

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

OUTCOMES OF THE SHARKS AND RAYS (ELASMOBRANCHII SPP.) WORKING GROUP

1. This document has been submitted by the Secretariat in relation to agenda item 41.

Outcomes of the sharks and rays (Elamobranchii spp.) working group

Mandate

1. Consider the issues raised in paragraphs 10 and 11 of document AC33 Doc. 14.3 (Rev. 1) concerning shark species that were selected for Stage 2 of the Review of Significant Trade (RST) and make recommendations concerning the treatment of multiple stocks for the same species and single stocks being harvested by multiple harvesting nations for sharks;
2. Consider the following questions raised by the representative for Europe (Mr. Benyr) in plenary:
  - i) based on best available information, is it feasible to request a stock based NDF for the shark species in RST? If the answer is 'yes' for some species, which ones?
  - ii) formulate feasible and practical recommendations on making NDFs that could be included as RST recommendations; and
  - iii) formulate recommendations for Parties that are fishing in shared stocks to help them coordinate sustainable offtake levels;

**The shark in-session working group recommends the following to the RST in-session WG:**

Mandate 1

*Treatment of multiple stock for the same species*

- Take into account the recommendations in AC33 Doc. 17:
  - a) agree that NDFs should ideally be made at a stock level – e.g., a single NDF covering the stock as a discrete unit irrespective of whether catch / harvest is taking place in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ);
  - b) agree that distinct stocks / distinct populations, if defined, should require separate NDFs or a single NDF clearly describing findings for each distinct stock / population
- Take into account the information in module 5 of CITES NDF Guidance on making NDFs for aquatic species.

*Single stock being harvested by multiple Parties*

- CITES Authorities should work with their fisheries authorities and consider working closely with RFMOs/RFB and neighbouring Parties, as appropriate, especially those that have NDFs, in sharing/obtaining data to make NDFs in order to avoid duplication of effort
- NDFs should consider all sources of mortality within the stock, taking into account the precautionary approach
- Adaptive management, including time-bound NDFs (no more than 5 years), should be used so that signals of stock change (whether from offtake from other Parties or other threats) can be taken into account and responded to.

Mandate 2 i)

Feasibility of requesting a stock based NDF

Yes, for all species in RST.

Mandate 2 ii)

- Develop NDFs for [species] where catch for export occurs, which could, inter alia, include the following elements taking into account the CITES NDF guidance, as well as other existing guidance, tools and resources:
  - Consideration for each stock as a separate management unit for conservation and harvest purposes
  - Adaptive management, with a review period of no more than 5 years, to take into consideration signals from the stock
  - A precautionary approach, where a cautionary offtake is initially considered, and revised with further information
- Encourage Parties in RST to consult with fisheries agencies as responsible bodies for management of these stocks to develop an NDF.

Mandate 2 iii)

- Take into account the recommendations in AC33 Doc. 17:
  - a) encourage Parties to collaborate regionally, including with CITES Parties not Party to RFMOs, to share information, including information to understand stock status and trends, stock assessments, NDFs, quotas, and capacity-building initiatives.
  - b) invite Parties to consider using stock assessment data from RFBs, including RFMOs, in addition to national information and other relevant sources of information, as appropriate, in informing the making of NDFs for specimens taken from ABNJ.