

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



Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 13-17 July 2020

Species specific matters

SHARKS AND RAYS (ELASMOBRANCHII SPP.)

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
 2. In Resolution 12.6 (Rev.CoP18) on *Conservation and management of sharks*, the Conference of the Parties:
 13. *DIRECTS the Animals Committee to periodically examine new information provided by range States on the implementation of the shark listings and other available relevant data and information;*
 14. *DIRECTS the Animals Committee to make species-specific recommendations, if necessary, on improving the conservation status of sharks and implementation of shark and ray listings;*
- and
16. *DIRECTS the Animals Committee and Standing Committee to report progress on shark and ray activities at the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, as appropriate.*
3. At its 18th meeting (CoP18, Geneva, 2019), the Conference of the Parties adopted Decisions 18.218 to 18.225 on *Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)*, which are presented in Annex 1 to this document.
 4. Parties also adopted proposals to include 18 additional species of Elasmobranchii spp. in Appendix II at CoP18. The species included were: Mako sharks (*Isurus oxyrinchus* and *I. paucus*), guitarfishes (*Glaucostegus* spp. – six species), and wedgefishes (Rhinidae spp. – 10 species). These new listings entered into force on 26 November 2019.

Implementation of Decision 18.220, paragraph a)

5. Regarding paragraph a) of Decision 18.220, the Secretariat published [Notification to the Parties No. 2020/16](#) on 28 February 2020, inviting Parties to submit concise summaries of any new information on shark and ray conservation and management activities, as well as highlight any questions, concerns or difficulties they are having in writing or submitting documentation on authorized trade for the CITES trade database.
6. At the timing of writing of this document (May 2020), 16 responses had been received from Parties (Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Cost Rica, Croatia, European Union, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Senegal, Thailand and the United States of America). These responses are contained in Annex 2 to this document in the language and format in which they were received. To assist the Animals Committee, the Secretariat intends to produce a synthesized analysis of the responses received and make it available as an information document.
7. The Secretariat notes that among the responses are six non-detriment findings (from Costa Rica and the United States of America), which will also be uploaded on the CITES sharks webpage.

Implementation of Decision 18.220, paragraph b)

8. Regarding paragraph b) of Decision 18.220, the Secretariat analysed data on trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2000. The table with the original data, which was downloaded from the CITES trade database on 27 March 2020, is contained in Annex 3 to this document. The latest available data is from 2018.
9. To present the 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 in keeping with the presentation of this data in document [AC30 Doc. 20](#)), the data was filtered and interpreted as follows:
 - a) Only species listed in Appendix I and Appendix II are included (Appendix III listed species have been excluded).
 - b) Only commercial transactions are included (Purpose code T).
 - c) Confiscated and pre-convention specimens are excluded (Source codes I and O).
 - d) Re-exports are included (to maintain consistency with the data reported to previous Animals Committee meetings).
 - e) When exporters and importers reported different quantities for the same transaction, the higher quantity was selected.
 - f) In the graphs showing products in trade (figures 2 and 4), the terms 'skin pieces', 'skins', 'specimens', 'tails', 'teeth' and 'unspecified' have been excluded (to maintain consistency with the data reported to previous Animals Committee meetings).
 - g) The graphs indicating volumes in trade (figures 3 and 4) only include transactions where the unit of measure is indicated in 'kg'. No conversion factors were applied.
10. The Secretariat notes that, when interpreting the available CITES trade data, the Committee should take into account the increase in the number of species listed on the Appendices over time¹, 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).
11. A total of 1,544 trade transactions have been reported in the CITES trade database. Of these, 565 transactions were in specimens of Appendix-III listed species. Of the remaining 979 transactions, 296 were reported as being traded for commercial purposes (Purpose code T). When confiscated and pre-Convention specimens are excluded, a total of 197 commercial trade transactions remain.
12. Based on the number of trade transactions, the species in the genus *Sphyrna* (in particular, *S. lewini* and *S. zygaena*) make up the largest portion of commercial trade in CITES-listed shark species since 2000,

