

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



Twenty-ninth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 18-21 July 2017

Species specific matters

Aquatic species

SHARKS AND RAYS (ELASMOBRANCHII SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. In Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP17) on *Conservation and management of sharks*, the Conference of the Parties:
 2. *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;*
 9. *DIRECTS the Animals Committee to make species-specific recommendations at meetings of the Conference of the Parties if necessary on improving the conservation status of sharks;*

and

14. *DIRECTS the Animals Committee to report progress on shark and ray activities at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.*

In the same Resolution, the Conference of the Parties:

3. *ENCOURAGES Parties to obtain information on implementation of National Plans of Action for the Conservation and Management of Shark Stocks (NPOA-Sharks) or regional plans, and to report directly on progress to the CITES Secretariat and at future meetings of the Animals Committee;*
3. At its 17th meeting (CoP17, Johannesburg, 2016), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 17.209 to 17.216 on *Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)*, as follows:

Directed to Parties

17.209 *Parties are encouraged to:*

- a) *undertake broad national consultations with all stakeholders concerning the implementation of CITES provisions for trade in species of Elasmobranchii included in the CITES Appendices, including industries involved in the harvest, export or import of the listed species; and involve in relevant meetings, events and processes CITES officials and fisheries officials, and representatives of relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations/Bodies (RFMO/RFBs) wherever possible and where limited capacity on fisheries management exists in the CITES authorities;*

- b) *share experiences and examples of making non-detriment findings for trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays including, where appropriate, how artisanal fishing is taken into consideration, and communicate them to the Secretariat for publication on the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal (<https://cites.org/prog/shark>) in order to improve capacity and knowledge of national and regional harvest levels and management measures;*
- c) *strengthen the efforts of exporting Parties in developing non-detriment findings for sharks and rays by sharing good practise and providing financial and other assistance, and consider in this regard Germany's offer to support training workshops on the application of the Shark NDF Guidance developed by the German Scientific Authority and available on the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal (<https://cites.org/prog/shark>);*
- d) *continue improving the collection of fisheries and trade data at the species level, especially with respect to CITES-listed species;*
- e) *share experiences with, and knowledge of, forensic means to efficiently, reliably and cost-effectively identify shark products in trade; and*
- f) *provide funding for a dedicated marine officer position in the CITES Secretariat, and consider seconding, or externally funding, additional staff members with expertise in fisheries and the sustainable management of aquatic resources to the Secretariat.*

Directed to the Secretariat

17.210 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *make guidance materials available for the identification of CITES-listed sharks and rays, including fins and other products and derivatives, on the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal, and the sharing of genetic testing protocols and other forensic approaches; and*
- b) *remind Parties that CITES-listed Elasmobranchii occur in small scale fisheries and that NDFs will need to be made if the products of these fisheries enter international trade, and draw their attention in this regard to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (the SSF Guidelines), which offer principles and guidance for small-scale fisheries governance and development.*

17.211 *The Secretariat shall:*

- a) *issue a notification, requesting Parties to provide new information on their shark and ray conservation and management activities, including legislation, and make the responses available to the Animals Committee for its consideration; and*
- b) *provide a summary of information in the CITES trade database on trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2000 for consideration by the Animals Committee.*

17.212 *Recognizing the continued requests from Parties for assistance in implementing Appendix-II shark and ray listings, and the need for further capacity building activities in this regard, the Secretariat shall seek additional funding to address the capacity needs raised at regional implementation meetings (Casablanca, Dakar and Xiamen)¹ and identified in the course of the 2013-2016 EU-CITES project.*

¹ See Annex 1 of document AC28 Com. 9.

Directed to the Secretariat and to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

- 17.213 *The CITES and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Secretariats are invited to continue and expand their collaboration concerning the conservation of and trade in sharks and rays, in particular by:*
- a) *exploring options for using the existing iSharkFin tool for the identification of dried and skinned shark fins;*
 - b) *working with the World Customs Organization to expand customs codes for shark and ray species and product categories;*
 - c) *making relevant studies and information relating to the conservation and management of CITES-listed shark species available on the CITES sharks and rays portal;*
 - d) *maintaining and improving the database of measures on conservation and management of sharks, with the aim to provide a user-friendly overview of stricter domestic measures adopted by CITES Parties for CITES-listed shark and ray species, the species that are covered in this way, the dates of these measures, and links to the measures, including:*
 - i) *Legal protection for CITES-listed shark and ray species;*
 - ii) *Zero quotas for CITES-listed shark and ray species;*
 - iii) *Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) that have agreed to protect CMS Appendix I species; and*
 - iv) *Members of RFMOs with measures that prohibit retention, landing, or trade of CITES-listed species; and*
 - e) *continuing to support the development and application of guidance and capacity building tools for making NDFs, in particular for situations where data availability is low, the fishery is mostly artisanal, sharks are caught as bycatch, or where catches concern sharks that are part of shared stocks, and, upon request, supporting Parties with targeted advice to ensure compliance with Article IV for trade in CITES Appendix-II listed sharks and rays.*

