

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



Twenty-eighth meeting of the Animals Committee
Tel Aviv (Israel), 30 August-3 September 2015

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

Species trade and conservation

Conservation and management of sharks

Implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP16)

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS – SPECIES OF CONCERN

1. This document has been prepared by Israel.¹
2. In Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP16) on *Conservation and management of sharks*, the Conference of the Parties directs the Animals Committee:

To examine new information provided by range States on trade and other available relevant data and information, and report their analyses at meetings of the Conference of the Parties;

To make species-specific recommendations at meetings of the Conference of the Parties if necessary on improving the conservation status of sharks;

and

To report progress on shark and ray activities at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.
3. It is eight years since the Animals Committee first provided a list of shark species of concern for the consideration of the Conference of Parties ([CoP14 Doc 59.1](#), Annex 3). This list was subsequently updated with reference to the FAO list of primary species for monitoring of fisheries and trade ([AC24 Inf. 6](#)) and reviewed at CoP15 ([CoP15 Doc 53](#) Table 1). More recently, the list was further refined in consideration of the responses to Notification to the Parties [No. 2011/049](#), which asked Parties to identify species that they believed required additional action to enhance their conservation and management ([AC26 Doc. 16.1](#) and [AC26 Doc. 16.2](#), including Israel's response in [AC26 Doc. 16.2, Annex IL](#)). The responses to Notification 20011/049 were discussed by AC26 ([AC26 Doc. 16.1](#)) and AC27 ([AC27 Doc. 22.1](#)), and AC27 established a working group for further work on Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP16) in preparation for CoP 17. The Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2015/027](#) asking for new information on fishery management measures for sharks, for discussion at AC28.
4. This document revisits the earlier lists of species of concern, compiled in Table 1. It pays particular attention to the Mediterranean and shark and ray species for which Israel is a range state, but incorporates nominations for species of concern from other regions, submitted by Parties and listed in [AC26 WG4 Doc. 1](#) Annex.

¹ 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.

5. All sharks (Order Selachii) and rays (Order Batoidae) have been fully protected in Israel since 2005. This protected species legislation means that they may not be captured, harmed, traded or kept, without a specific permit from the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA). Israel's waters are in effect a shark and ray sanctuary and Israel views shark and ray conservation as high priority.
6. The Barcelona Convention Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity of the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol), and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) under Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 on fisheries management measures for conservation of sharks and rays in the GFCM area, require the conservation and management of many of the species of concern identified by CITES. The SPA/BD Protocol includes several elasmobranchs in Annex II (list of endangered or threatened species) and Annex III (the list of species whose exploitation is regulated). Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-contracting Parties (CPCs) of the GFCM are required to ensure a high protection from fishing activity to elasmobranch species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol. These species must be released alive or unharmed to the extent possible and cannot be retained on board, trans-shipped, landed, transferred, stored, sold or displayed or offered for sale. There are special monitoring and reporting requirements for species listed in Annex II and Annex III. The GFCM has made important progress in recent years in developing stock assessments and scientific capacity of Mediterranean States for monitoring these species.
7. Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 requires CPCs to ensure that catches of tope shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*) taken with bottom-set nets, longlines and in tuna traps shall be promptly released alive or unharmed to the extent possible. There are also restrictions on captures of this species on longlines outside the Mediterranean.
8. EU fishing regulations protect several shark and ray species from fishing within EU waters by the EU fleet and by third country vessels, and in some cases by EU vessels wherever they fish.
9. Some EU countries (such as Croatia and Malta) have also taken steps recently to legally protect the elasmobranch species listed in Annex II to the Barcelona Convention SPA/BD Protocol. Information on the level of implementation by other Mediterranean States of the SPA/BD and GFCM measures has not been reviewed. Overall progress on the conservation and management of species of concern to CITES Parties and FAO Members within the Mediterranean, where known, is summarised in Table 1.
10. Table 1 refers to some results of the IUCN's Global Red List for the chondrichthyan fishes (sharks, rays and chimaeras), summarised in Dulvy *et al* (2014)². This review of the assessments of over 300 scientists considered evolutionary uniqueness and taxonomic conservation priorities, identifying the six families of sharks and rays that face the highest level of threat. These are Family Pristidae (sawfishes), Family Squatinidae (angel sharks), Family Rhynchobatidae (wedgfishes), Family Narkidae (sleeper rays), Family Dasyatidae (Dasyatid stingrays, Family Rhinobatidae (guitarfishes) and Family Alopiidae (thresher sharks). Some of these already appear on the CITES lists of species of concern – including the guitarfishes, which are a high priority for conservation action for Israel due to their poor conservation status in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The angelshark family, Squatinidae, is notable for its absence from previous CITES lists. Twelve out of the 15 species of angelsharks worldwide are threatened, including all three species known from the Mediterranean and they are listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol (Sawback angelshark *Squatina aculeata*, Smoothback angelshark *S. oculata*, and the Common angelshark *S. squatina*).
11. The IUCN's newly released European Red List of Marine Fishes (Nieto *et al.*, 2015)³ shows that sharks, rays, skates, and sawfish have the worst overall conservation status of all fishes in Europe and that their status is particularly bad in the Mediterranean Sea due to the risk of unregulated overfishing there. Indeed, the status of Mediterranean chondrichthyans has worsened in the past decade, since the first regional Red List assessment. Several species are, at least in some areas, now close to regional or global extinction and there are many other "lost sharks and rays" that have not been sighted in decades. Of greatest concern, according to this report, is the status of all three angelsharks (*Squatina* spp.).
12. Two additional issues highlighted in the new European Red List of Marine Fishes² are the lack of management for the Blue shark *Prionace glauca*, which is the most exploited fish in European waters, and a major component of international trade in shark fins and meat, but remains unmanaged. Secondly, the report identifies an unregulated rapid rise in reported landings of catches of smaller sharks, particularly the smoothhounds (*Mustelus* spp., part of Family Triakidae). These also enter international trade to meet demand for their meat, particularly in

