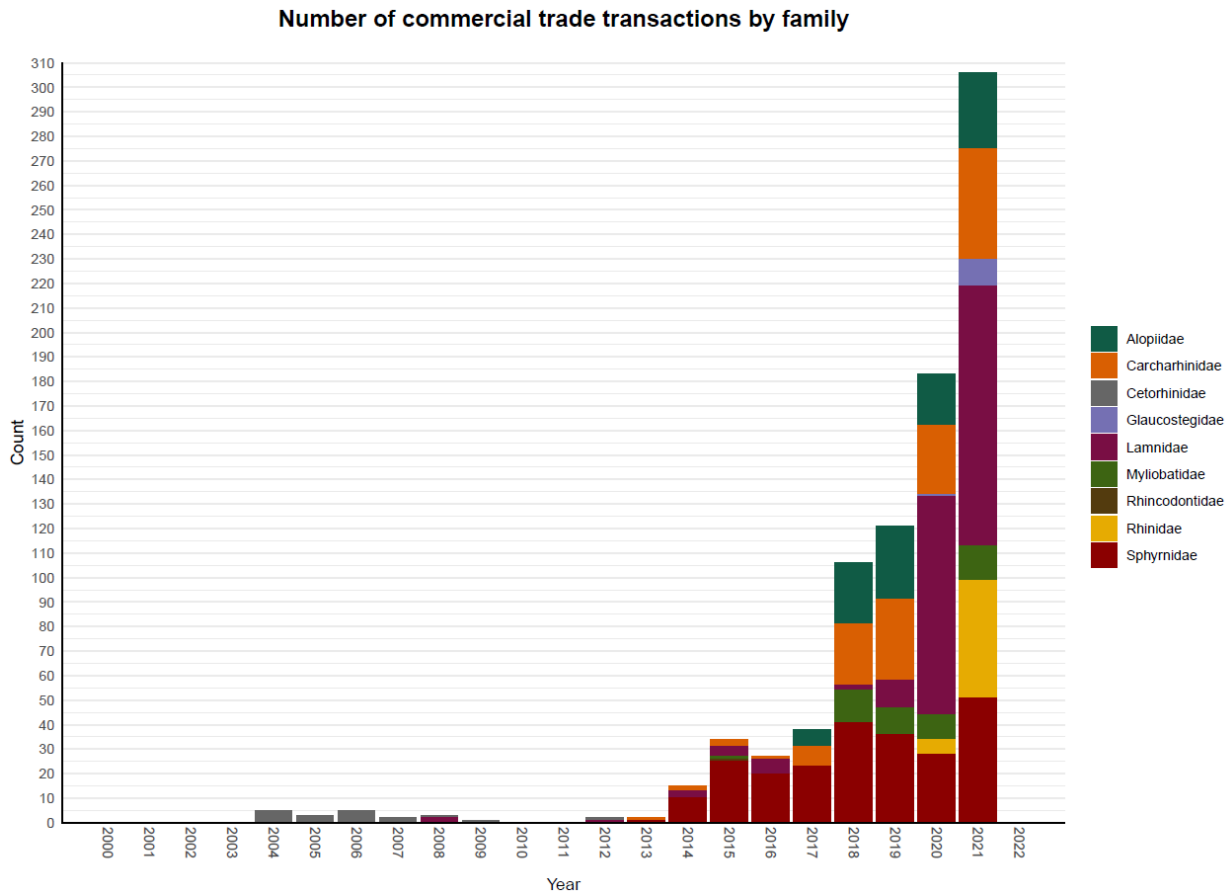


Figure 2. Number of annual recorded commercial trade transactions (including re-exports) in species of sharks and rays listed in CITES Appendix II.

When considering terms in trade, fins are recorded most often with 567 records followed by bodies (84 records), meat (55 records), skins (42 records), live (40 records) and gill plates (32 records). The majority of trade records consists of trade in fins, which has steadily increased since 2014. The trade in bodies and meat has also increased since 2018 (Figure 3).

