



The Species Survival Network (SSN) Working Group is pleased to provide to you the Fall 2017 issue of SSN Sharks, a publication regarding the sharks, rays, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).



INTRODUCTION

Successful Shark Workshops in Peru

This past summer, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Society International and various agencies from the Government of Peru collaborated to hold three regional two-day workshops to assist local law enforcement and fisheries authorities in identification of shark fins and preventing shark fin trafficking. The first day, participants learned about CITES implementation and enforcement. The second day participants were trained on visual identification of shark fins and on taking DNA samples of wet and dry shark fins at various ports of landing. Participants had the chance to see shark landings, interact with fishermen, and see recently seized fins confiscated from traffickers caught trying to smuggle them out of the country. These workshops provided an excellent opportunity for delegates from ministries of fisheries, environment, and customs, as well as local enforcement officers, to communicate with each other and learn about the challenges each group faces when trying to enforce CITES listings and prevent trafficking.

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1. CITES Notifications of Interest

No. 2017/053 The Secretariat notified the Parties that the previous recommendation from 17 May 2013 (No. 2013/020) to suspend trade in CITES-listed species with Lesotho has been rescinded because Lesotho provided the missing annual reports to the Secretariat on 26 July 2017.

No. 2017/058 At CoP17, the CoP directed Parties to provide identification materials for better enforcement and to assist with capacity building. One of the requests for identification materials was for sharks and rays (Elasmobranchii spp.) included in Decision 17.209. Parties are encouraged to share experiences with, and knowledge of, forensic means to efficiently, reliably and cost-effectively identify shark products in trade.

REGULATORY NEWS

PERU

New Peru Regulation Affecting Landings

16 August 2017. Peru passed a decree that amends a previous decree and mandates stricter requirements for landing sharks. Sharks must be landed with all fins present, totally or partially attached to the shark's body. The decree prohibits landing loose shark fins and trunks along the Peruvian coast.

<http://busquedas.elperuano.com.pe/download/url/decreto-supremo-que-modifica-el-decreto-supremo-n-021-2016-decreto-supremo-n-010-2017-produce-1554967-6>

NATIONAL NEWS

CANADA

Shark Fin Soup in Canada May Include Many At-Risk Species

Researchers led by Dirk Steinke at the University of Guelph found that 71 % of more than 100 shark fin samples tested contained shark species considered to be at risk of extinction, including the whale shark, listed on Appendix II of CITES and classified as "Vulnerable" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 2003.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/shark-fins-1.4262628>

Climate Change to Bring Great White Sharks to B.C.

A Canadian professor has found that the warming waters, caused by climate change, have made habitat near British Columbia suitable for great white sharks. Sightings of this species in the area are rare, but are anticipated to increase as the waters warm by 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2050.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/great-white-sharks-bc-climate-change-1.4220807>

PERU

Ban on Whale Sharks in Peru

As of July 15th, no whale shark fisheries will be permitted in Peruvian waters. This ban also makes landing, transportation, retention, processing and commercialization of the species illegal. This measure is meant to protect whale sharks, which are very vulnerable due to their late reproductive maturity. The Instituto del Mar del Perú (IMARPE) will carry out population studies on the species. Since this article was published, whale sharks have also been listed on Appendix I of CMS.

<https://www.undercurrentnews.com/2017/07/18/peru-halts-whale-shark-fishery/>

SINGAPORE

The Shark and Ray Trade in Singapore

A TRAFFIC study covering the trade dynamics in several species over a ten-year period found that shark meat is the most traded shark product by quantity while shark fins are the most valuable. Skates and rays are suspected to constitute a sizeable proportion of the global shark meat trade, while rays are often overlooked in the fin trade.

