

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



Thirtieth meeting of the Animals Committee  
Geneva (Switzerland), 16-21 July 2018

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 also adopted Decisions 17.209 to 17.216 on *Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)*, encompassing a variety of activities to be undertaken by Parties, the Standing Committee, and the following instructions directed at the Secretariat and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO):

***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)<sup>1</sup> and identified in the course of the 2013-2016 EU-CITES project.*

**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.*

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 of document AC28 Com. 9.

## Background

4. The Secretariat has previously reported on the implementation of Decisions 17.209 to 17.216 on *Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)* in its report to the 29th meeting (AC29, Geneva, July 2017) of the Animals Committee (see document [AC29 Doc. 23](#)). Based on its review of the document and information contained therein, the Committee adopted recommendations as reflected in [AC29 Com.3 \(Rev. by Sec.\)](#). Recommendations 6 to 8, which are directed to the Secretariat, read as follows:
  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 the consideration of 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 AC30 developing recommendations 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 AC30.*
5. The Secretariat also notes that the Standing Committee, at its 69th meeting, established an intersessional working group on sharks and rays, chaired by Indonesia with a mandate to (see [SC69 summary record](#)):
  - a) *consider the information in paragraphs 20 to 33 of document SC69 Doc. 50;*
  - b) *review the following:*
    - i) *how to take account of measures and regulations agreed under Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Bodies, or other multilateral environmental agreements, in particular the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), in the implementation of CITES;*
    - ii) *the role of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and Bodies in supporting the making of non-detriment findings;*
    - iii) *identification and traceability issues, 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; and*
    - iv) *legislative issues that might be hindering the implementation of the Convention for sharks and rays; and*
  - c) *report on its deliberations and make recommendations to the 70th meeting of the Standing Committee for its report to the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.*

## Responses from Parties and stakeholders

6. As requested by the Animals Committee, the Secretariat published [Notification to the Parties No 2018/041](#), inviting Parties to submit any relevant information to the Secretariat for inclusion in this document. At the suggestion of the Chair of the Animals Committee, the notification also invited responses from other stakeholders (besides Parties) that may also hold information that could be pertinent to the discussions of the Animals Committee.
7. At the time of writing of this document (May 2018) the Secretariat had received responses by 13 Parties (Australia, Belize, China, Colombia, the European Union, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela) and three organizations (Florida International University, Pew Charitable Trusts and the Wildlife Conservation Society), which are collated in the Annex to this document.

8. The Secretariat notes with gratitude that among the submissions, there are seven new non-detriment findings (NDF), which have been uploaded to the CITES shark portal, bringing the current number of NDFs, NDF examples and NDF guidelines available on the Portal to 18.
9. Given the volume of information received, the Secretariat will conduct some initial analysis and summarize the responses as an information document (similar to document [AC29. Inf. 3](#)).

#### Summary of trade data since 2000

10. As requested by the Animals Committee, the Secretariat downloaded (on 14 May 2018) the data contained in the CITES trade database on trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2000. The full data set is presented in Annex 2 to this document.
11. A total of 557 trade transactions have been reported – 421 when excluding pre-Convention specimens. This represents 128 new trade transactions, i.e. an increase by 23%, compared to the Secretariat's report on trade in sharks and rays presented at AC29. For 2016 and 2017, 122 trade transactions were reported, and six were late additional reports for 2015.
12. Out of these 557 trade transactions, 167 were reportedly for commercial trade (purpose code "T"), or 108 when excluding confiscated and pre-convention specimens. Visualizations of the number and volume of commercial trade since 2000, excluding confiscated and pre-convention specimens, can be found on the next page, differentiated by species (Figures 1 and 3) and by product (Figures 2 and 4).
13. The Secretariat notes that, when interpreting the available CITES trade data, the Committee should take into account both the increase in the number of species listed on the Appendices over time<sup>2</sup> as well as lower levels of completeness of the data for the most recent years due to delay in reporting (see [Annual reports on the CITES website](#)).
14. Specimens of species of the genus *Sphyrna* make up the largest portion of commercial trade in CITES-listed shark and rays, both by number of transactions and volume, in 2014, 2015 and 2016, i.e. since their listing entered into force on 14 September 2014.
15. It is worth noting that, while in 2013 and 2014 meat made up a large portion of the traded volume (in particular meat of Porbeagle shark, *Lamna nasus*), fins (in particular from Hammerhead sharks, genus *Sphyrna*) are dominating trade in 2015 and 2016, both by number of transactions and in volume.

#### Information on NPOA-Sharks or regional plans

16. In its response to the Notification, Belize informed the Secretariat that it had finalized its National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Shark Stocks (NPOA-Sharks), which will be released by the end of May 2018, and that it is seeking support for the implementation of its NPOA-Sharks.