Number of commercial trade transactions by term

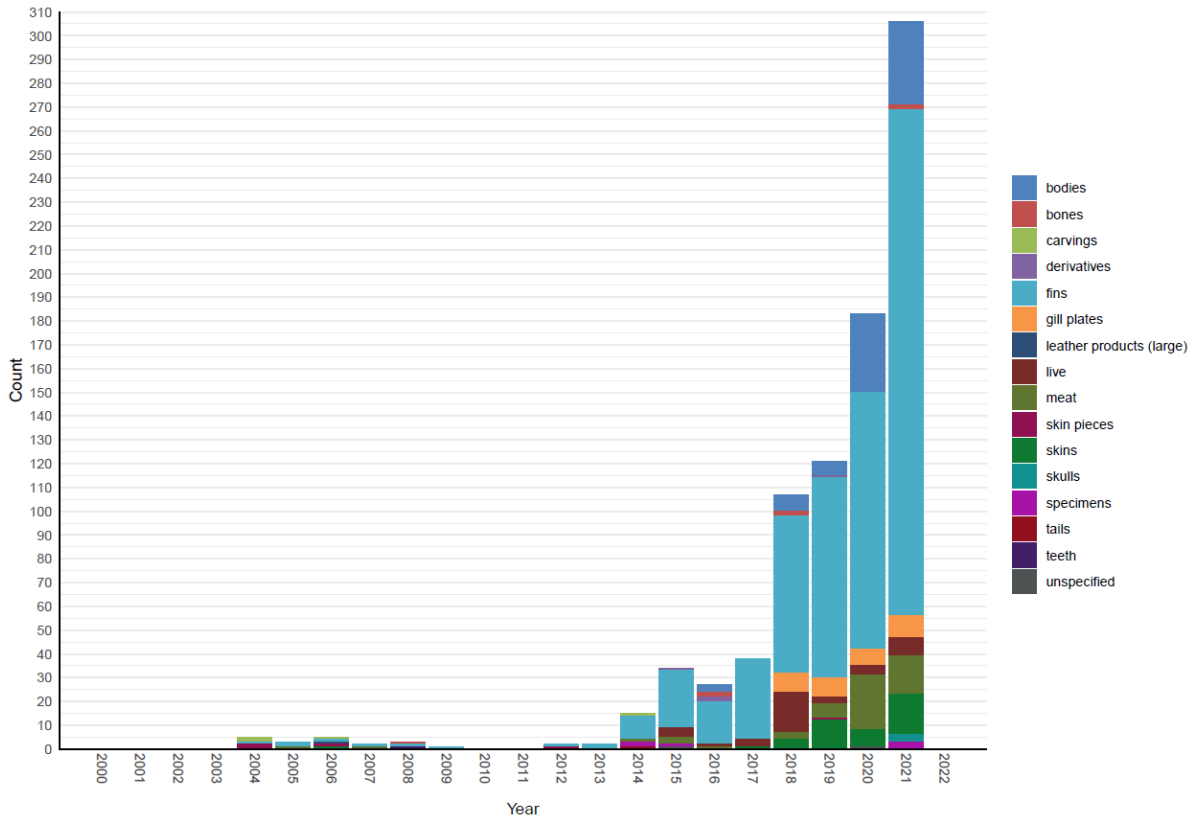


Figure 3. Number of recorded commercial trade transactions (including re-exports) in products of shark and ray species listed in CITES Appendix II.

The top traded species for fins is *C. falciformis* (85 records), followed by *S. lewini* (80 records), *I. oxyrinchus* (78 records), *S. zygaena* (57 records) and *S. mokarran* (51 records). Figure 4 shows the number of records for commercial trade in fins by species.