Directed to Parties that are members of Regional Fisheries Organizations or Bodies

- 17.214 *Parties that are also members of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations or Bodies (RFMOs/RFBs) are urged to:*
- a) *work through the respective mechanisms of these RFMOs/RFBs to develop and improve methods to avoid bycatch of sharks and rays, where retention, landing, and sale of these species is prohibited under RFMO requirements, and reduce their mortality, including by exploring gear selectivity and improved techniques for live release;*
 - b) *encourage the RFMOs/RFBs to consider making CITES-listed species a priority for data collection, data collation and stock assessments among non-target species, and provide these data to their members; and*
 - c) *cooperate regionally on research, stock assessments, data sharing and analysis to help Parties making legal acquisition findings and NDFs for shared stocks, and on training initiatives for CITES Authorities, fisheries staff and customs officers, in cooperation with the CITES and FAO Secretariats.*

Directed to Parties that are also Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and/or the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (CMS Sharks MoU)

17.215 *Parties that are also Parties to CMS and/or the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (CMS Sharks MoU) are urged to work through the mechanisms of CMS and the Sharks MoU to develop and improve methods for conservation of sharks and rays.*

Directed to the Standing Committee

17.216 *On the basis of information provided by the Secretariat and the Animals Committee, the Standing Committee shall consider issues concerning the conservation and management of sharks and rays, and provide guidance as appropriate, pertaining to:*

- a) *legislative matters that might arise in exporting, transit or consumer countries, and those relating to legality of acquisition and introduction from the sea;*
- b) *identification and traceability, taking into consideration requirements that have been developed for the trade in specimens of other Appendix-II species, and their applicability to specimens of CITES-listed sharks and rays in trade;*
- c) *conservation and management measures for sharks and rays taken by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations; and*
- d) *coherence of CITES provisions concerning sharks and rays with conservation and management measures of other relevant multilateral environmental agreements;*

The Standing Committee shall report on the implementation of this decision, with recommendations as appropriate, at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

4. At CoP17, the Parties further agreed to include thirteen new species of Elasmobranchii in Appendix II, with entry into force delayed by 6 months or 12 months respectively to allow time for Parties to resolve related technical and administrative issues. The listing of *Mobula* spp. (9 species) entered into force on 4 April 2017. The listings of all species of *Alopias* spp. (3 species) and *Carcharhinus falciformis* will enter into force on 4 October 2017.

Information submitted by Parties

5. Pursuant to Decision 17.211, paragraph a), the Secretariat issued Notification to the Parties [No. 2017/031](#), inviting Parties to submit any new information on shark and ray conservation and management activities that have taken place.
6. At the timing of writing of this document (May 2017), 21 replies have been received (Bahamas, Canada, China, Colombia, Croatia, the European Union, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Latvia, the Netherlands, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, and the United States of America), which are presented in Annex 1 to this document. Given the volume of information received, the Secretariat believes that some initial compilation and a summary might be helpful to the Animals Committee, but such a summary could not be prepared in time for inclusion in this document.

Summary of trade data since 2000

7. Regarding Decision 17.211, paragraph b), the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) provided the Secretariat with an excerpt of the data from the CITES trade database on trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2000². The latest available data is from 2015. The table with the original data is attached to this document as Annex 2.

² History of listings in effect of Elasmobranchii on CITES Appendices and corresponding number of species included in the Appendices from 2000-2015. The numbers in brackets indicate the number of species (Arabic numbers) listed by Appendices (Roman numbers) in each year.