<http://www.traffic.org/storage/traffic-sg-sharkray-trade.pdf>

2. Dates of Interest

14–22 November 2017: 25th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, Marrakech, Morocco

2–7 December 2017: 14th Regular Session of the Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, Manila, Philippines

14–18 May 2018: 9th Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

CHINA

Shark Fin Sales in China Have Dropped Up to 70%

Trade in shark fins, common symbols of wealth in China, has contributed to declines of up to 98% in some shark populations in the last 15 years. WildAid reports, however, that sale of shark fins in China has now fallen by between 50% to 70%. One wholesaler was quoted saying “shark fin is a dying business.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/china-choice/2014/aug/08/sales-of-shark-fin-china-drop-70>

Exotic Pets (Including Sharks) on the Rise in China

A new trend in China has resulted in an increase in acquisition of ultra-exotic pets by people in their 20s and 30s as a means to “stand out and show off” to friends. These pets range from venomous snakes to sharks. Traders have found ways to circumvent Chinese laws against acquiring some of these animals. Interpol estimates that only approximately 10% of this trade is detected. There is a growing concern that increased trade in exotic pets will lead to the spread of deadly diseases.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/09/wildlife-watch-exotic-pets-popular-china/>

Blue Shark Ban May be Big Hit to Hong Kong Fin Trade

Samoa and Sri Lanka proposed adding the blue shark to Appendix II of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). After this announcement, Hong Kong fin traders were concerned about what impact this would have if Parties adopt the proposal at the CMS COP12. Blue sharks are one of the most frequently caught sharks in the world and are the source of 60% to 80% of the fins consumed in Hong Kong. This proposal has since been adopted by the CMS Parties.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2108502/hong-kong-shark-fin-traders-will-be-hit-hard>

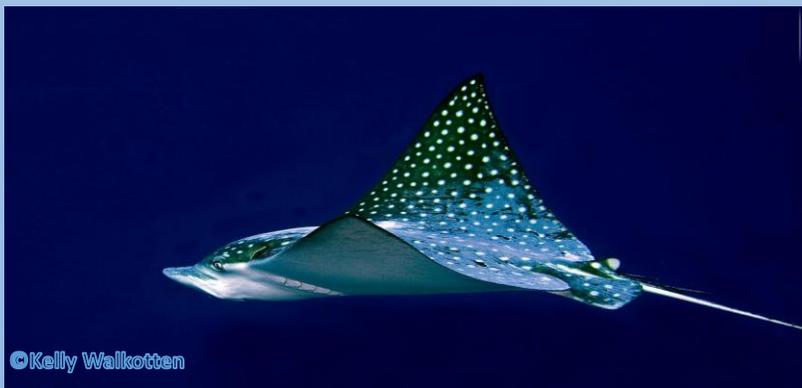
ECUADOR

A Chinese Fishing Vessel Was Found off the Coast of the Galapagos Islands Carrying 300 Tons of Endangered Sharks

A Chinese refrigerator ship, Fu Yuan Yu Leng 999, carrying 300 tons of endangered sharks was intercepted by the Ecuadorian Navy 34.5 nautical miles off the island of San Cristóbal in the Galápagos. The 20 members of the crew could face up to three years in prison. The ship was merely transporting the sharks. The vessel that originally caught the sharks has not been identified, although it is possible that the sharks were caught near the Galápagos. The Galápagos National Park covers over 51,000 square miles, making it the second largest protected area in the world. Ecuadorian Environment Minister Tarsicio Granizo says that Ecuador will stay vigilant about illegal activity happening there.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/chinese-fishing-vessel-crew-arrested-poaching-endangered-sharks-off-galapagos-islands-1635104>

<https://qz.com/1060639/galapagos-shark-fishing-bust-who-are-the-ghost-poachers-who-supplied-the-fu-yuan-yu-leng-999/>



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3. 2017-2018 CITES Calendar

27 November – 1 December
2017: 69th Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC69), Geneva, Switzerland

01–05 October 2018: 70th Meeting of the Standing Committee (SC70), Sochi, Russia

COSTA RICA

Push for President Not to Export Fins

Several non-profit organizations have joined forces to petition Costa Rica's President Luis Guillermo Solís to stop the export of 8 tons hammerhead shark fins amassed since March 1, 2015, when international shipments of the species' fins from the country became illegal. Two official scientific panels of experts determined that international trade of hammerhead shark products is detrimental to the species' survival and should not be allowed, but Solís' administration did not follow the panels' advice.