Number of commercial trade transactions of fins by species

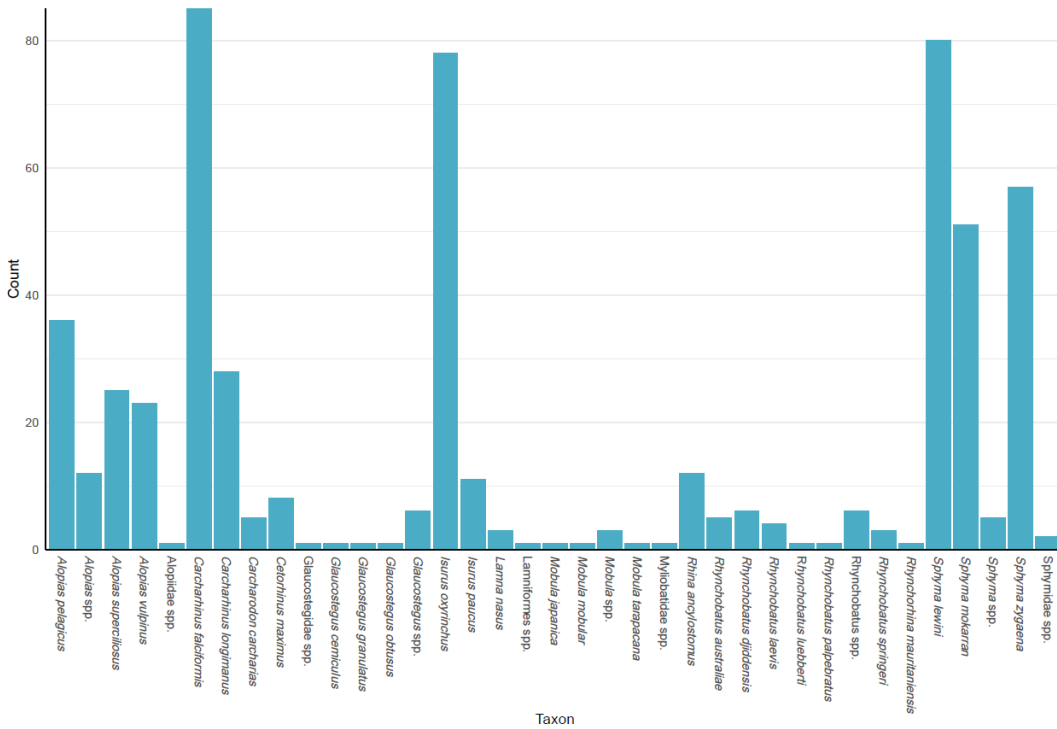


Figure 4. Number of recorded commercial trade transactions (including re-exports) in fins of shark and ray species listed in CITES Appendix II.

In comparison, a much lower number of species are traded for bodies (Figure 5) with 11 species recorded as being traded as bodies. A total of 84 records of bodies were recorded with the majority of records being of *I. oxyrinchus* (65%; 55 records) followed by *C. falciformis* (11%; 9 records) and *I. paucus* (8%; 7 records). The most traded species for meat was *I. oxyrinchus* (71%; 39 records) and *Lamna nasus* (9%; 5 records).

