

Shortfin & Longfin Mako Shark

CoP18 Prop. 42 to include the shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) in Appendix II in accordance with Article II, paragraph 2a, and the longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*) in Appendix II in accordance with Article II, paragraph 2b.

Sponsored by: Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Egypt, European Union, Gabon, Gambia, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Palau, Samoa, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Togo.



RECOMMEND: SUPPORT ADOPTION OF PROPOSAL

The shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) is a species of large (4m long), highly migratory shark distributed in temperate and tropical ocean waters. Today, its geographical distribution is highly compromised by bycatch as well as targeted fishing for their fins and meat.

The longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*) is very similar in appearance to the shortfin mako, making it difficult to distinguish between parts and products of these two species, especially in international trade.

Both species have recently been re-classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List^{1,2}. Both shortfin mako and longfin mako were listed in CMS Appendix II in 2008 and in Annex 1 of the CMS Sharks MOU in 2010.

DISTRIBUTION & HABITAT

The shortfin mako is widely distributed, and can be found in the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, South Pacific and North Pacific¹. Population densities vary greatly among oceans. Longfin makos are less widely distributed, than the shortfin mako, but inhabit many of the same locations².

¹ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/39341/2903170>

² <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/60225/3095898>

³ Dulvy, N. K., Baum, J. K., Clarke, S., Compagno, L. J., Cortés, E., Domingo, A., ... & Martínez, J. (2008). You can swim but you can't hide: the global status and conservation of oceanic pelagic sharks and rays. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, 18(5), 459-482.

⁴ Camhi, M.D., Valenti, S.V., Fordham, S.V., Fowler, S.L. and Gibson, C. 2007. The Conservation Status of Pelagic Sharks and Rays: Report of the IUCN Shark Specialist Group Pelagic Shark Red List Workshop. IUCN Species Survival Commission Shark Specialist Group. Newbury, UK. 78pp.

THREATS

The main threat to shortfin makos is pressure from fishing. Shortfin and longfin mako are retained in both direct and incidental catch in multi-species fisheries throughout their range, particularly in pelagic longline fisheries in both national and international waters^{3,4}.

From 2010 to 2016, fisheries in the Atlantic contributed to 50% of total catches (45,956 tonnes) of shortfin mako sharks with 35 % from the Pacific (31,838 tonnes), 15% from the Indian Ocean (14,043 tonnes), and less than 1% from the Mediterranean (152 tonnes). The average catches per year were 9,025 tonnes from 2004 to 2009, and 12,141 tonnes per year between 2010 and 2016 – a substantial increase. Spain, Taiwan (province of China), and Portugal represent 62% of the annual catches reported to FAO in the period from 2006 to 2016 (35%, 15%, and 12% respectively).

TRADE

Mako shark meat (known as “veau de mer” in Europe) is of high quality and is often used fresh, dried, salted, frozen, and smoked for human consumption

throughout the world. It is priced at USD 22-44 per kg in American supermarkets, and it is a premium product in Japan⁵. In Spain, mako meat in wholesale markets costs twice as much blue shark meat (USD 14.17/kg fresh versus USD 7.63/kg fresh for blue shark). During 2014-2015, shortfin mako was the fifth most frequently observed species in the shark fin trade in Hong Kong's main commercial center^{6,7}.

DECLINES

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), total landings of shortfin mako increased by 69% in 2010-2016 compared to 2004-2009⁸. Increased fishing pressure puts populations at a risk of dropping below 30% of historic levels⁸. Ecological risk and productivity assessments have determined that shortfin makos are the second-most vulnerable shark species to overexploitation by pelagic long-line fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean and the most vulnerable in the Indian Ocean⁹. ICCAT scientists have recommended prohibition of all landings in the North Atlantic¹⁰.

Some areas, such as the Mediterranean, have experienced significant reductions of shortfin mako populations. At the stock level, the most recent scientific information according to CoP18 Prop.42 shows historical declines of greater than 96% in the Mediterranean.

The IUCN/TRAFFIC review of this proposal notes that, considering both the historic and recent trends in populations, regulation of trade is required and recommends an Appendix II listing. The FAO Expert Panel concluded that the available data do not provide evidence that these species meet the Criteria for Appendix II. Note, however, that the FAO requires that its expert panel use a narrower interpretation of the CITES listing criteria than CITES itself

does. Although the CITES Secretariat's provisional review said that the species come close to meeting CITES Criteria for Appendix II, in its final recommendations the Secretariat (for the first time ever) used the FAO's interpretation of the listing criteria and recommended against adoption of this proposal.

Shortfin mako and longfin mako are threatened around the world by direct and indirect fishing fueled by international demand for their meat and fins. The shortfin mako meets the criteria for listing on Appendix II of CITES in accordance with article ii, paragraph 2a of the Convention and criterion b of Annex 2a of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. Cop17), while the longfin mako meets the criteria for listing on Appendix II of CITES in accordance with Article II, paragraph 2b of the Convention and criterion A of Annex 2b in Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17).



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⁵ Dent, F. and Clarke, S. 2015. State of the global market for shark products. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 590. Rome, FAO. 187 pp.

⁶ Clarke, S.C., J.E. Magnussen, D.L. Abercrombie, M.K. McAllister and M.S. Shivji. 2006. Identification of shark species composition and proportion in the Hong Kong shark fin market based on molecular genetics and trade records. *Conservation Biology* 20(1): 201-211. DOI: 10.1111/j.1523-1739.2006.00247.x

⁷ Fields, A. T., Fischer, G. A., Shea, S. K. H., Zhang, H., Abercrombie, D. L., Feldheim, K. A., Babcock, E.A. and Chapman, D. D. 2017. Species composition of the international shark fin trade assessed through a retail-market survey in Hong Kong. *Conservation Biology*. DOI: 10.1111/cobi.13043

⁸ FAO. 2018. Fishery and Aquaculture Statistics. Global capture production 1950-2016 (FishstatJ). En: FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department [online]. Roma. Actualizado 2018. www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/software/fishstatj/en.

⁹ IOTC 2017. Report of the 20th Session of the IOTC Scientific Committee. Seychelles, 30 November – 4 December 2017. 232 pp.

¹⁰ ICCAT SCRS, 2017. Report of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics. (SCRS). Available at: https://www.iccat.int/Documents/BienRep/REP_EN_16-17_II-2.pdf