<http://news.co.cr/global-support-sought-to-stop-export-of-costa-rican-shark-fins-stockpiled-during-ban/63532/>



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Handbook on CITES and Livelihoods Case Study Released

This case study of the effects on the livelihoods of rural poor communities resulting from the inclusion of species in CITES was based on a rapid assessment of livelihoods of longline fishermen capturing hammerhead shark species - *Sphyrna lewini*, *Sphyrna zygaena*, *Sphyrna mokarran* in Puntarenas, Costa Rica. Hammerhead shark use was examined to determine the effects of CITES listings in this area. While the study found that some of the fisherman are negatively impacted, it did offer suggestions to mitigate this problem, which might include training fisherman for other jobs.

http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dsd/ELPG/aboutELPG/Documents/English_Hammer_Shark_Case_Study_2016.pdf

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

New UN Resolution to Tackle Wildlife Trafficking

This Resolution was adopted by 193 Member States at the final meeting of the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly on 11 September 2017. The Resolution illustrates the commitment these countries have made to fighting wildlife trafficking and ensuring that it is a priority by reinforcing the focus on key areas in the fight against illicit trafficking in wildlife, including enhanced national legislation, supporting sustainable livelihoods, enhancing law enforcement, countering corruption, deploying information technologies and undertaking well-targeted demand reduction efforts.

https://cites.org/eng/news/pr/CITES_welcomes_new_powerful_UN_resolution_to_tackle_wildlife_trafficking_12092017

Mako Shark Mortality Rate Ten Times Higher than Estimates Given by Fisheries Show

Satellite tracking of juvenile shortfin mako sharks revealed that the mortality rate from fishing is ten times higher than estimates calculated using catch data reported by fishers, raising concerns about overfishing in the western North Atlantic and the sustainability of current fishing practices.

<https://news.mongabay.com/2017/09/fishing-mortality-of-mako-sharks-ten-times-higher-than-fisheries-estimates/>

Study Shows DNA from Endangered Sharks Confiscated Around the World

DNA barcoding and rRNA sequencing was used to identify twenty shark and five ray species from 129 dried fins and gill plates obtained in Canada, China, and Sri Lanka. More than half of the identified species fall under the IUCN Red List categories 'Endangered' and 'Vulnerable,' raising further concerns about the impacts of this trade on the sustainability of these low productivity species.

<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/majority-of-shark-fin-manta-ray-gills-on-market-from-at-risk-species-study/article36085557/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&>



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

New Studies

- *CITES Handbook on the Effects of the Application of CITES Decisions on Livelihoods on Poor Rural Communities:*
http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dsd/ELPG/aboutELPG/Documents/English_Hammer_Shark_Case_Study_2016.pdf
- *The Shark and Ray Trade in Singapore*
<http://www.traffic.org/storage/traffic-sg-sharkray-trade.pdf>

Trade Guidance

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service export permit application form guidance: <https://www.fws.gov/international/permits/by-species/sharks-and-rays.html>
- CITES Secretary-General, John Scanlon, on the fisheries regulatory framework at the multilateral level:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_UtKmHUDx4&feature=youtu.be&list=PL4m6ro9BgRm-Pe2p6N1D65m8z-IqamBLN

Shark ID Materials

- See published Shark ID Guides for [South America – Atlantic](#); [South America – Pacific](#); [Mexico, Central America and the Pacific](#); [Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean](#).
- CITES additional [identification materials on sharks](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (CONT.)

