

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



Thirty-third meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 12 – 19 July 2024

Aquatic species

DEEP WATER SHARKS

1. This information document has been submitted by New Zealand in relation to Agenda Item 41*.
2. New Zealand draws the attention of this meeting to a March 2024 paper published in the scientific journal *Science* (Volume 383, Issue 6687, Pages 1135-1141) entitled “*Fishing for oil and meat drives irreversible defaunation of deepwater sharks and rays*”. The paper was written by Brit Finucci and 36 co-authors.
3. While New Zealand does not necessarily endorse the findings and conclusions of the study, the lead author, Brit Finucci, and one of her co-authors, Malcolm Francis, are both highly respected shark scientists from New Zealand.
4. The Abstract of the paper notes that “Deepwater sharks and rays are among the most sensitive marine vertebrates to overexploitation. One-third of threatened deepwater sharks are targeted, and half of the species targeted for the international liver-oil trade are threatened with extinction. Steep population declines cannot be easily reversed owing to long generation lengths, low recovery potentials, and the near absence of management. Depth and spatial limits to fishing activity could improve conservation when implemented alongside catch regulations, bycatch mitigation, and international trade regulation” [through CITES]. “Deepwater sharks and rays require immediate trade and fishing regulations to prevent irreversible defaunation and promote recovery of this threatened megafauna group.”
5. The abstract of this paper is available at: [Fishing for oil and meat drives irreversible defaunation of deepwater sharks and rays | Science](#)

* *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.*