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<sup>2</sup> *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
- 2017 (I :6, II :22) *Mobula spp.* -> Appendix II (4 April 2017), *Alopias spp.*, *Carcharhinus falciformis* -> Appendix II (4 October 2017)

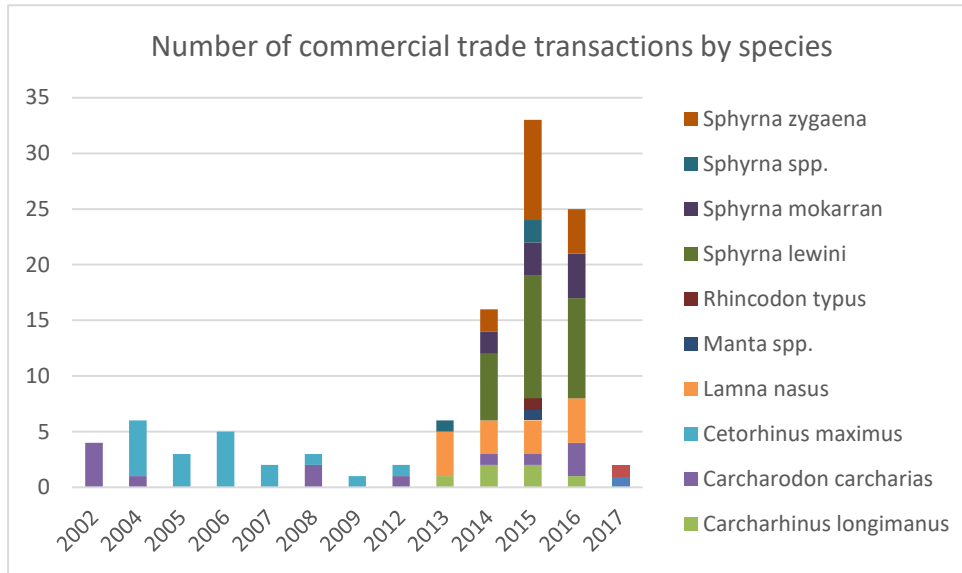


Fig 1. Number of recorded commercial trade transactions of CITES-listed sharks and rays by species, excluding confiscated & pre-convention specimens.

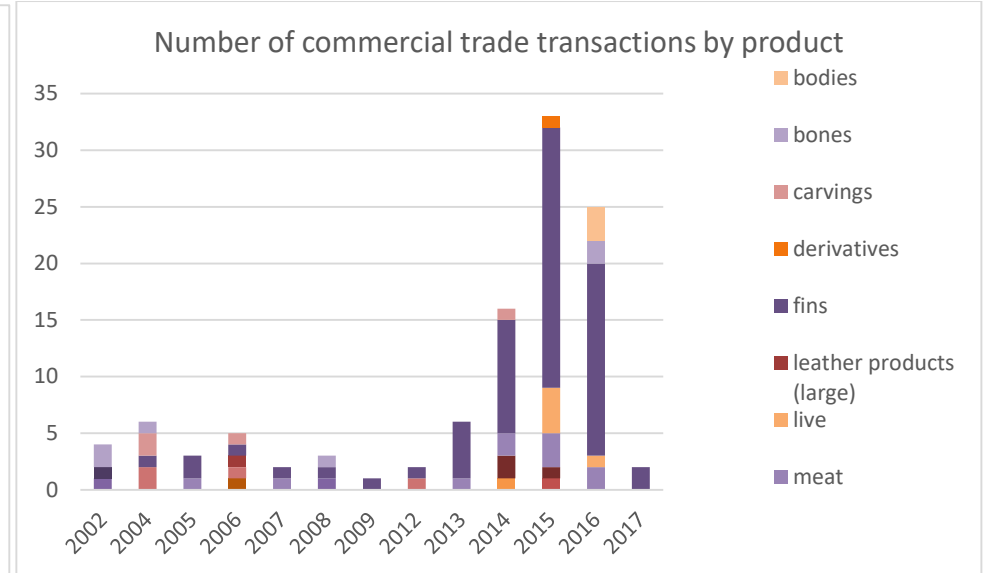


Fig 2. Number of recorded commercial trade transactions of CITES-listed sharks and rays by product, excluding confiscated & pre-convention specimens