² Dulvy, N.K. & 22 additional authors (2014). **Extinction risk and conservation of the world's sharks and rays**. *eLife* 2014;3:e00590. DOI: 10.7554/eLife.00590.001

³ Nieto, A. & 59 additional authors (2015). **European Red List of Marine Fishes**. IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and the European Union. DOI: 10.2779/082723

Europe. There are three species of smoothhounds in European and Mediterranean waters (Starry smoothhound *Mustelus asterias*, Smoothhound *M. mustelus*, and Blackspot smoothhound *M. punctulatus*) all of which are listed in Annex III of the SPA/BD Protocol). The new challenge is that recent revision to their taxonomy means that a detailed assessment is needed of the range and abundance of each species.

13. Risk assessment – The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) provided information to the Animals Committee at AC26 ([AC26 Inf. 8](#), [AC26 Inf. 9](#)) and AC27 ([AC27 Doc. 22.4](#)) on a new method for determining species at risk of overexploitation through examining their intrinsic biological vulnerability and management-risk (“M-Risk”), which was developed by TRAFFIC and commissioned by the UK Government. In examining M-Risk, 46 species of shark were assessed using the method, with good results⁴. This method could provide a standardized method for determining priority species and a recommendation was adopted at AC27 inviting Parties to consider the M-Risk assessment method in the process of making non-detriment findings ([AC27 WG7 Doc. 1](#)).
14. The Animals Committee is invited:
 - a) to take note of this document and to endorse it for the AC Shark Working Group;
 - b) to draw the attention of Parties to the potential use of the M-Risk assessment method developed by TRAFFIC for the UK for determining priority species;
 - c) to recommend that the Sharks working group and the Parties review the role of trade in contributing to the threatened status of the *Mobula* devil rays, Guitarfishes, Threshers and Tope shark, all of which have been included for many years in the lists of species of concern produced by CITES and FAO, undertake M-risk assessments for species that do not yet have them, and discuss whether these species would benefit from more detailed attention under CITES;
 - d) to add the angelsharks (Family Squatinidae), and the Smoothhounds (*Mustelus* spp.), to the list of species of concern for attention by the Animals Committee.

⁴ Lack, M., Sant, G., Burgener, M. and Okes, N. (2014). **Development of a Rapid Management-Risk Assessment Method for Fish Species through its Application to Sharks**. Report to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Defra Contract No. MB0123. UK.

Table 1. Summary of shark and ray species of concern

Species	Current Status in CITES	Current Status in CMS ⁵	Listed under GFCM?	Listed under SPA/BD Protocol?	Comments
Whale shark <i>Rhincodon typus</i>	Appendix II	Sharks MOU; Appendix II			Not present in the Mediterranean
Basking shark <i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>	Appendix II	Sharks MOU; Appendix I & II	√	√	Prohibited species in EU waters for EU & 3 rd country fleets, and for EU fleets everywhere.
White shark <i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>	Appendix II	Sharks MOU; Appendix I & II	√	√	Prohibited species, EU waters & EU fleets
Porbeagle shark <i>Lamna nasus</i>	Appendix II	Sharks MOU; Appendix II	√	√	Prohibited species, for all EU fleets and third country vessels in EU waters
Hammerhead sharks <i>Sphyrna</i> spp	Appendix II (3 spp)	Appendix II (2 spp)	√ (3 spp)	√ (3 spp)	Prohibited species, ICCAT/GFCM waters, for all EU and relevant third country vessels
Oceanic whitetip <i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>	Appendix II	Appendix II			Prohibited species for all EU vessels in ICCAT, IOTC, IATTC and WCPFC waters
Sawfishes Family Pristidae	Appendix I	Appendix I & II	√ (2 spp)	√ (2 spp)	Entire family threatened (CR or EN) ⁶ Prohibited species, in EU waters & by EU fleets everywhere.
Manta rays <i>Manta birostris</i> & <i>Manta alfredi</i>	Appendix II	Appendix I & II			Not present in the Mediterranean. Prohibited species in EU waters for EU & 3 rd country fleets, and for EU fleets everywhere.
Freshwater stingrays Family Potamotrygonidae	Dec. 16.130-16.135				Not present in the Mediterranean
Spiny dogfish shark <i>Squalus acanthias</i>		Sharks MOU; Appendix II (N hemisphere stocks)	√	√	Prohibited species, ICCAT/GFCM waters, for all EU and relevant third country vessels
Thresher sharks <i>Alopias</i> spp		Appendix II			Prohibited species, ICCAT/GFCM & IOTC waters, for all EU and relevant 3 rd country vessels. Entire family (3 species) threatened ⁶
Shortfin and longfin mako <i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i> , <i>I. paucus</i>		Appendix II	√	√	
Silky shark <i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>		Appendix II			Prohibited species, ICCAT/GFCM waters, for all EU and relevant third country vessels
Devil rays Family Mobulidae		Appendix I & II	<i>Mobula mobular</i>	<i>Mobula mobular</i>	Prohibited species in EU waters for EU & 3 rd country fleets, and for EU fleets everywhere. Aggregations of