Number of commercial trade transactions of bodies by species

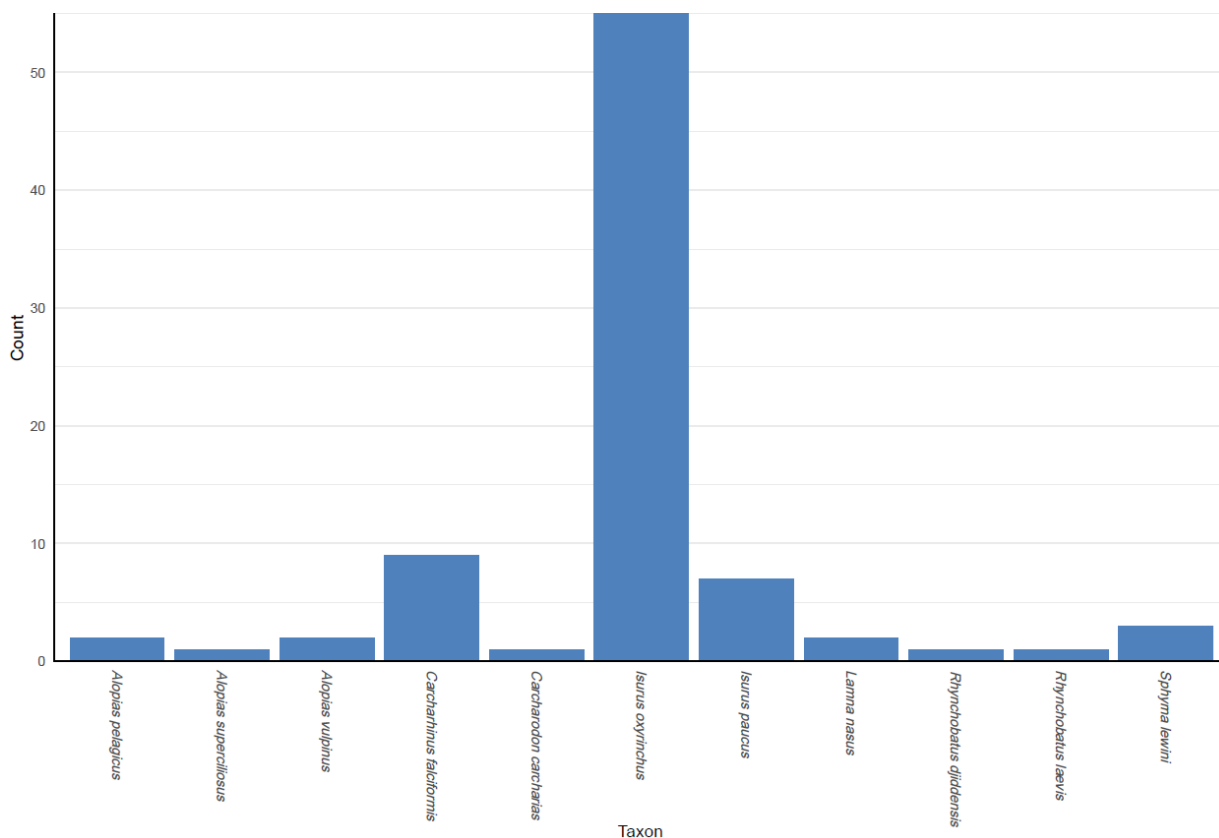


Figure 5. Number of recorded commercial trade transactions (including re-exports) in bodies of shark and ray species listed in CITES Appendix II.

The number of commercial trade transactions over time by species and product is shown in Figure 6. The highest number of commercial trade transaction is in *I. oxyrinchus* with over 80 records for 2020 and 2021. Trade in *I. oxyrinchus* consists of records for bodies (55 records), meat (39 records) and fins (78 records). Trade in *C. falciformis* has been consistent over the last 4 years with trade ranging from 23, 29, 23, 36 records from 2018 to 2021. The majority of this trade is in fins (85 records) followed by skins (16 records) and bodies (9 records). For the hammerhead species, *S. lewini* is the most commonly trade species with 80 records of fins and 19 records of live specimens, *S. mokarran* and *S. zygaena* are most often traded for fins with 51 and 57 records, respectively.