¹ History of listings in effect of *Elasmobranchii* on CITES Appendices and corresponding number of species included in the Appendices from 2000-2019. 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: 10, III: 0): *Sphyrna lewini*, *S. mokarran*, *S. zygaena*, *Lamna nasus* -> Appendix II; *Carcharhinus longimanus* -> Appendix II; *Manta* spp. -> Appendix II
- 2017 (I: 6, II: 24, III: 9): *Alopias* spp., *Carcharhinus falciformis*, *Mobula* spp. -> Appendix II; *Potamotrygon* spp. -> Appendix III (Brazil); *Paratrygon aiereba*, *Potamotrygon constellata*, *P. magdalenae*, *P. motoro*, *P. orbignyi*, *P. schroederi*, *P. scobina*, *P. yepezi* -> Appendix III (Colombia)
- 2019 (I: 6, II: 42, III: 9): *Isurus oxyrinchus*, *I. paucus*, *Glaucostegus* spp., *Rhinidae* spp. -> Appendix II.

noting that they were only listed in 2014, followed by *Carcharhinus falciformis*, *Cetorhinus maximus* and *Sphyrna mokarran* (see Figure 1).

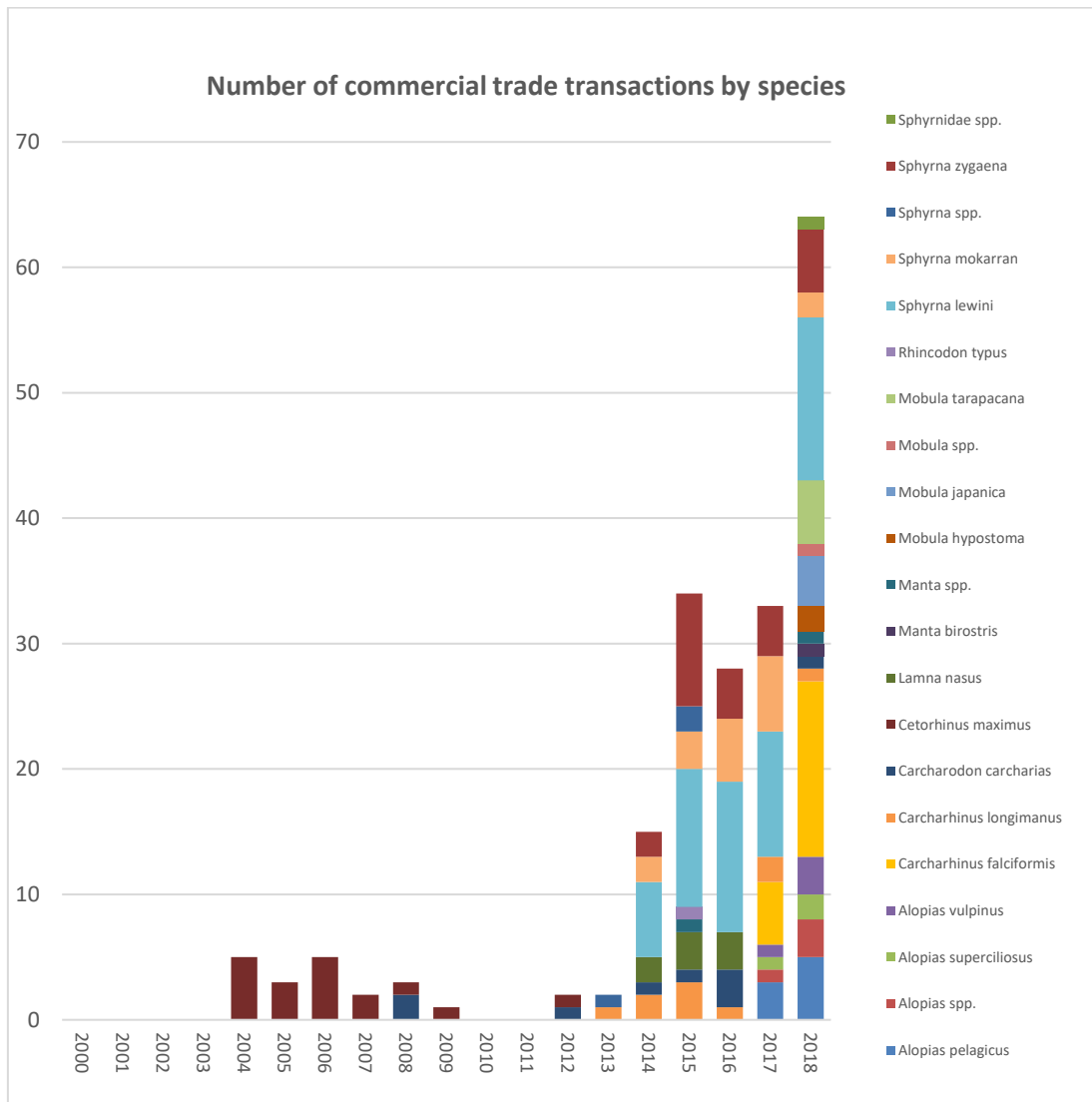


Figure 1. Number of recorded commercial trade transactions (including re-exports) in species of sharks and rays listed in CITES Appendix I or II of CITES (extracted from CITES trade database March 2020).

