

Cooperation between IOTC and CITES

Improving capacity and data availability for CITES Parties in the Indian Ocean region



iotc ctoi

The **Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)** is a Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) mandated to manage tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas.

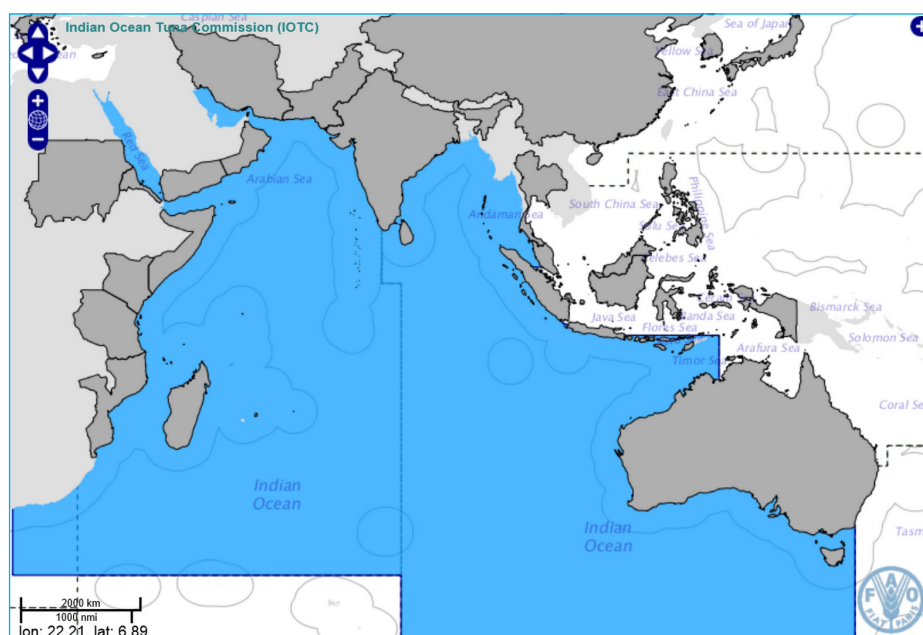
Several of the species of sharks included in CITES Appendix II at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP16, Bangkok, March 2013) are caught as by-catch in IOTC fisheries.

To address challenges in the implementation of the associated CITES provisions at the national level, IOTC and CITES developed a joint project to improve capacity and data availability in the Indian Ocean Region.

CITES commissioned a capacity needs assessment regarding the shark and ray species listed at CoP16 which identified that the availability of data to support the making of Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) is generally poor across all regions, and in particular in the Indian Ocean region.

The IOTC Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch (WPEB) is tasked to review and analyse matters relevant to by-catch, by-product and non-target species that are affected by IOTC fisheries. CITES-listed Oceanic whitetip sharks (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) and Scalloped hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna lewini*) are among its scope.

To assist WPEB to fulfil its mandate and work plan, and at the same time generate information for CITES Parties' making of NDFs, IOTC collaborated with CITES to improve the data availability for the two shark species. The collaboration consists of a desk study to compile historical catch data and the organization of a data collection/preparation workshop for the Parties.



source: <http://www.fao.org/figis/geoserver/factsheets/rfbs.html>



Outcomes and lessons

- ✓ Improving data availability for Oceanic whitetip sharks and Scalloped hammerhead sharks, given that they are highly migratory and part of a shared stock in the region
- ✓ Improved data can be used by CITES Parties for making NDFs and allows WPEB to provide better advice to IOTC's Contracting Parties
- ✓ IOTC-CITES collaboration is an example for synergies between CITES and RFMOs in promoting sustainable fisheries management

Looking into the future...

- Improve and expand regional data on stock structures for CITES-listed sharks
- Assist IOTC Member States with robust science-based advice for the management of CITES-listed sharks, including the making of NDFs
- Enhance regional cooperation in sharing biological and fisheries data for coherent fisheries management of shared stocks of CITES-listed sharks
- Continue collaboration between IOTC and CITES on species of common interest

For more information about IOTC and its activities:

- IOTC: www.iotc.org
- IOTC WPEB: <http://www.iotc.org/science/wp/working-party-ecosystems-and-bycatch-wpeb>