

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



Seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
Johannesburg (South Africa), 24 September – 5 October 2016

Committee I

Sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.)

DRAFT DECISIONS ON SHARKS AND RAYS (ELASMOBRANCHII SPP.)

This document has been prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of document CoP17 Doc. 56.1 as agreed at the third session of Committee I (see document CoP17 Com. I Rec. 3).

Directed to Parties

17.AA Parties are encouraged to:

- a) undertake broad national consultations with all stakeholders concerning the implementation of CITES provisions for trade in species of Elasmobranchii included in the CITES Appendices, including industries involved in the harvest, export or import of the listed species; and involve in relevant meetings, events and processes CITES officials and fisheries officials, and representatives of relevant Regional Fisheries Management Organisations/Bodies (RFMO/RFBs) wherever possible and where limited capacity on fisheries management exists in the CITES authorities;
- b) share experiences and examples of making non-detriment findings for trade in CITES-listed sharks and rays including, where appropriate, how artisanal fishing is taken into consideration, and communicate them to the Secretariat for publication on the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal (<https://cites.org/prog/shark>) in order to improve capacity and knowledge of national and regional harvest levels and management measures;
- c) strengthen the efforts of exporting Parties in developing non-detriment findings for sharks and rays by sharing good practise and providing financial and other assistance, and consider in this regard Germany's offer to support training workshops on the application of the [Shark NDF Guidance](#) developed by the German Scientific Authority and available on the CITES Sharks and Rays Portal (<https://cites.org/prog/shark>);
- d) continue improving the collection of fisheries and trade data at the species level, especially with respect to CITES-listed species;
- e) share experiences with, and knowledge of, forensic means to efficiently, reliably and cost-effectively identify shark products in trade; and
- f) provide funding for a dedicated marine officer position in the CITES Secretariat, and consider seconding, or externally funding, additional staff members with expertise in fisheries and the sustainable management of aquatic resources to the Secretariat.

Directed to the Secretariat

17.BB 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 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.CC 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.DD 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)¹ and identified in the course of the 2013-2016 EU-CITES project.

Directed to the Secretariat and FAO

17.EE The CITES and 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 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

¹ See Annex 4 of this document. The overview reproduced therein was originally contained in Annex 1 of document AC28 Com. 9.

- 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.

Directed to Parties that are members of Regional Fisheries Organizations or Bodies

- 17.FF Parties that are also members of Regional Fisheries Organizations or Bodies (RFMOs/RFBs) are urged to:
- a) work through the respective mechanisms of these RFMOs/RFBs to develop and improve methods to avoid bycatch of sharks and rays, where retention, landing, and sale of these species is prohibited under RFMO requirements, and reduce their mortality, including by exploring gear selectivity and improved techniques for live release;
 - b) encourage the RFMOs/RFBs to consider making CITES-listed species a priority for data collection, data collation and stock assessments among non-target species, and provide these data to their members; and
 - c) cooperate regionally on research, stock assessments, data sharing and analysis to help Parties making legal acquisition findings and NDFs for shared stocks, and on training initiatives for CITES Authorities, fisheries staff and customs officers, in cooperation with the CITES and FAO Secretariats.

Directed to Parties that are also Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and/or the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (CMS Sharks MoU)

- 17.GG Parties that are also Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and/or the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (CMS Sharks MoU) are urged to work through the mechanisms of CMS and the Sharks MoU to develop and improve methods for conservation of sharks and rays.

Directed to the Standing Committee

- 17.HH On the basis of information provided by the Secretariat and the Animals Committee, the Standing Committee shall consider issues concerning the conservation and management of sharks and rays, and provide guidance as appropriate, pertaining to:
- a) legislative matters that might arise in exporting, transit or consumer countries, and those relating to legality of acquisition and introduction from the sea;
 - b) identification and traceability, 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;
 - c) conservation and management measures for sharks and rays taken by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and
 - d) coherence of CITES provisions concerning sharks and rays with conservation and management measures of other relevant multilateral environmental agreements;

The Standing Committee shall report on the implementation of this decision, with recommendations as appropriate, at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.