- The number of trade transactions involving shark fins (in particular from hammerhead sharks, genus *Sphyrna*, and silky shark, *Carcharhinus falciformis*) has continued to increase, and there has been a notable increase in trade in live specimens (mainly in species of the genera *Sphyrna* and *Mobula*) (see Figure 2).

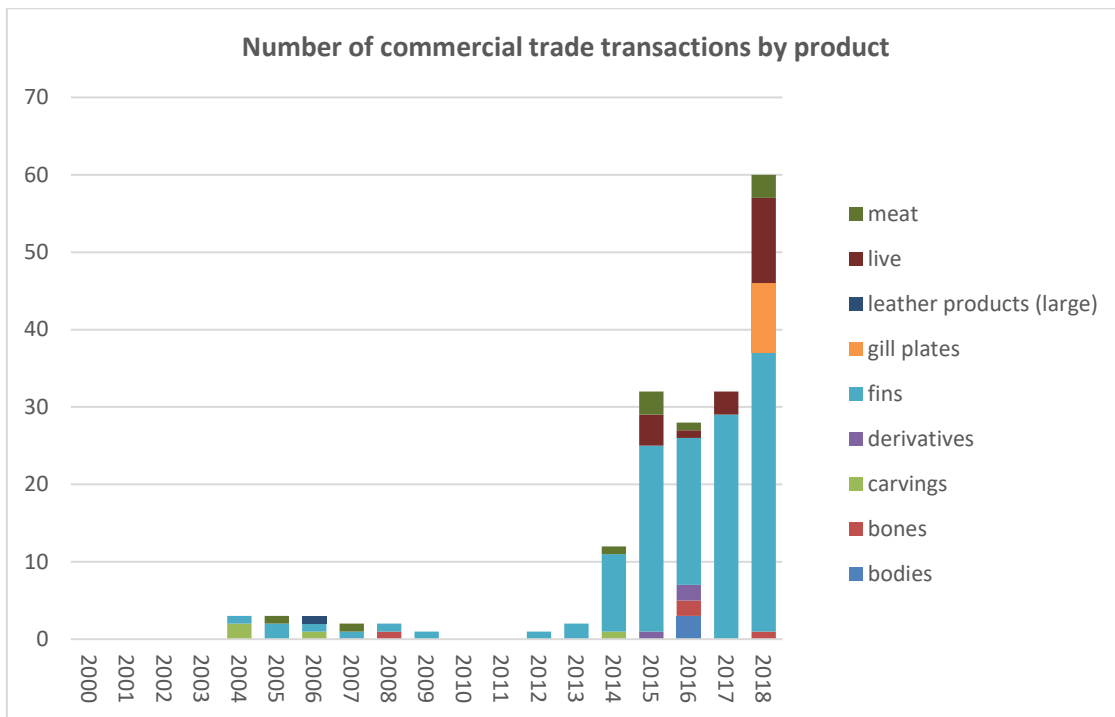


Figure 2. Number of recorded commercial trade transactions (including re-exports) in products of shark and ray species listed in CITES Appendix I or II of CITES (extracted from CITES trade database March 2020).

14. The greatest volume of trade recorded in kilogrammes was in specimens of *Carcharhinus falciformis*, followed in order of volume by *Sphyrna zygaena*, *Alopias pelagicus*, *A. vulpinus* and *Sphyrna lewini* (see Figure 3).