Number of commercial trade transactions by species and product

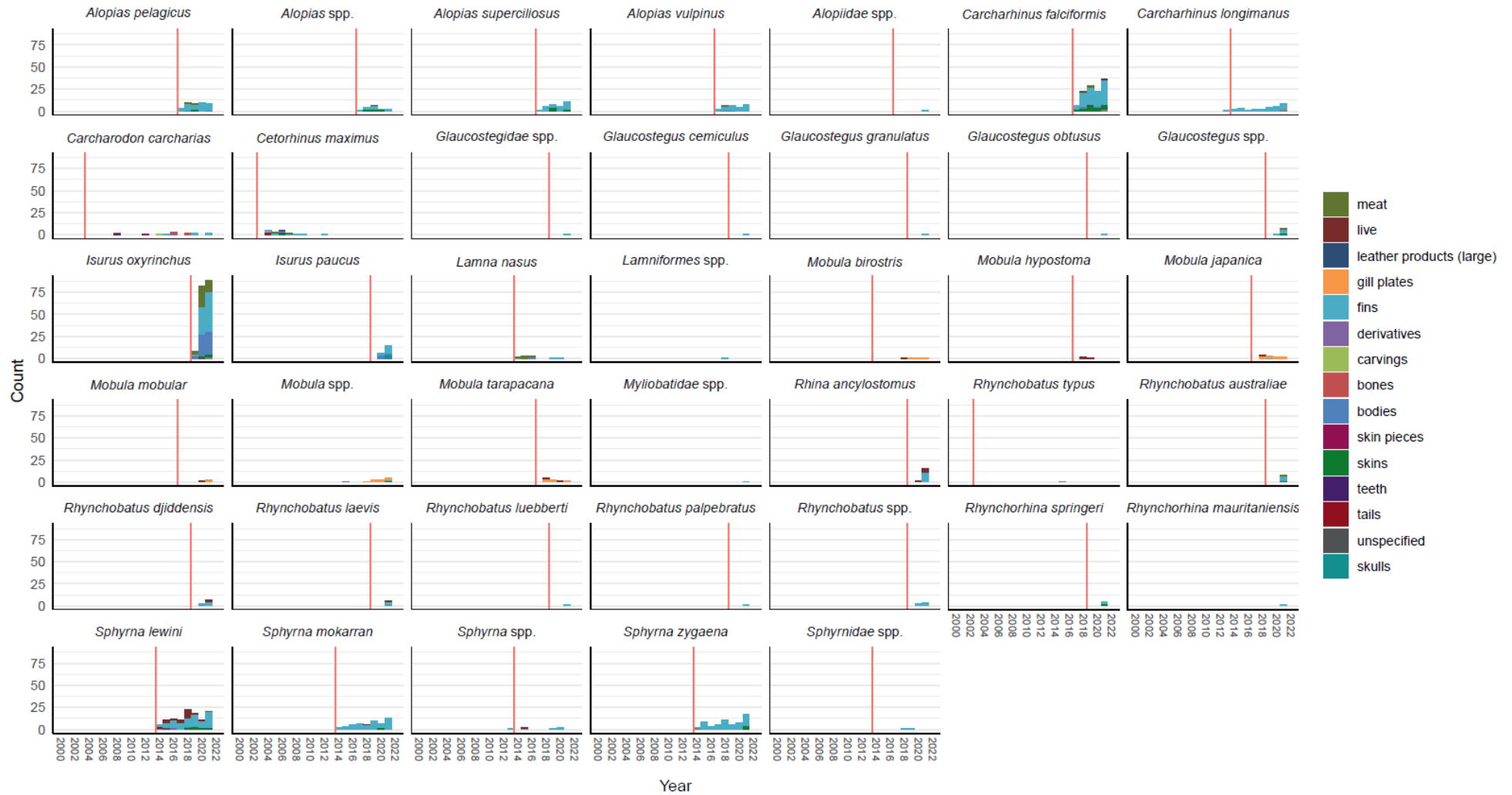


Figure 6. Number of recorded commercial trade transactions (including re-exports) for each species of sharks and rays listed in CITES Appendix II by . Bars are coloured by the product in trade and the vertical red line shows the year of listing in Appendix II.

Trade based on records reported in weight

In 2019, a total of over 1,2 million kg of trade was recorded, followed by over 7 million kg (7,000 metric tons) in 2020 and 2021. The greatest volume of trade recorded in kilograms was in specimens of *I. oxyrinchus*, which was listed in Appendix II in 2017 with 12,423,071 kg reported over three years. The second and third largest volume of trade recorded in kilogram was for *C. falciformis* (1,960,644 kg) between 2017-2021 and *Alopias pelagicus* (1,387,365 kg) between 2017-2021 (Figure 7).

