

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



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

SHARKS

Membership (as decided by the Committee)

- Co-Chairs: the representatives of Central and South America and the Caribbean (Mr. Calvar Agrelo) and of Oceania (Mr. Robertson);
- Parties: Argentina, Australia, Cabo Verde, Canada, China, European Union, Germany, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Spain, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America; and
- IGOs and NGOs: CMS, UNEP-WCMC, FAO, IUCN, SEAFDEC, Bloom Association, Born Free USA, Defenders of Wildlife, Global Guardian Trust, Humane Society International, IFAW, Japan Wildlife Conservation Society, NRDC, Oceana Inc., Save our Seas Foundation, Species360, The Blue Resources Trust, The Pew Charitable Trusts, TRAFFIC, Vulcan/Paul G. Allen Philanthropies, Wildlife Conservation Society and Zoological Society of London.

Mandate

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

- a) consider document AC30 Doc. 20 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 on *Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)*;
- c) identify any new challenges faced by Parties in the implementation of the Convention for sharks with a particular focus on the species included by the Conference of the Parties at its 17th meeting and;
- d) identify sections of Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP17) that may require updating to reflect the recent focus on implementation of shark listings and capture any pertinent and recurring findings;
- e) based on paragraphs a) to d) 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

The Animals Committee notes concerns raised that the actual trade in CITES-listed shark products recorded in the CITES database appear to be lower than what would be expected against the knowledge available on catches of listed species. This could be occurring for many reasons including the delayed reporting of Parties,

the use of different units (weight/number of items) on CITES permits, the stockpiling of CITES-listed shark products due to a country not having made a positive non-detriment finding (NDF) at this time, problems issuing permits for products with mixed species (eg. liver oil) and illegal trade including the laundering of listed species products with non-listed species.

Directed to the Secretariat

1. The Animals Committee recommends that Resolution Conf 12.6 (Rev. CoP17) on *Conservation and management of sharks* be updated and reviewed, and invites the Secretariat to propose amendments to this Resolution for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its 18th meeting (CoP18), also taking into account any discussions or recommendations in the Standing Committee. The Animals Committee recommends that the amendments should in particular include provisions designed to guide Parties in their implementation of the Convention for CITES-listed shark species especially on:
 - i) The making of NDFs and the sharing of information on NDFs;
 - ii) Improving reporting on trade in shark products; and
 - iii) Ways to ensure better traceability of shark products in trade.
2. The Animals Committee recommends that the Secretariat take note of recommendations from both AC29 and AC30 when preparing draft Decisions and revisions of Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev. CoP17) for the consideration of the 18th meeting of the Conference of Parties.
3. The Animals Committee invites the Secretariat for its 31st meeting (AC31) to:
 - i) issue a notification to Parties, requesting that they provide concise summaries of new information on their shark and ray conservation and management activities;
 - ii) highlight any questions, concerns or difficulties they are having in writing or submitting export or import trade documentation for the CITES trade database maintained by the United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), with a view to the Animals Committee developing recommendations;
 - iii) 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,

And the Secretariat collate these for consideration of the 31st meeting of the Animals Committee.

Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs)

4. The Animals Committee urges Parties to help increase the capacity of other Parties, particularly in assessing the status of CITES-listed species and other relevant information that will assist in the development of NDFs.
5. The Animals Committee urges Parties, regional fisheries bodies, and organizations to support the development of long-term fisheries (including bycatch and release) and trade species-specific data collection programs for CITES-listed shark and ray species to assist CITES Parties in the development of NDFs.
6. The Animals Committee encourages Parties to continue to cooperate regionally, including through Regional Fisheries Bodies, on research, stock assessments, data sharing and analysis to help Parties making legal acquisition findings and NDFs for shared stocks.
7. The Animals Committee recommends that Parties and regions continue sharing their experiences of developing non-detriment findings (NDFs) for sharks and rays, share these NDFs *via* the CITES sharks and rays portal, for the benefit of other CITES Parties, identify gaps in capacity, and develop advice and recommendations on formulating 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) cooperating with regional fisheries bodies;
- v) Introduction from the Sea issues;
- vi) processes for adopting, evaluating and revising precautionary interim NDFs with conditions; and
- vii) opportunities for providing training for trainers.

Trade

- 8. The Animals Committee encourages Parties to report to the Secretariat their trade records of CITES-listed elasmobranch products by weight and product form (e.g. dried fin or frozen fin, live specimens) rather than number of items, and requests the Secretariat to liaise with UNEP-WCMC regarding amending the description of trade terms in the database to differentiate between these fin products.
- 9. The Animals Committee requests Parties to alert the CITES Secretariat of institutional arrangements that disallow commercial exports from their country of CITES Appendix II elasmobranch products (e.g. fins, meat, live specimens) and reminds Parties that they have the option of announcing zero quotas or negative NDFs if they wish to inform other Parties that they have decided not to allow exports, and can ask the Secretariat to publish this information on the sharks and rays portal, and if possible through the Database of Measures of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- 10. The Animals Committee requests Parties to alert the Secretariat of changes in trade of non-fin products, such as meat, from CITES-listed species, in recognition of the fluctuating levels of trade reports for different products.
- 11. The Animals Committee supports and encourages FAO to continue its analysis of the non-fin shark and ray trade to assist CITES Parties in gaining a better understanding of the trade and trends in shark and ray products, including to inform the development of NDFs.

Identification

- 12. The Animals Committee urges Parties and organizations to continue:
 - i) the provision of training in the identification of shark fin and other products to improve their detection in trade; and
 - ii) collaboration, advancement, and dissemination of the development of rapid and cost-effective genetic tools to assist Parties with the identification of shark and ray products in trade.
- 13. The Animals Committee urges Parties and relevant stakeholders to provide imagery of fresh shark fins to FAO to assist in further development of the iSharkFin software tool.

Enforcement

- 14. The Animals Committee request Parties to alert the CITES Secretariat of issues related to suspected increasing illegal trade in products of CITES Appendix-II elasmobranch species, for example discrepancies between reported or observed landings and international trade.
- 15. The Animals Committee congratulates Parties that have undertaken assessments of stockpiles of commercial and/or pre-Convention shark fins for CITES Appendix-II elasmobranch species, and encourages the Parties that have not done so to do so and to share their experiences of recording these stockpiles and controlling and monitoring the entry of these stocks into trade.

Look-alike issues

- 16. The Animals Committee requests the Standing Committee to consider implementation issues of CITES-listed hammerhead species and make recommendations, as appropriate, to CoP18.