- 2000 (III:1): *Cetorhinus maximus* -> Appendix III (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- 2001 (III :2): *Carcharodon carcharias* (Appendix III, Australia)
- 2003 (II :2, III :1): *Cetorhinus maximus*, *Rhincodon typus* -> Appendix II
- 2005 (II : 3): *Carcharodon carcharias* -> Appendix II
- 2007 (I :5, II :4): Pristidae spp. -> Appendix I, except *Pristis microdon* -> Appendix II
- 2012 (I :5, II :4, III :2): *Lamna nasus* -> Appendix III (Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); *Sphyrna lewini* -> Appendix III (Costa Rica)
- 2013 (I :6, II :3, III :2): *Pristis microdon* -> Appendix I
- 2014 (I :6, II :9): *Sphyrna lewini*, *S. mokarran*, *S. zygaena* -> Appendix II ; *Carcharhinus longimanus* -> Appendix II, *Manta* spp. -> Appendix II

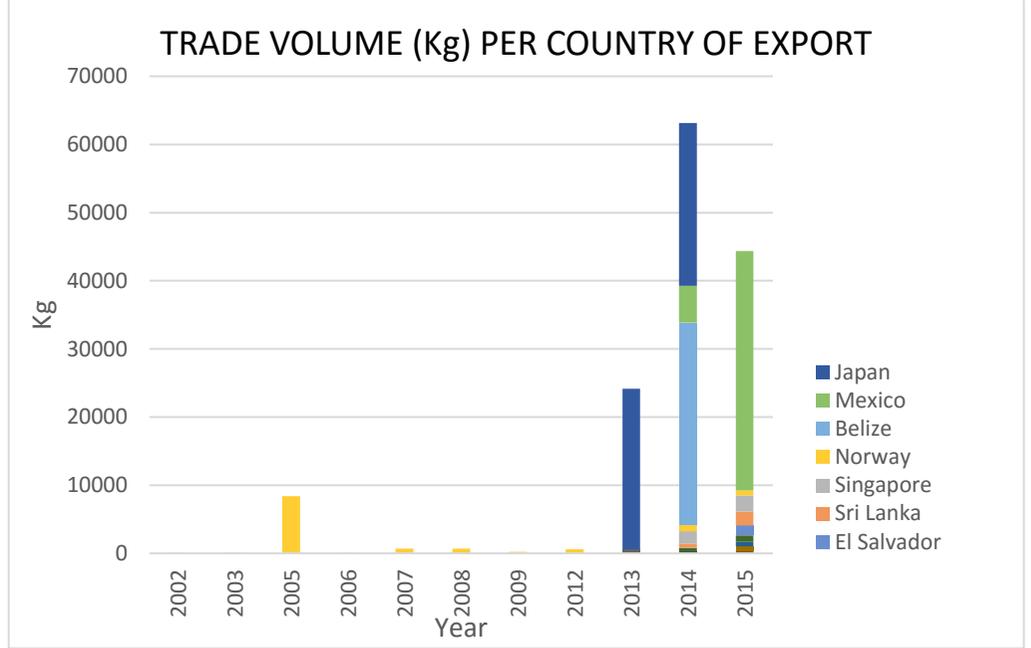
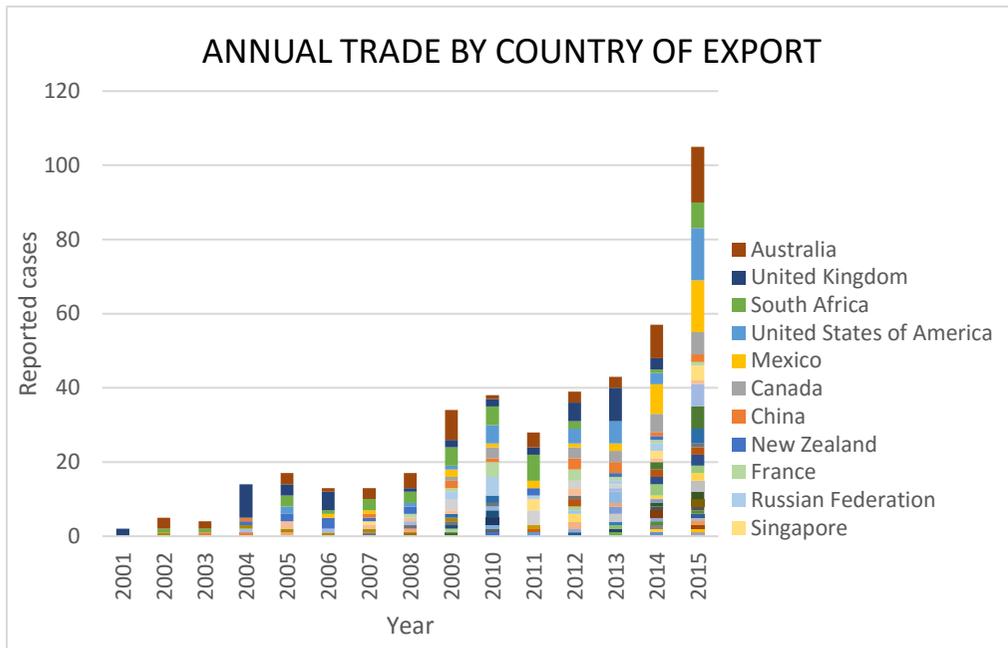


Fig.1: Number of reported trade transactions of CITES listed shark and ray species from 2000 – 2015 by country of export.