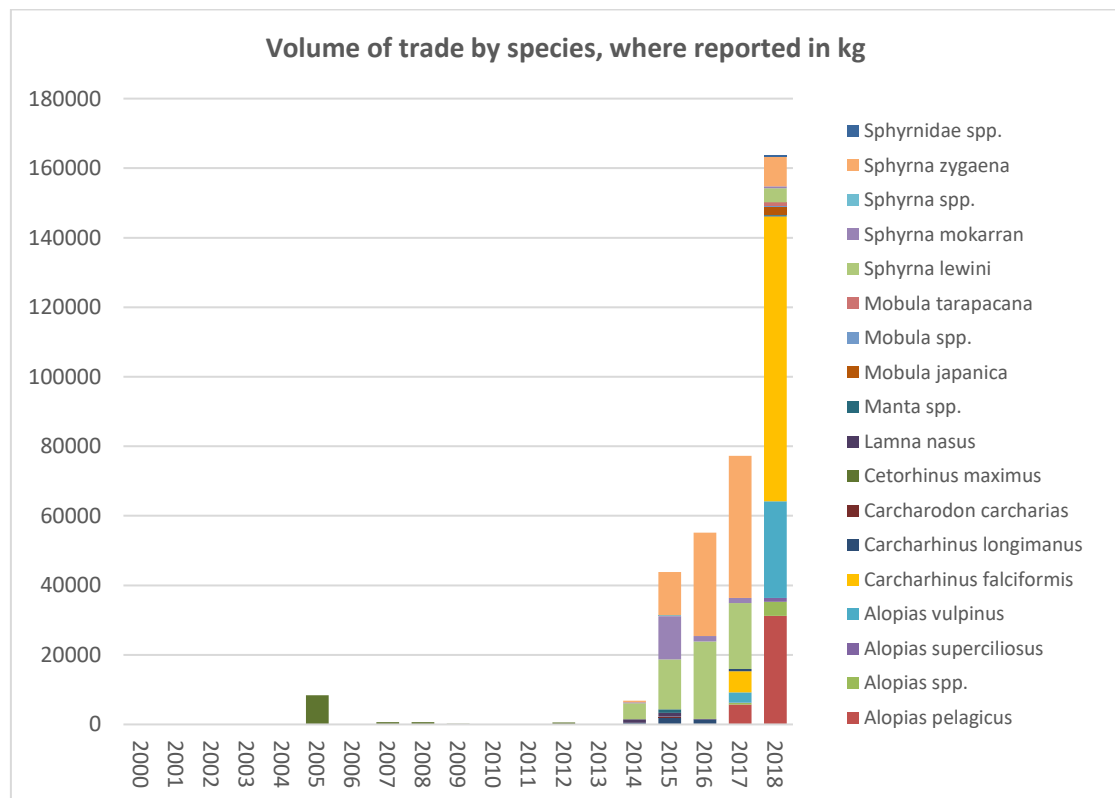


Figure 3. Volume of commercial trade transactions that was recorded in kg (including re-exports) in species of sharks and rays listed in CITES Appendix I or II of CITES, (extracted from CITES trade database March 2020).

15. Figure 4 indicates that the volume of trade reported in kilogrammes has continued to increase, with notable increases in the volume of fins, meat and gill plates. The total volume reported increased from 605kg in 2012 to 43,825kg in 2015; 77,270 kg in 2017; and 163,687 kg in 2018. These increases are mainly associated with trade in fins (representing 83% of the volume trade in 2018).