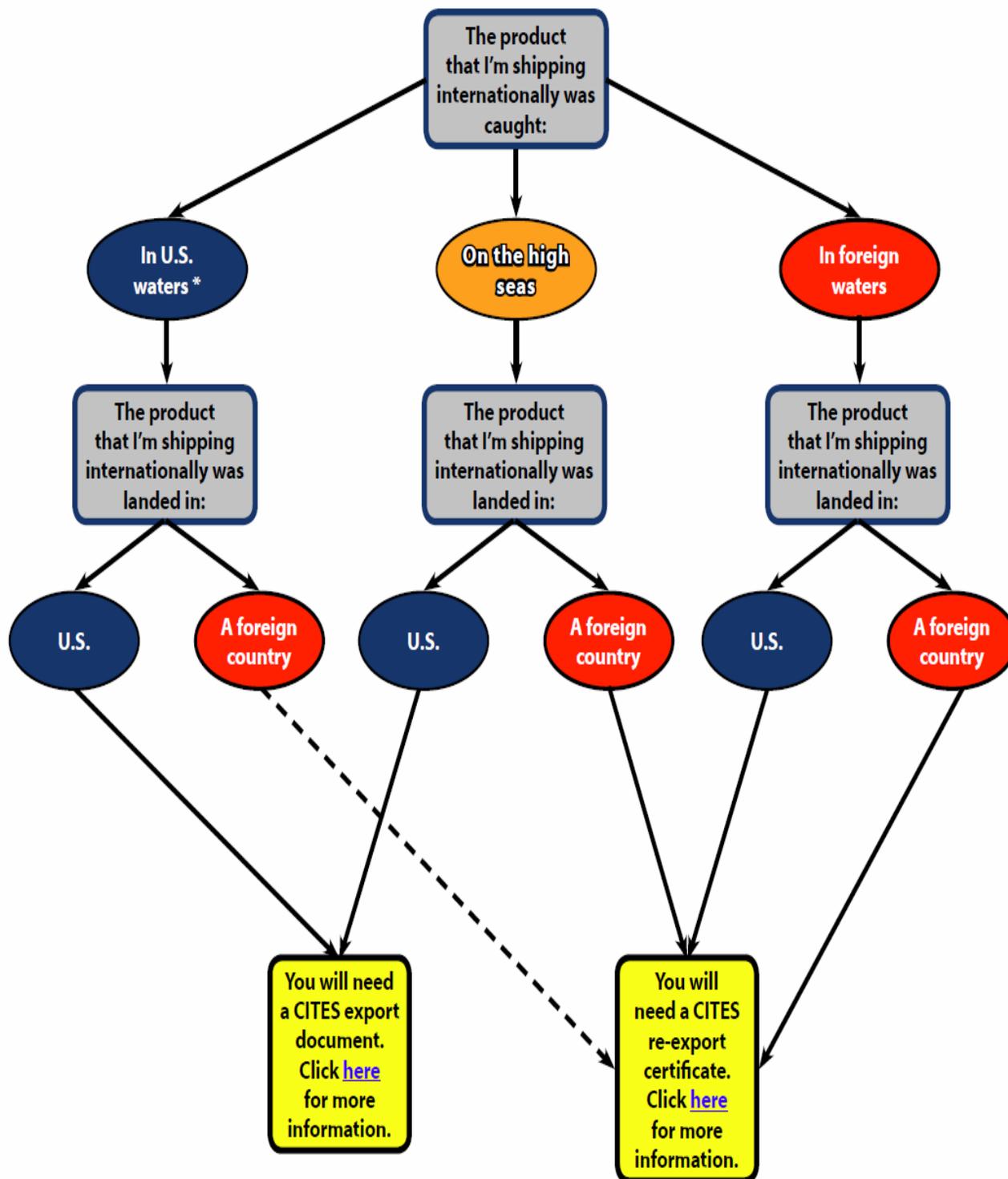


Figure 1. [Infographic](#) illustrating U.S. permitting requirements for exporters pursuant to CITES regulations. Courtesy of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

