

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



Twenty-ninth meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 18-22 July 2017

Species specific matters

Aquatic species

SHARKS
(RESOLUTION CONF. 12.6 [(REV. COP 17)]
(agenda item 23)

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

- Chair: the representative of Oceania (Mr. Robertson);
- Parties: Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Estonia, European Union, Indonesia, Japan, Malta, Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, and United States of America; and
- IGOs and NGOs: CMS, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNEP-WCMC; IUCN, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC); Abercrombie & Fish, Blue Resources Trust, Defenders of Wildlife, Florida International University, Humane Society International, IFAW, Japan Wildlife Conservation Society, Natural Resources Defense Council, Paul G. Allen Philanthropies, Sea Save Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, TRAFFIC, Wildlife Conservation Society, and Zoological Society of London.

Mandate

In support of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP17), the working group shall:

- a) consider document AC29 Doc. 23 and examine the information provided by range States in Annex 1, the trade data contained in Annex 2, and any other relevant information;
- b) identify information pertinent to addressing the scientific and technical challenges for the implementation of the Convention for sharks, identified in Decisions 17.209 to 17.216 ;
- c) identify any new challenges faced by Parties in the implementation of the Convention for sharks with a particular focus on the species included at CoP17; and
- d) based on the above, consider how the Animals Committee can fulfil its mandate given in Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev CoP17) to make recommendations on improving the conservation status of sharks at meetings of the Conference of the Parties, if necessary.

Recommendations

1. The Animals Committee urges Parties and other organizations to collaborate in developing techniques and opportunities for rapid and cost-effective DNA testing of shark and ray products, including in the field, and to share that knowledge.

2. The Animals Committee recommends that the CITES Secretariat request Parties and other organizations to share protocols for the collection and curation of tissue material and product samples derived from CITES-listed species, for the development and testing of genetic identification procedures and other forensic approaches (e.g. isotope analyses).
3. The Animals Committee urges Parties and other organizations to develop robust, low-cost tools and systems, where not already existing, to ensure that CITES species are identified accurately at the first point of capture/landing. This will facilitate the implementation of traceability systems for international trade. The Animals Committee asks the Secretariat to bring this matter to the attention to the Standing Committee for its consideration of the issues identified in Decision 17.216.
4. The Animals Committee urges Parties and all relevant stakeholders to provide clear imagery of wet and dried unprocessed shark fins (particularly but not exclusively those from CITES-listed species) along with related species level taxonomic information to FAO to facilitate refinement of iSharkFin software using machine learning.
5. The Animals Committee urges Parties and all relevant stakeholders to develop and share tools for the identification of other shark and ray commodities and derivatives in trade.
6. The Animals Committee directs the Secretariat to issue a notification to Parties, requesting that they provide concise summaries of any new information on their shark and ray conservation and management activities, and that the Secretariat collate these for consideration of the 30th meeting of the Animals Committee (AC30).
7. The Animals Committee directs the Secretariat to at the same time request CITES Parties to highlight any questions, concerns or difficulties they are having in writing or submitting export or import trade documentation for the CITES (UNEP-WCMC) trade database, with a view to the Animals Committee developing recommendations at its 30th meeting for how such data (e.g. units reported) and coherence between exports and imports may be improved.
8. The Animals Committee directs the Secretariat to provide information from the CITES Trade Database on commercial trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2000, sorted by species and if possible by product, for consideration by its 30th meeting.
9. The Animals Committee recommends that Parties and regions share their experiences of developing non-detriment findings (NDFs) for sharks and rays, share these NDFs *via* the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal, identify gaps in capacity, and develop advice and recommendations on formulating national and regional NDFs for sharks and rays, taking into consideration:
 - i) strategies for the establishment and maintenance of data collection systems and data analysis and presentation;
 - ii) dealing with data-poor, multi-species, small-scale/artisanal, and non-target (bycatch) situations;
 - iii) addressing look-alike issues and NDFs for trade in non-fin commodities;
 - iv) obtaining advice from regional fisheries bodies;
 - v) introductions from the Sea issues;
 - vi) processes for adopting, evaluating and revising precautionary interim NDFs with conditions;
 - vii) opportunities for providing training for trainers;and report back to AC30.
10. The Animals Committee urges the Secretariat to continue its valuable collaborations with FAO, Regional Fisheries Bodies, CMS and other relevant actors regarding marine issues including but not restricted to those identified in paragraph 9 of document AC29 Doc. 23.
11. The Animals Committee reminds Parties that FAO has developed a shark measures database and they are encouraged to consult it regularly to ensure that their measures are well reflected.

12. The Animals Committee recognises that utilisation of and trade in shark and ray meat and other products (skin, cartilage, oil) is poorly understood, and recommends the development of case studies by FAO and others into international trade and markets for these products.
13. The Animals Committee urges Parties and other stakeholders to support the establishment and maintenance of fundamental long-term data collection programmes on the status of shark and ray stocks.
14. The Animals Committee requests the Secretariat to bring to the attention of the Standing Committee the need for guidance to Parties when issuing permits for products that are composed of multiple species, which can include listed and non-listed species.