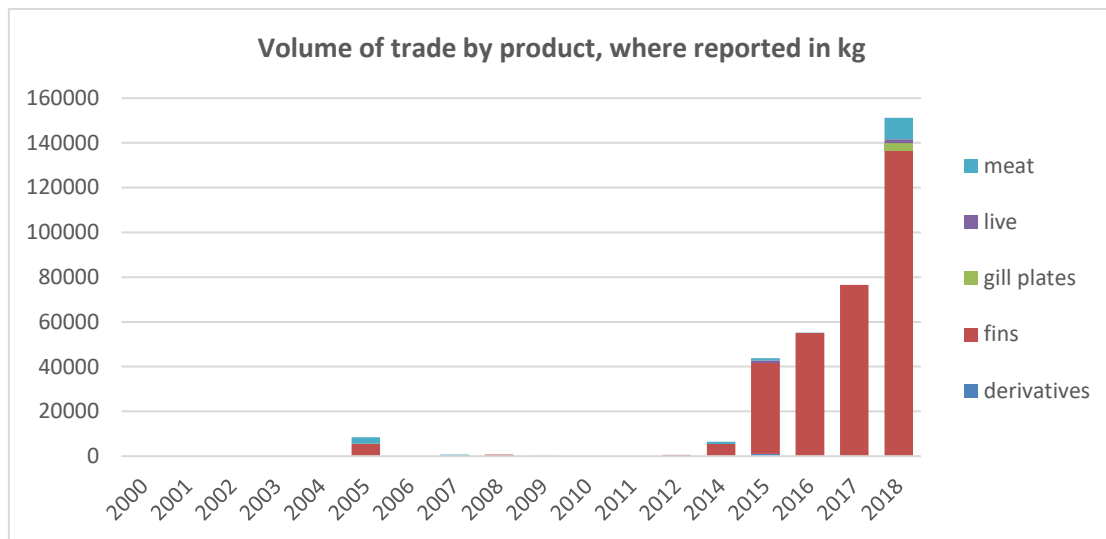


Figure 4. Volume of commercial trade transactions that was recorded in kg (including re-exports) in products of shark and ray species listed in CITES Appendix I or II of CITES, (extracted from CITES trade database March 2020).

Implementation of Decisions subject to external funding

16. With regards to Decisions 18.219, 18.221 and 18.222, and as indicated in [Notification to the Parties No. 2020/032](#), the Secretariat estimates that their implementation could cost in excess of USD 1.6 million. Thanks to a pledge of USD 180,000 from the European Union, work on these Decisions can begin shortly, but additional funds will need to be secured from donor Parties and stakeholders for their full implementation.
17. The Secretariat notes that the activities envisioned under the scope of Decision 18.219 include a review of the existing experiences with making non-detriment findings, which may also be helpful in supporting the implementation of Decisions 18.132 to 18.134 on *Non-detriment findings* (see document AC31 Doc. 14.1/PC25 Doc. 17).
18. Since CoP18, a number of additional activities aimed at supporting Parties in their implementation of CITES provisions for trade in Elasmobranchii spp. have been undertaken in the framework of the *CoP17 Decisions and Resolutions project* that was funded by the European Union. Previous activities carried out under this project are outlined in document [CoP18 Doc. 68.2](#).
19. Under this project, the South-East Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC) organised a regional data validation workshop in October 2019, that built on a previous project activity to collect landing data on sharks in Cambodia and Myanmar during 2015 and 2016. SEAFDEC will now compile the information regarding shark landing data in South-East Asia for the periods 2015–2016 and 2017–2019 to produce a set of technical documents that will be made available to the Animals Committee before the end of 2020.
20. Also, under this project, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organised an expert workshop in February 2020 to finalize the *Guidance document on implementing CITES through national fisheries legal frameworks: a Study and a Guide*, which will be published shortly.

Additional information

21. The Secretariat notes that Species360 and the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) are currently leading a review of shark and ray species that could make a valuable contribution to the Animals Committee's work

on sharks and rays. Under the Species Knowledge Index² initiative, they will collate available information concerning sharks and ray species that are:

- a) listed on CITES;
- b) listed in different international and regional conventions such as the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (BERN);
- c) assessed by the *Red List of Threatened Species* of the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN);
- d) listed by the Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE);
- e) considered distinct in evolutionary terms, as assessed by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL); and/or
- f) have *ex situ* populations in Species360's register of zoos and aquariums.

The available trade information on the selected species of sharks and rays will be collated, as well as biological information available in *Fish Base* and *Global capture production* data in FAO. It is understood that Species360 and SDU will make their findings available as an information document for the present meeting.

Recommendations

22. With regard to the implementation of Resolution Conf. 12.6 (Rev.CoP18) and Decisions 18.223, paragraph a) and 18.225, the Secretariat invites the Animals Committee to establish an intersessional working group on sharks to:
 - a) based on information contained in document AC31 Doc. 25, including the responses to Notification to the Parties No. 2020/016 found in its Annex 2, and on other available data and information, draft species-specific recommendations for improving the conservation status of sharks, and the implementation of shark and ray listings;
 - b) review the non-detriment findings (NDFs) and NDF guidance available on the CITES shark webpage, and any NDFs for Elasmobranchii that Parties make available to the working group before the 32nd meeting of the Animals Committee;
 - c) based on the above, work with the Secretariat in the context of the implementation of Decisions 18.132 to 18.134 on *Non-detriment findings (NDFs)*, to develop draft guidance to support the making of NDFs in data-poor, multi-species, small-scale/artisanal, and non-target (bycatch) situations, for CITES-listed shark species;
 - d) analyse and review the results of any of the activities under Decisions 18.221 and 18.222 brought to its attention by the Secretariat; and
 - e) report on its work to the Animals Committee at its 32nd meeting.

