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

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Twenty-second meeting of the Animals Committee
Lima (Peru), 7-13 July 2006

Conservation and management of sharks

SPECIES AFFECTED BY TRADE

1. This document has been prepared by the intersessional Shark Working Group of the Animals Committee.

2. The Shark Working Group discussed several species that were originally referred to at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP13; Bangkok, October 2004). The Animals Committee's recommendations to CoP13 (see document CoP13 Doc.35, Annex 2) are boxed below for ease of reference, followed by the conclusions and recommendations which the Shark Working Group formulated at its meeting in 2006. Some additional species were also considered that were not part of that original list.

Recommendation:

3. The Working Group recognized that many shark and ray species continue to be affected by fisheries despite being legally protected or managed. Parties are encouraged to take measures to ensure that fishing activities do not adversely affect these stocks, including by improving liaison between fisheries and conservation departments, thus strengthening their combined compliance and enforcement abilities.

a) Spiny dogfish shark *(Squalus acanthias)*

(See document CoP13 Doc. 35, Annex 2, paragraph 4)

The Animals Committee concluded that the conservation and management status of the species is unfavorable in most regions, with many Northern Hemisphere populations severely depleted, and recommends the following:

a) Range States and Regional Fishery Management Organizations should take steps to improve data collection and management for spiny dogfish. In particular, the United States and Canada are encouraged with urgency to work together to link existing assessment programmes and establish bilateral, science-based management measures for spiny dogfish.

b) Parties that are Member States of the European Union are encouraged with urgency to seek and implement, via national and EU level measures, scientific advice on developing a conservation plan that allows the rebuilding of the stocks of spiny dogfish occurring and harvested in EU waters.

c) In regions where information on stock status is poor, range States are encouraged to develop precautionary and adaptive management measures to ensure that spiny dogfish catches are sustainable.

d) Parties are encouraged to report dogfish catches, landings and trade data to FAO and to train customs officials in using existing spiny dogfish codes.

The Working Group endorsed these recommendations to CoP13, which have not been implemented.

Recommendation: Working Group participants are encouraged to undertake a technical analysis of the draft listing proposal circulated by Germany for consideration at the 22nd meeting of the Animals Committee. Parties are encouraged, before the end of September 2006, to present their comments on the validity and ease of implementation of this proposal for consideration by the proponent prior to the submission of the proposal to the European Union in October 2006.

Recommendation: The Working Group noted the need to understand the special needs of implementing particular Appendix-II species listings for this shark species. Hence, the Working Group suggested that a review of the potential implementation issues surrounding an Appendix-II listing of *Squalus acanthias* or *Lamna nasus* might be useful to Parties.

b) Porbeagle shark *(Lamna nasus)*

(See document CoP13 Doc. 35, Annex 2, paragraph 6)

The Animals Committee recommended the following:

a) ICCAT members are encouraged to collect and report data on catches and discards of porbeagle sharks, as per ICCAT Resolution 95-2 which has yet to be complied with, and undertake stock assessments in order to develop management recommendations. Other relevant Regional Fishery Management Organizations are encouraged to establish and implement similar programmes.

b) The US and Canada are encouraged to enhance existing management for their shared porbeagle stock by establishing a cooperative, bilateral research and fisheries management programme.

c) The World Customs Organization (WCO) is encouraged with urgency to establish a harmonized international code for porbeagle sharks.

The Working Group endorsed these recommendations to CoP13, which have not been implemented.

Recommendation: Working Group participants are encouraged to undertake a technical analysis of the draft listing proposal circulated by Germany for consideration at the 22nd meeting of the Animals Committee. Parties are encouraged, before the end of September 2006, to present their comments on the validity and ease of implementation of this proposal for consideration by the proponent prior to the submission of the proposal to the European Union in October 2006.

c) Freshwater Stingrays (Family Potamotrygonidae)

(See document CoP13 Doc. 35, Annex 2, paragraph 10)

The Animals Committee recommended that:

a) Range States for these species (family Potamotrygonidae) jointly examine cross-border trade that may be facilitating illegal trade and consider Appendix III listings, where appropriate, to control illegal exports; and that

b) the document be revised, with the addition of more species abundance, distribution and trend data, and submitted to CoP13 or AC21.