Fig.2: Volumes in kg of trade transactions of CITES listed shark and ray species from 2000-2015, by country of export. Values were available for 76 out of 429 overall trade transactions.

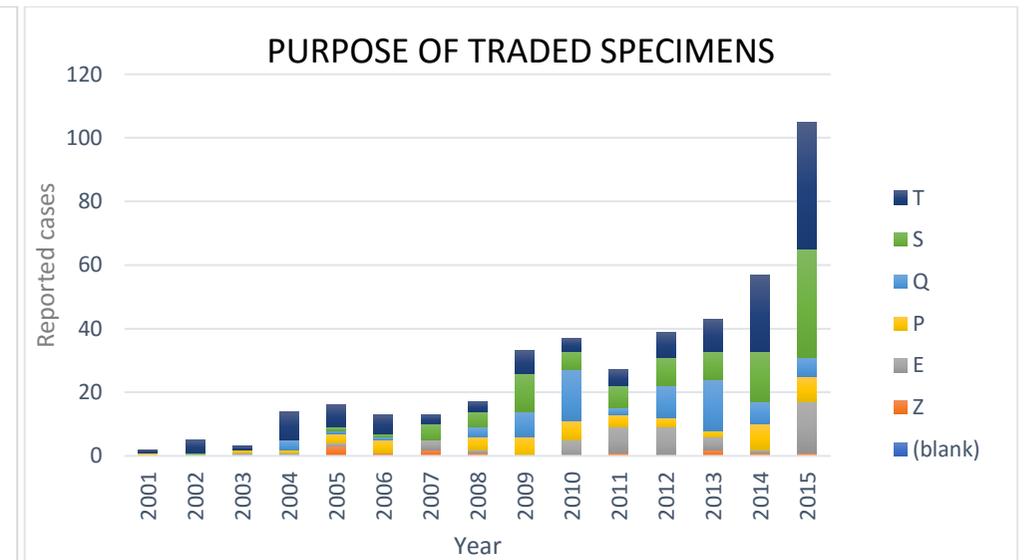
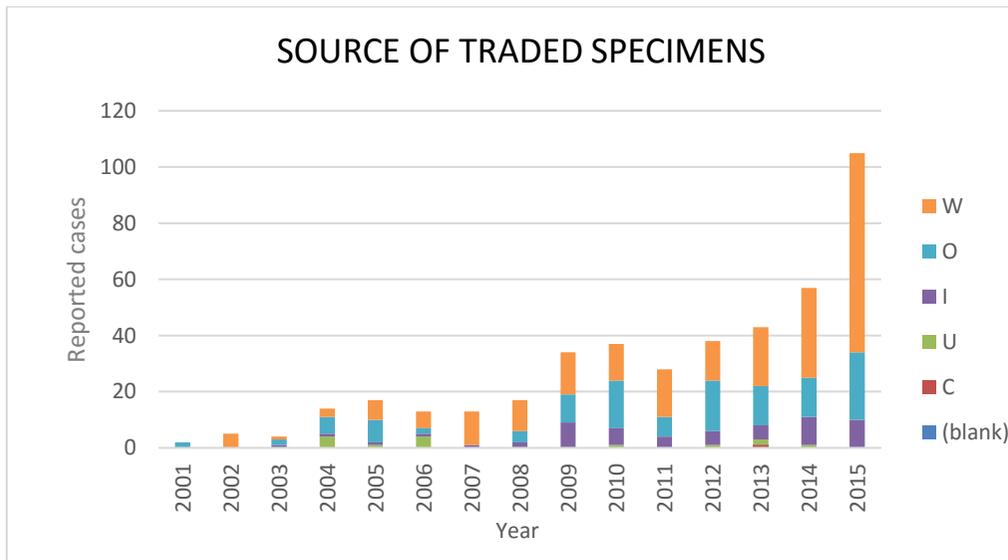


Fig. 3 Number of reported trade transactions of CITES listed shark and ray species from 2000 -2015 by source code.

Fig. 4: Number of reported trade transactions of CITES listed shark and ray species from 2000 -2015 by purpose code.