⁵ CMS = The Convention on Migratory Species. Note: A species may be listed in both Appendix I and Appendix II in CMS. Appendix I lists migratory species that are Endangered; Appendix II lists migratory species which have an unfavorable conservation status and which require international agreements for their conservation and management. One example of such an agreement is the non-binding Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MoU), which has 38 Signatory Parties and lists 7 species of chondrichthyan fishes.

⁶ Dulvy et al. 2014. Extinction Risk and Conservation of the World's Sharks and Rays. *eLife* 2014;3:e00590.

Species	Current Status in CITES	Current Status in CMS ⁵	Listed under GFCM?	Listed under SPA/BD Protocol?	Comments
					<i>Mobula mobular</i> fished in eastern Mediterranean in spring ⁷ .
Spinetail mobula: <i>M. japonica</i>					Nominated by New Zealand (AC26 WG4 Doc.1)
Gulper sharks genus <i>Centrophorus</i>			<i>C. granulosus</i>	<i>C. granulosus</i>	Deepwater fishing prohibition in Mediterranean confers protection.
<i>Centrophorus harrissoni</i> , <i>C. moluccensis</i> , <i>C. zeehaani</i>					Nominated by Australia (AC26 WG4 Doc.1)
Sandbar shark <i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>			√	√	Protected nursery ground in Turkey.
School, tope, or soupfin shark <i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>			√	√	GFCM/36/2012/3 requires live release from bottom-set nets, longlines and tuna traps. Longline catch prohibited in some ICES waters.
Blue shark <i>Prionace glauca</i>			√	√	No fisheries regulations.
Deepwater nurse shark <i>Odontaspis ferox</i>			√	√	Nominated by New Zealand (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Requiem and pelagic sharks					
Guitarfishes, shovelnose rays, Order Rhinobatiformes			√ (<i>Rhinobatos cemiculus</i> & <i>R. rhinobatos</i>)	√ (<i>Rhinobatos cemiculus</i> & <i>R. rhinobatos</i>)	Guitarfishes (15/28 spp threatened ⁶), wedgefishes (all 6 spp threatened ⁶). Prohibited species, all EU & relevant 3 rd country vessels in EU waters of ICES areas (not Med Sea).
Giant guitarfish <i>Rhynchobatus djiddensis</i>					Nominated by India (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Sharpnose guitarfish <i>Glaucostegus granulatus</i>					Nominated by Israel (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Halavi guitarfish <i>Glaucostegus halavi</i>					Nominated by Israel (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Clubnose guitarfish <i>Glaucostegus thouin</i>					Nominated by Israel (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Common shovelnose ray, Giant shovelnose ray <i>Glaucostegus typus</i>					Nominated by Israel (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Dusky shark <i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>					Edge of range, southwestern Mediterranean
Bull shark <i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>					Not present in the Mediterranean
Tiger shark <i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>					Very few records in the Mediterranean
Leopard sharks <i>Triakis semifasciata</i>					Not present in the Mediterranean
Pondicherry shark <i>Carcharhinus hemiodon</i>					Nominated by India (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)

⁷ 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.

Species	Current Status in CITES	Current Status in CMS ⁵	Listed under GFCM?	Listed under SPA/BD Protocol?	Comments
Ganges shark <i>Glyphis gangeticus</i>					Nominated by India (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Speartooth shark <i>Glyphis glyphis</i>					Nominated by India (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Ganges stingray <i>Himantura fluviatilis</i>					Nominated by India (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)
Porcupine ray <i>Urogymnus asperrimus</i>					Nominated by India (AC26 WG4 Doc. 1 Annex)