The Working Group noted that Brazilian exports included a legal trade of 17,000 specimens per annum and illegal trade of an estimated 25,000 to 30,000, including transboundary exports

(smuggling). The overall quantity of South American species sold worldwide is estimated at 50,000 to 60,000 (Charvet-Almeida, pers. comm., 2006). Additionally, four of the five species of Southeast Asian freshwater stingrays are listed as threatened on the 2006 IUCN-World Conservation Union Red List of Threatened Species while the fifth is Data Deficient. The species entering the aquarium trade: white-edge freshwater whipray, *Himantura signifer*, and possibly the longnose marbled whipray, *Himantura oxyrhyncha*, are both Endangered (IUCN Red List, 2004). Ornamental freshwater stingrays are exported to States in North America, Europe and East Asia.

Recommendations:

i) Encourage the voluntary submission of import and export data by the ornamental fish industry, possibly using a similar protocol to that used for the collection of data in the Global Marine Aquarium Database.

ii) Ensure that the ornamental fish trade industry is made aware of the annual export quota for each species from range States.

iii) Note and learn lessons from the development of the Marine Aquarium Council and, if appropriate, develop a mechanism to address the issues of freshwater ray conservation.

iv) A CITES Appendix-II listing or other effective export and import control of quotas per species is recommended for consideration by the Animals Committee and Parties within reasonable time, considering the existence of endemic and transboundary populations and that their restriction to freshwater environments makes these stingrays more vulnerable to environmental impacts than marine species.

v) The European Union might consider whether it could be beneficial to list these species on Annex D of the Council Regulation on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein (import notifications are required for Annex D-listed species).

d) Sawfishes (Family Pristidae)

(See document CoP13 Doc. 35, Annex 2, paragraph 15)

The Animals Committee recommends that Parties that are or have been range States for Pristidae undertake, as a matter of urgency, a review of the status of these species in their coastal waters, rivers and lakes, and, if necessary, introduce conservation and trade measures to reduce extinction risk.

Recommendation:

Parties should note that there is evidence of international trade in sawfish species, that such trade in these Critically Endangered species (IUCN Red List, 2006) is highly likely to be detrimental to their continued survival, and that all former and remaining range States should consider as a matter of urgency providing these species with strict legal protection, utilizing all relevant legislation to enforce this protection, and control their trade. The World Association of Zoos and Aquaria (WAZA) should be notified of the Animals Committee's/Parties' concern regarding these species.

e) Gulper sharks (genus *Centrophorus*)

(See document CoP13 Doc. 35, Annex 2, paragraph 15)

An FAO Deep Sea Workshop in December 2003 recommended that "a precautionary approach to the management of these and other deep sea species is absolutely essential", including monitoring of catches, landings and trade at species level, preparation of good identification guides, improved use of observers, and development of standard carcass forms to improve reporting, which should include both species and their products. The Animals Committee recommends that Parties support this approach.

Recommendation:

The Working Group endorsed the recommendation made at CoP13, further noting that a number of recent scientific papers document that the genus *Centrophorus* and other deep-water sharks exhibit high longevity and late maturity (examples of such references below). Although many species are still listed as data deficient under the IUCN Red List and no demographic analysis has been completed, life history data for some species suggests that these species are some of the least productive of elasmobranches.

Irving, S.B. 2005. Age, growth and reproduction of deepwater dogfishes from southeast Australia. PhD thesis. Deakin University, Waramaboo 1, Victoria, Australia.

Irvine, S.B., Stevens, J.D., and Laurenson, L.B. 2006. Surface bands on deepwater squalid dorsal-fin spines: an alternative method for aging the golden dogfish *Centroselachus crepidator*. *Can. J. fish. Aquat. Sci*., **63**: 617-627.

Clarke, M.W., P.L. Connolly and J.J. Bracken. 2002. An examination of the exploited deepwater shark *Centrophorus squamosus* from the continental slopes of the Rockall Trough and Porcupine Bank. *Journal of Fish Biology*. **60**: 501-514.