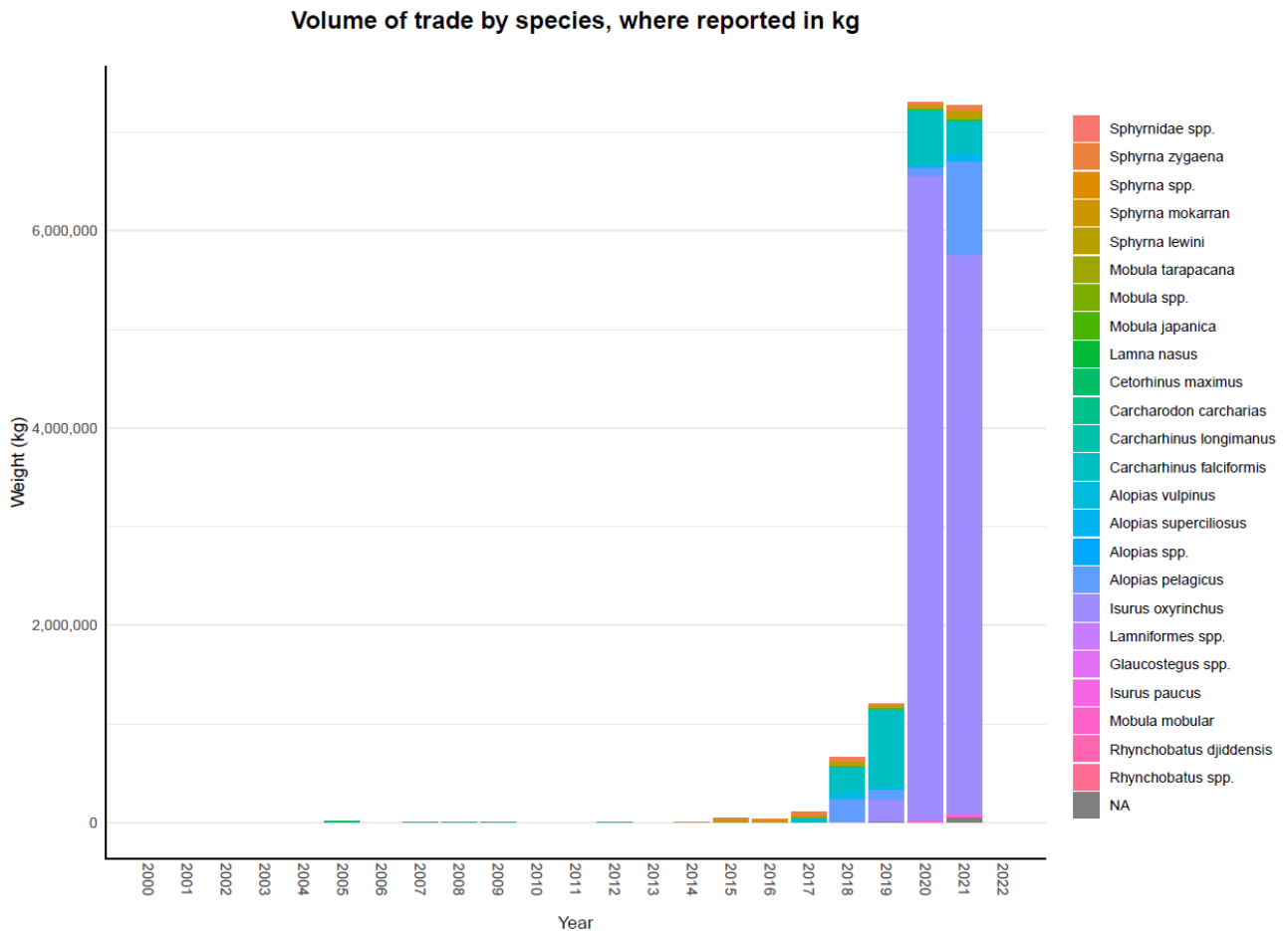


Figure 7. Volume of commercial trade transactions that was recorded in kg (including re-exports) in species of sharks and rays listed in CITES Appendix II.

The majority of this trade is made up of trade in bodies, meat and fins (Figure 8). Despite the lower number of records of bodies and meat in the CITES Trade Database, by volume, they make up the majority of the trade.