8. In total, 429 trade transactions have been reported, or 301 when excluding pre-Convention specimen. The number of trade transactions recorded per year increased gradually from 2000 to 2013, increasing steeply in 2014 and particularly in 2015 (see Figure 1). Traded volumes increased sharply in 2013 and 2014, with a drop in 2015 (see Figure 2).
9. The largest increase in 2014-2015 was for trade in wild sourced specimen (source code "W"; see Figure 3), both for commercial and scientific purposes (purpose codes "T" and "S"; see Figure 4.)
10. The taxa for which most commercial trade was recorded in 2014-2015, excluding trade in pre-Convention specimens, were *Sphyrna lewini*, *Sphyrna zygaena*, *Sphyrna mokarran*, *Lamna nasus* and *Carcharhinus falciformis*.

Information on NPOA-Sharks or regional plans

11. The Secretariat was informed about two revised National Plans of Action for the Conservation and Management of Shark Stocks (NPOA-Sharks) as part of the responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2017/031.
12. According to FAO's Database of measures on conservation and management of sharks (<http://www.fao.org/ipoa-sharks/database-of-measures/en/>), since 2015, seven Parties adopted (Belize; Cuba; Maldives; Vanuatu) or revised (Argentina; Ecuador; Japan) their National Plans of Action on Sharks; and seven Parties are in the process of drafting their National Plan of Action (Kenia, Mauritius, Oman, Pakistan, Thailand, Antigua and Barbuda, Indonesia). Overall the database lists 27 Parties and 4 regions which have adopted Plans of Action for Sharks in place

Implementation of Decision 17.212 on requested capacity building assistance and related decisions

13. The Secretariat is pleased to announce that the European Union has confirmed its financial support for a project entitled "*Implementation of CITES CoP17 Resolutions and Decisions*", which includes resources for capacity building activities pursuant to Decision 17.212 to assist Parties with the implementation of CITES provisions for sharks and rays. The Secretariat wishes to express its gratitude to the European Union for this generous support.
14. With the confirmation of external funding, the Secretariat intends to start the development of new activities, guided by the experiences from the 2013-2016 EU-CITES project "*Strengthening capacity in developing countries for sustainable wildlife management and enhanced implementation of CITES wildlife trade regulations, with particular focus on commercially exploited aquatic species*" and the needs identified during the regional implementation meetings referred to in Decision 17.212. These will also contribute the implementation of Decisions 17.210 and 17.213. An oral update on the planned activities will be provided at the present meeting of the Animals Committee.
15. The Secretariat notes that in document [CoP17 Doc. 56.1](#), it had estimated the full cost of the implementation of Decision 17.212 at 2,000,000 USD. It will therefore continue to explore co-funding opportunities in addition to the generous contribution by the European Union.
16. The Secretariat will continue maintaining its shark portal website (<http://cites.org/prog/shark>) with up-to-date information on these and future activities and, pursuant to Decision 17.213 paragraph d), support the maintenance and improvement of FAO's Database of measures on conservation and management of sharks, also referred to in paragraph 12 of this document.
17. The shark portal, pursuant to Decision 17.210, paragraph a), will also continue to serve as a repository for: identification materials, including for fins and other products and derivatives; genetic testing protocols and other forensic approaches as they become available; reference and training materials; NDFs and NDF guidance; events and agendas; and other relevant publications.
18. To assist with the implementation of Decision 17.210, paragraph b), the Secretariat intends to commission a concise study to extract relevant guidance from FAO's *Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries* and other relevant FAO guidelines. This guidance will be made available to Parties.

Implementation of Decisions 17.213 on continued collaboration with FAO

19. Early in 2017, with resources remaining from the 2013-2016 EU-CITES project referred to above, the CITES Secretariat commissioned FAO to produce an updated capacity needs study, based on the study [“Assessment of the capacity of selected countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to implement the new CITES listings of Sharks and Manta Rays”](#), prepared in 2014. The updated study is currently being published.
20. Additionally, the CITES Secretariat used remaining funds to organise a workshop with participants from FAO, selected Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) to provide an opportunity to exchange views on successes, lessons learned and future opportunities for cooperation on the implementation of CITES for marine species, and agree on common approaches to implement the measures agreed at CoP17 concerning sharks and rays. The outputs of the workshop will be used to further inform capacity building activities pursuant to Decision 17.212.

Recommendations

21. The Animals Committee is invited to consider the present document and examine the information provided in its Annexes.
22. Based on this information, the Animals Committee may wish to consider how to fulfil its mandate given in Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev CoP17) to make species-specific recommendations at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, if necessary, on improving the conservation status of sharks.