



Science Division

Department of Information Services

Scientific Authority for the CITES Convention

28 June 2015

## **Response to Notification No. 2015/027 from Israel**

### **Information to be submitted for the 28th meeting of the Animals Committee: on Sharks and Ray Fishery Management**

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#### **Background**

All sharks (Order Selachii) and all rays (Order Batoidae) are fully protected in Israel since 2005. They may not be captured, harmed, traded or kept, without a specific permit from the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA).

The INPA had conducted campaigns to increase awareness of the need to protect these species and has increased enforcement efforts against fishing of these species.

Any import or export of sharks and rays (alive or dead), or any parts and derivatives of these species requires an import or export permit from the INPA. Live specimens also require a permit from the Fishery Department of the Ministry of Agriculture.

#### **Species of Concern for Possible Consideration by the Animals Committee**

We have seen media reports about fishing of large aggregations of Giant Devil Ray *Mobula mobula* in the eastern Mediterranean each February, outside of Israel's territorial waters<sup>1</sup>. This species is fully protected in Israel, and it is classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red list, and it is included in Annex II (Endangered Species) of the Barcelona Convention Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity of the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol).

The species *Mobula mobula* is not listed in CITES. It is of concern to us that this population could be under threat and that it is being affected by unregulated fishing in our region.

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<sup>1</sup> Couturier, L.I.E., Bennett, M.B. and Richardson, A.J. (2013). **Mystery of giant rays off the Gaza strip solved.** *Oryx* 47(4): 479-482.