Kiraly, S.J., J.A. Moore, and D.H. Jasinski. 2005. Deepwater and other sharks of the US Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone. *Marine Fisheries Review*, **65**: 1-63.

f) School, tope, or soupfin shark *(Galeorhinus galeus)*

(See document CoP13 Doc. 35, Annex 2, paragraph 17)

These sharks, valued for their meat and fins, are (or have been) important in target and multispecies fisheries in temperate waters world-wide. Most stocks are shared between several Range States, and in most regions are seriously depleted. Only a small number of States have achieved successful management of this biologically-vulnerable species. The Animals Committee recommends that range States request FAO's assistance with developing a capacity building workshop for this species in order to train managers from developing States and other States where coastal shark fisheries are not being managed. This would also serve as a case study for the management of other coastal shark fisheries. This was drawn to the attention of the FAO observer.

Recommendation:

The Working Group recommended emphatically that the Animals Committee propose a decision reflecting its recommendations to CoP13 that a capacity-building workshop and stock assessments be held, as a matter of urgency in order to improve the management and monitoring of this species, the South American stocks of this species now being evaluated as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List (IUCN Red List, 2006). The Working Group also urged range States to improve their monitoring of fishing of and trade in this species.

g) Requiem sharks

(See document CoP13 Doc. 35, Annex 2, paragraph 19)

It recommends that range States pay particular attention to the management of fisheries and trade in these taxa, including undertaking reviews of their conservation and trade status. It was noted that many of the Carcharhinid sharks were high seas pelagic species that could only be managed through the joint efforts of States, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and other international bodies.

A relatively small number of identifiable shark species comprise a fairly large proportion of the fins that can be identified to species level in fin markets. These include the hammerheads genus *Sphyrna*, shortfin mako, *Isurus oxyrinchus*, tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier*, the threshers genus *Alopias*, and members of genus *Carcharhinus* such as oceanic whitetip shark, *Carcharhinus longimanus*, silky shark, *C. falciformis*, dusky shark, *C. obscurus*, sandbar shark, *C. plumbeus*,

and bull shark, *C. leucas*. Some of these species are Vulnerable under the 2006 IUCN Red List assessment.

Recommendations: The Working Group recommends that the Animals Committee draw the attention of FAO, Parties and RFBs to these species so that they may be prioritized for more accurate recording in catches, landings and trade, for example by inclusion in logbooks and identification guides for whole sharks and, to the greatest extent possible, their products (e.g. fins).

h) Guitarfishes, shovelnose rays (Order Rhinobatiformes)

The Working Group recognized that the fin products from these species are of particular value in international trade; the species are also utilized for their meat. Their conservation status is of increasing concern, with declining catches and stocks reported from several coastal areas, for example the common guitarfish, *Rhinobatos rhinobatos,* and the blackchin guitarfish in Guinea Bissau, West Africa, and the giant guitarfish, *Rhinobatos cemiculus,* in West Jawa, Indonesia. It suggested that the Animals Committee recommend that range States should, as a matter of urgency, undertake reviews of fisheries, landings, and trade in these species, where possible review the status of stocks, and ensure that steps are taken to introduce and apply any relevant legislation to enforce protected status.

i) Devil rays (Family Mobulidae)

These species are of concern because of their low reproductive capacity. Some species are migratory and move between range States' coastal waters and possibly into international waters. They are taken in artisanal and commercial fisheries almost everywhere that they occur (in the absence of protection), and are utilized for their meat and gill rakers. The latter enter international trade, e.g. the bentfin devilray, *Mobula thurstoni,* which is landed in directed targeted elasmobranch fisheries in the Gulf of California, Mexico, and Indonesia.

Recommendation:

The Working Group recommends that the Animals Committee draw these species to the attention of FAO, Parties and RFBs, so that they may be prioritized for more accurate recording in catches, landings and trade, for example by inclusion in logbooks and identification guides for whole rays and, to the greatest extent possible, their products.

j) Leopard sharks *(Triakis semifasciata)*

Recommendation:

The Working Group drew the attention of the Animals Committee and Parties to the illegal international trade in this species to the European Union that is taking place. It recommends that the European Union consider adequate measures to support the United States of America's domestic legislation for the management of this species. It requested the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association OATA to inform its members of the legal status of the species and to report on levels of trade.