

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



Nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties  
Panama City (Panama), 14 – 25 November 2022

### HIGHLY CREDIBLE SHARK ASSESSMENTS UNDERPIN CITES DECISIONS

This document has been submitted by the Government of Panama\*, in relation to Prop 37, 38, 39 and 40, and agenda item 65 and 87.2

Effective policy should be informed by rigorous evidence. This is particularly true for binding intergovernmental agreements like the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES); decisions that can have profound implications on nature and people. The upcoming CITES 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (November 2022) will consider proposals to include 104 shark and ray species in Appendix II. Considering this, we need to correct a consequential error in the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) panel report<sup>1</sup> related to generation of IUCN Red List of Threatened Species<sup>TM</sup> assessments.

Specifically, the report massively underestimates effort, breadth, diversity of input, and thus robustness, of Red List shark and ray assessments by erroneously estimating an assessment rate of 20 species per day. In contrast, Dulvy *et al.*<sup>2</sup> report that 1,199 assessments involved 353 experts from >71 countries who met during 17 week-long regional workshops across more than eight years; with over 5,200 sources informing assessments. Workshop time included 1,765 person-days (353 experts, five-day workshops). Further, a sixteen-person core team (full/part-time) led assessments over three years, totalling >4,300 person-days effort. This yields >6,065 person-days total, which across 1,199 species results in an assessment rate of 0.2 species assessment per person-day (one per person-week); two orders of magnitude greater than FAO suggests, and consistent with investment levels documented for the Red List<sup>3</sup>. We urge CITES Parties to consider the great strength of evidence from these shark and ray assessments accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO. 2022. Report of the Seventh FAO Expert Advisory Panel for the assessment of the proposals to amend Appendices I and II of CITES concerning commercially-exploited aquatic species – Rome, 18–22 July 2022. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc1931en>

<sup>2</sup> Dulvy *et al.* 2021. Overfishing drives over one-third of all sharks and rays toward a global extinction crisis, *Current Biology* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2021.08.062>

<sup>3</sup> Juffe-Bignoli *et al.* 2016 *PLoS ONE* <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0160640>