

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



Seventy-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee
Lyon (France), 7 - 11 March 2022

Species specific matters

Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)

REPORT OF THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE

1. This document has been submitted by the Animals Committee.*
2. 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.
3. At its 31st meeting (AC31, online, June 2021), the Animals Committee considered AC31 Doc. 25 and its addendum by the Secretariat on the implementation of paragraphs a) and b) of Decision 18.220, and of Decisions 18.224 and 18.225.
4. At AC31, the Committee established an in-session working group on sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.) with a mandate to take into consideration (i) the CITES trade data analysis in document AC31 Doc. 25 and its addendum, (ii) the responses from Parties to Notification to the Parties No 2020/016 and their summary in AC31 Inf. 9, (iii) the non-detriment findings provided by Parties in response to the Notification, (iv) new information on sharks and rays presented in document AC31 Doc. 25 and its addendum as well as any other relevant information, identify CoP18 Decisions that may merit revisions or renewal, and draft recommendations to integrate the development of NDF guidance with the NDF workshop envisaged under Decision 18.132 paragraph c) i) (see [AC31 Com. 7 \(Rev. by Sec.\)](#)).
5. For ease of reference and in the context of the joint reporting envisaged in Decision 18.225, this document reports on all the recommendations of the Animals Committee.

Outcome of discussions at AC31 (as reflected in AC31 SR and Com. 7 (Rev. by Sec))

6. The Animals Committee invited the Standing Committee to review the results of the Secretariat's study on the apparent mismatch between trade in shark products, especially regarding introduction from the sea, if available, in fulfilment of Decision 18.221, paragraph a).
7. The Animals Committee invited the organizers of the workshop on non-detriment findings (NDF)¹ to consider including a focus on sharks within the marine or aquatic species work stream to support the making of NDFs, in particular for data-poor, multi-species, shared and migratory stocks, small-scale artisanal, introduction

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

¹ *This work is envisaged under Decision 18.132 and a Technical Advisory Group has been established to assist the Secretariat in organizing the workshop.*

from the sea and non-target (bycatch), recognising that sharks and rays are good examples of the challenges faced by Parties when preparing NDFs in these situations.

8. The Animals Committee invited the Standing Committee to consider the inclusion of a new three letter code form (FFN) for registering trade in wet (fresh, chilled, frozen) fins of sharks in the [Guidelines for the preparation and submission of CITES annual illegal trade reports](#).
9. The Animals Committee recommended that available national conversion factors used when estimating live catch weight by species, fishery, and product form be collated for more accurate reporting of shark and ray trade data by Parties.
10. The Animals Committee invited the Secretariat to encourage the regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) representatives to attend future meetings of the Animals Committee, in light of the recommendation from the meeting of the joint tuna RFMO (tRFMO) by-catch working group on sharks in December 2019 to improve communication and cooperation between CITES and tRFMOs to provide guidance and advice for the CITES-listed species caught within the jurisdiction of each tRFMO.
11. The Animals Committee noted that the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), held in February 2021, adopted the recommendation that FAO will continue cooperating with CITES and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), including in the provision of scientific and technical advice on proposals and issues relating to the listing and implementation of such listing of commercially-exploited aquatic species.
12. The Animals Committee encouraged the Secretariat to continue close collaboration with FAO and undertake joint activities according to the Memorandum of Understanding between CITES and FAO signed in 2006.
13. The Animals Committee noted the benefits of close collaboration with FAO, and other relevant organizations and experts including TRAFFIC and the IUCN Species Survival Commission Shark Specialist Group (SSG) to assist the Secretariat in the study called for in Decision 18.221 paragraph a), and if necessary, Decision 19.DD, to understand trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays.
14. The Animals Committee noted that a compilation of the shark AC31 in-session working group contributions is available as information document [AC31 Inf. 24](#).
15. The Animals Committee further agreed to submit the eight draft decisions in Annex 2 to the present document to the Standing Committee for its consideration.
16. The Animals Committee requested its Chair and the Chair of the working group on sharks and rays to contribute to the joint report on sharks and rays with the Standing Committee to the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Recommendations

17. The Standing Committee is invited to:
 - a) note the recommendations of the Animals Committee in paragraphs 6 to 16;
 - b) consider the recommendations of the Animals Committee directed to the Standing Committee in paragraphs 6 and 8; and
 - c) consider the draft decisions by the Animals Committee in Annex 2 to the present document and review the draft decisions that are relevant to the Standing Committee.

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.

Draft decisions on *Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)* by the Animals Committee
for consideration by the Standing Committee

19.AA *Directed to Parties*

Parties are encouraged to:

- a) provide brief information (with an executive summary not exceeding 200 words, if the report exceeds four pages) to the Secretariat, in particular on any national management measures that prohibit commercial take or trade, and respond to the Notification called for in Decision 19.CC;
- b) in accordance with their national legislation, provide a brief report (with an executive summary not exceeding 200 words, if the report exceeds four pages) 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) respond to the Notification called for in Decision 19.CC and share available national conversion factors used when estimating live catch weight by species, fishery, and product form for more accurate reporting of shark and ray trade data by Parties and indicate whether and how these are used in the development of their non-detriment findings;
- d) 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;
- e) continue to support the implementation of the Convention for sharks, including by providing funding for the implementation of Decisions 19.BB, 19.DD and 19.EE, and consider seconding staff members with expertise in fisheries and the sustainable management of aquatic resources to the Secretariat; and
- f) actively collaborate to combat illegal trafficking in sharks and ray products by developing mechanisms for coordination between source, transit, and destination countries.

Directed to Secretariat

19.BB 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.

19.CC The Secretariat shall:

- a) issue a Notification to the Parties, inviting Parties to:
 - i) provide concise (with 200 word executive summary, if the report exceeds four pages) 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 and monitoring of CITES-listed shark-products in trade, in source, transit, and consumer Parties; 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) share with the Secretariat their NDFs and conversion factors used when estimating catch live weight through converting recorded shark landings and trade, where available, to post in the sharks and rays web portal;
 - iii) highlight any questions, concerns or difficulties Parties are having in writing or submitting documentation on authorized trade data (e.g. which units are used in reporting trade) for the CITES Trade Database;
- b) provide information from the CITES Trade Database on commercial trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays since 2010, sorted by species and, if possible, by product;
 - c) invite non-Party, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organization observers to support Parties by providing concise information related to the above;
 - d) disseminate new or existing guidance identified by the Standing Committee on the control and monitoring of stockpiles of shark parts and derivatives pursuant to Decision 19.GG, paragraph b); and
 - e) collate this information for the consideration of the Animals Committee and the Standing Committee.

19.DD 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) and any proposed solutions to resolve this issue in the future to the attention of the Animals Committee or Standing Committee, as appropriate.

19.EE 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 is 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.

19.FF *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) for CITES-listed shark species, in particular in data-poor, multi-species, small-scale/artisanal, and non-target (by-catch) situations, and for shared and migratory stocks, and introduction from the sea; and
- b) report the outcomes of its work under this Decision to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

19.GG Directed to the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall consider:

- a) developing 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) developing new guidance or identifying 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 this Decision to the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

19.HH Directed to the Standing Committee and the Animals Committee

The Animals Committee and Standing Committee shall analyse and review the results of any of the activities under Decisions 19.AA and 19.GG and with the support of the Secretariat, prepare a joint report for the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the implementation of these Decisions.