Volume of trade by product, where reported in kg

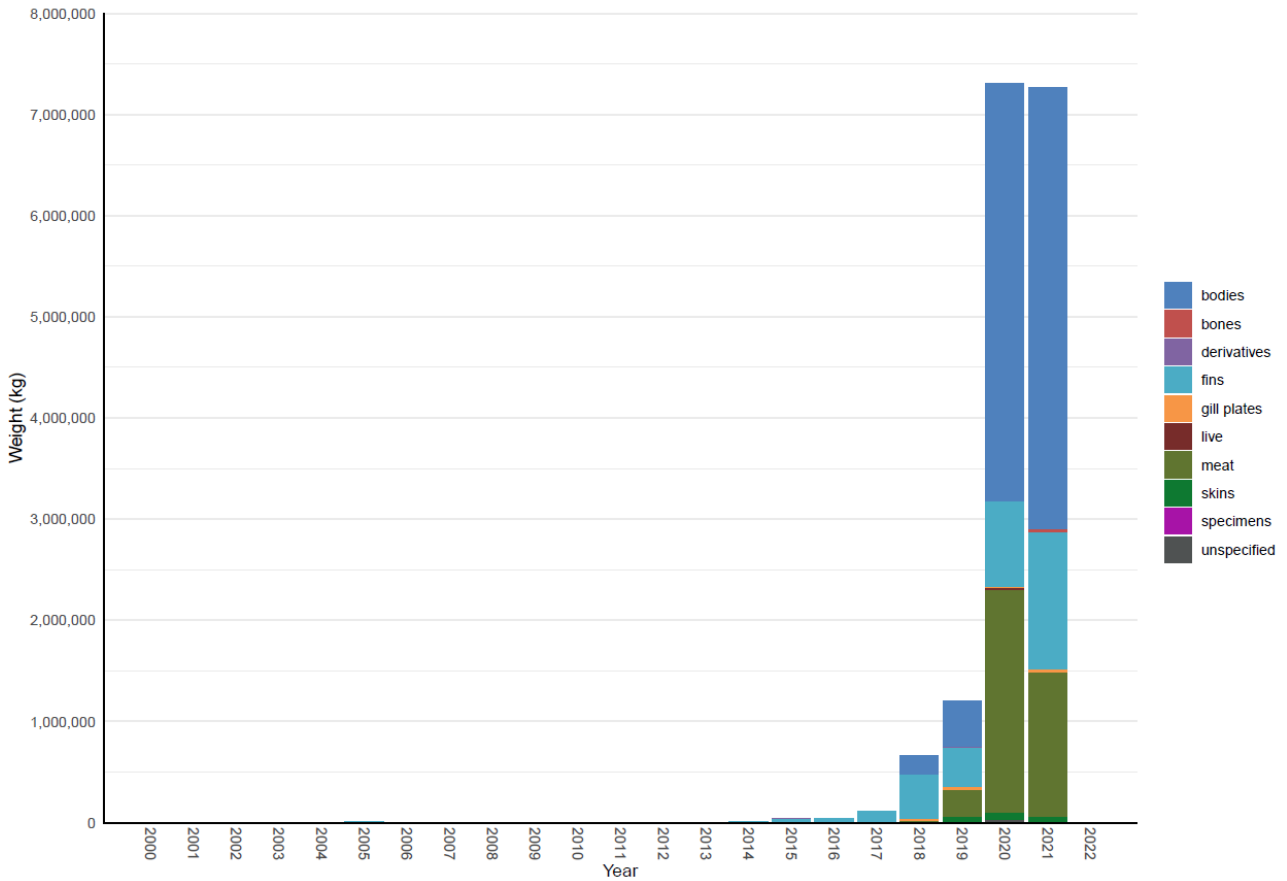


Figure 8. Volume of commercial trade transactions that was recorded in kg (including re-exports) in products of shark and ray species listed in CITES Appendix II.

The highest volume of trade in kg is of *I. oxyrinchus* in bodies (7,606,268 kg), meat (3,841,127 kg) and fins (914,164.7 kg), followed by *A. pelagicus* in bodies (567,540.8 kg) and fins (804,081.2 kg) and *C. falciformis* in bodies (913,631.5 kg) and fins (850,453.5 kg).