² <https://conservation.species360.org/programs/species-knowledge-index/>

Decisions on Sharks and rays (*Elasmobranchii spp.*)
adopted by the 18th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties

18.218 Directed to the Parties

Parties are encouraged to:

- a) provide information to the Secretariat in support of the study called for in Decision 18.221 paragraph a), in particular on any national management measures that prohibit commercial take or trade, and in response to the Notification called for in Decision 18.220;
- b) in accordance with their national legislation, provide a report to the Secretariat about the assessment of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives for CITES-listed species stored and obtained before the entry into force of the inclusion in CITES in order to control and monitor their trade, if applicable;
- c) inspect, to the extent possible under their national legislation, shipments of shark parts and derivatives in transit or being transhipped, to verify presence of CITES-listed species and verify the presence of a valid CITES permit or certificate as required under the Convention or to obtain satisfactory proof of its existence; and
- d) continue to support the implementation of the Convention for sharks, including by providing funding for the implementation of Decisions 18.219, 18.221 and 18.222, and considering seconding staff members with expertise in fisheries and the sustainable management of aquatic resources to the Secretariat.

18.219 Directed to the Secretariat

Subject to external funding, the Secretariat shall continue to provide capacity-building assistance for implementing Appendix-II shark and ray listings to Parties upon request.

18.220 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall:

- a) issue a Notification to the Parties, inviting Parties to:
 - i) provide concise summaries of new information on their shark and ray conservation and management activities, in particular:
 - A. the making of non-detriment findings;
 - B. the making of legal acquisition findings;
 - C. the identification of CITES-listed shark-products in trade; and
 - D. recording stockpiles of commercial and/or pre-Convention shark parts and derivatives for CITES Appendix-II elasmobranch species and controlling the entry of these stocks into trade; and
 - ii) highlight any questions, concerns or difficulties Parties are having in writing or submitting documentation on authorized trade for the CITES Trade Database;
- b) 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;

- c) disseminate existing guidance identified, or newly developed, guidance on the control and monitoring of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives pursuant to Decision 18.224, paragraph b) by the Standing Committee; and
- d) collate this information for the consideration of the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee.

18.221 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, and in collaboration with relevant organizations and experts:

- a) conduct a study to investigate the apparent mismatch between the trade in products of CITES-listed sharks recorded in the CITES Trade Database and what would be expected against the information available on catches of listed species; and
- b) bring the results of the study in paragraph a) to the attention of the Animals Committee or Standing Committee, as appropriate.

18.222 Directed to the Secretariat

The Secretariat, subject to external funding, is requested to collaborate closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to:

- a) verify that information about Parties' shark management measures are correctly reflected in the shark measures database developed by FAO (<http://www.fao.org/ipoa-sharks/database-of-measures/en/>) and, if not, support FAO in correcting the information;
- b) compile 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 facilitate refinement of iSharkFin software developed by FAO;
- c) conduct a study analysing the trade in non-fin shark products of CITES-listed species, including the level of species mixing in trade products and recommendations on how to address any implementation challenges arising from the mixing that may be identified; and
- d) bring the results of activities in paragraphs a) to c) to the attention of the Animals Committee or Standing Committee, as appropriate.

18.223 Directed to the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee, in collaboration with relevant organisations and experts, shall:

- a) continue to develop guidance to support the making of non-detriment findings (NDFs), in particular in data-poor, multi-species, small-scale/artisanal, and non-target (bycatch) situations, for CITES-listed shark species; and
- b) report the outcomes of its work under Decision 18.223, paragraph a) to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

18.224 Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall:

- a) develop guidance on the making of legal acquisition findings, and related assessments for introductions from the sea for CITES-listed shark species in the context of the implementation of Resolution Conf. 18.7 on *Legal acquisition findings*;
- b) develop new guidance or identify existing guidance on the control and monitoring of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives, in particular for specimens caught prior to the inclusion of the species in Appendix II; and

- c) report its findings under Decision 18.224, paragraphs a) and b) to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

18.225 *Directed to the Standing Committee and Animals Committee*

The Animals Committee and Standing Committee shall analyse and review the results of any of the activities under Decisions 18.221 and 18.222 brought to their attention by the Secretariat, and with the support of the Secretariat prepare a joint report for the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of these Decisions.