

# Cooperation between JCU-CSTFA and CITES

## Capacity building in Oceania to implement CITES sharks and manta rays activities



The James Cook University Centre for Sustainable Tropical Fisheries and Aquaculture (JCU-CSTFA) is an academic research institution that aims to provide knowledge that will underpin aquatic food security for Australia, the tropics and globally.

Sharks represent a significant by-catch of Pacific fisheries, especially for tuna and billfish. JCU-CSTFA cooperated with CITES to assist Parties in the Oceania region in implementing the activities associated with the CITES Appendix-II listing in 2014 of sharks and manta rays, with a particular focus on building capacity for the making of Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs).

JCU-CSTFA first compiled available information that could inform a Non-Detriment Finding (NDF) for the three Hammerhead and two Manta ray species to improve understanding of the species and their management in the Oceania region.

To enhance capacity and regional cooperation for the making of NDFs, a workshop was held in Nadi, Fiji (11-13 April 2016), with CITES Parties and delegates from the Pacific management organisations and NGOs active in the management of CITES-listed sharks and manta rays in the region.

At the workshop, the participants agreed on the format of a regional NDF template, containing common information for each of the species such as: global catches, conservation status, biological parameters and regional management measures. Synergies with other existing and planned projects were identified which can assist in addressing NDF information needs.



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## Outcomes and lessons

- ✓ The regional NDF template pre-populated with species' information was considered beneficial to start the NDF process
- ✓ A framework was provided for regional co-operation to produce NDFs on shared stocks
- ✓ Regional cooperation and coordination of the NDF process would benefit the NDF progress in Pacific countries

## Looking into the future...

- While Shark NDFs can be completed with limited catch data, a focus on implementing future data collection will help to make NDFs more robust
- When assessing sustainable harvest levels in the context of a regional NDF an allocation process for shared stocks may be useful
- Communication among in-country and regional agencies is essential for NDF preparation
- The common NDF template was considered a good model that may be considered for other species

- For more information about JCU-CSTFA and its activities: <https://research.jcu.edu.au/cstfa>
- Want to know more about Oceania CITES shark and rays? Go to <https://cites.org/eng/prog/shark/index.php>



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