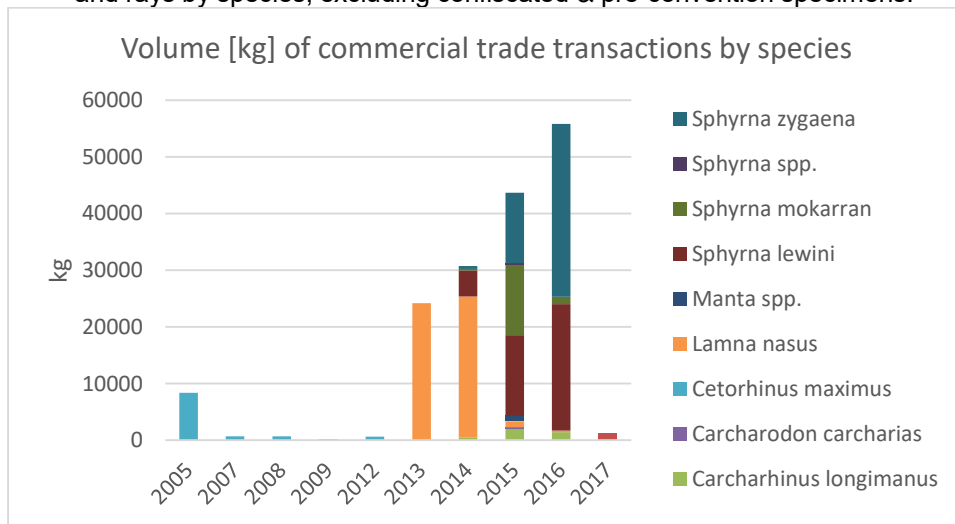


Fig 3. Volume of recorded commercial trade transactions of CITES-listed sharks and rays by species, excluding confiscated & pre-convention specimens.

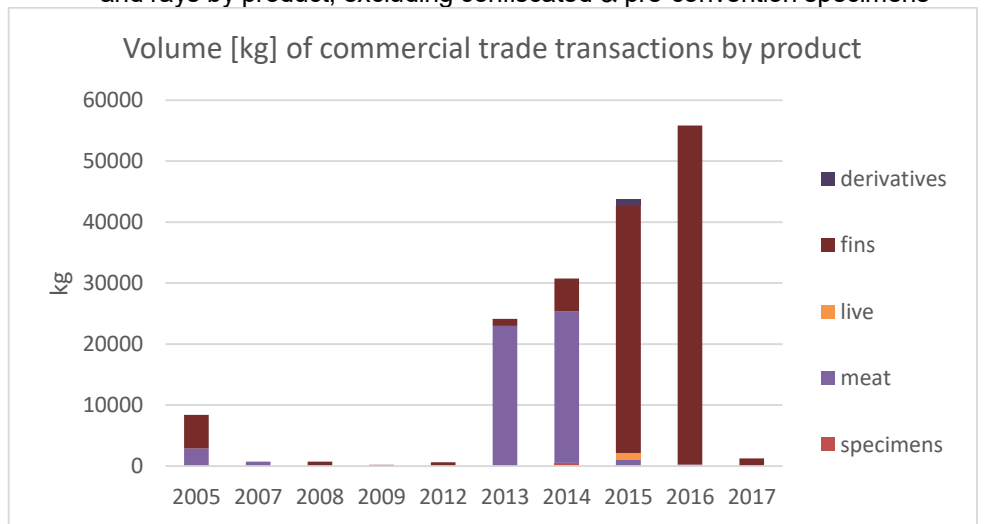


Fig 4. Volume of recorded commercial trade transactions of CITES-listed sharks and rays by product, excluding confiscated & pre-convention specimens

### Capacity building assistance and continued collaboration with FAO (Decisions 17.212 & 17.213)

17. Regarding Decision 17.212, the Secretariat has concluded a small-scale funding agreement with the South East Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) under the umbrella project entitled “Implementation of CITES CoP17 Resolutions and Decisions”, generously supported by the European Union. The activities conducted by SEAFDEC in the framework of this agreement will support four Parties (provisionally: Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam) in setting up data collection systems for shark and ray catches at the species level, and support three Parties (provisionally: Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand) in the development of non-detriment findings.
18. The activities mentioned in paragraph 17 above build on a previous joint activity of CITES with SEAFDEC under the 2013-2016 EU-CITES project, after which an FAO-led assessment<sup>3</sup> of the impact of CITES on South East Asian shark fisheries found that CITES had a small, but measurable, impact in improving several aspects of these fisheries, in particular governance. The new activities are scoped to address, among other things, remaining challenges identified in the assessment.
19. The Secretariat has also concluded an agreement with FAO under the same umbrella project. The activities to be conducted by FAO pursuant to this agreement will, among other things, support the implementation of Decisions 17.210, paragraph b), and 17.213, paragraphs a), d) and e).
20. The Secretariat will provide an oral update on further shark and ray- focused activities conducted or planned under the umbrella project entitled “Implementation of CITES CoP17 Resolutions and Decisions at AC30.

### 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, and given that AC30 is the last meeting of the Animals Committee prior to the 18th meeting (CoP18, Colombo, 2019) of the Conference of the Parties, the Committee may wish to consider how to fulfil its mandate in Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP17), namely to report its analysis of information submitted by range States, report progress on shark and ray activities and make species-specific recommendations on improving the conservation status of sharks, if necessary, to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.12281>