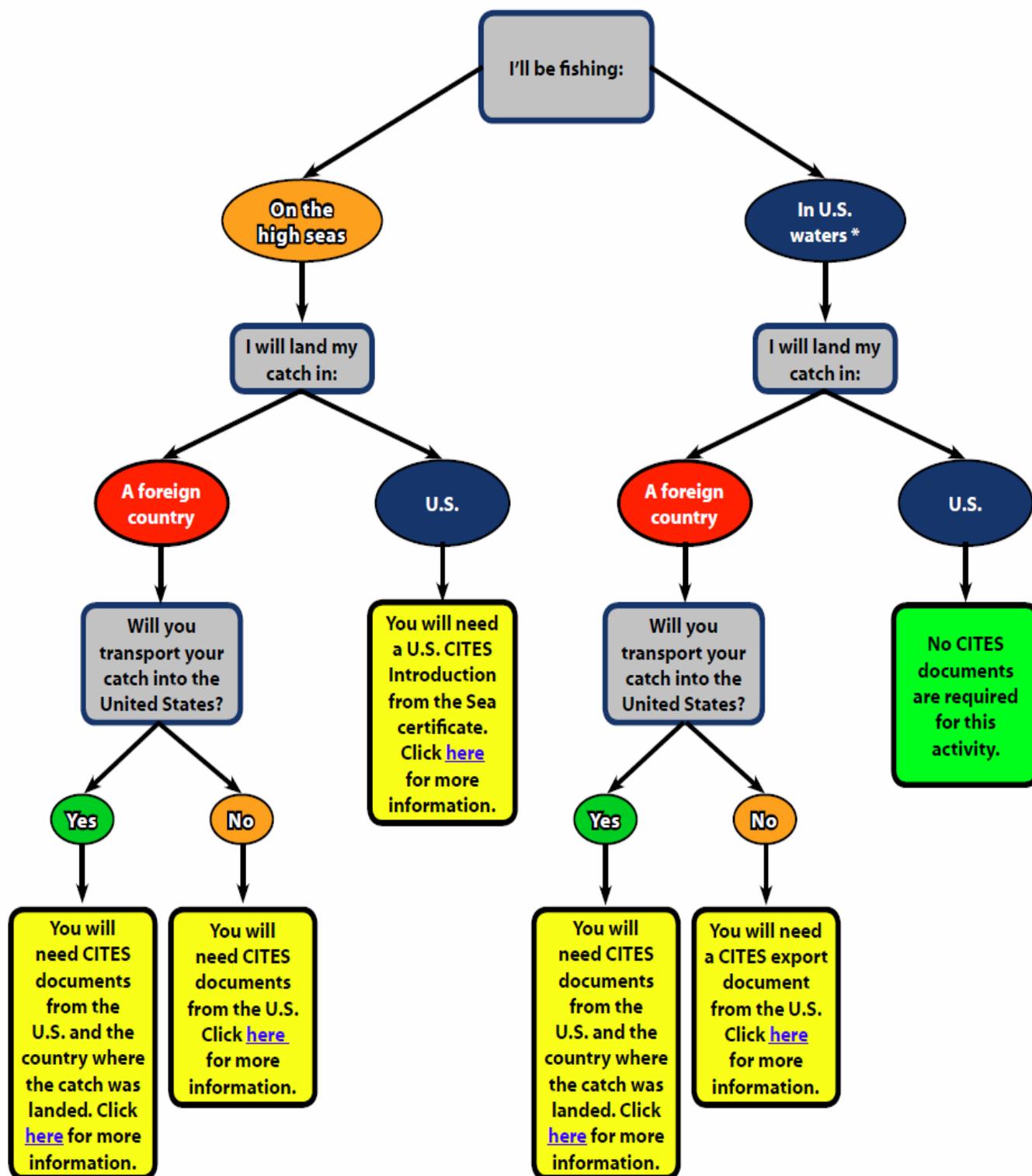


Figure 2. [Infographic](#) illustrating U.S. fisher permitting pursuant to CITES regulations. Courtesy of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



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USEFUL WEBSITES

[Species Survival Network](#)

[CITES](#)

[CITES Sharks & Manta Rays](#)

[IUCN Red List](#)

[Convention on Migratory Species \(CMS\)](#)

[International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas \(ICCAT\)](#)

[Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission \(IATTC\)](#)

[Indian Ocean Tuna Commission \(IOTC\)](#)

[Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission \(WCPFC\)](#)

[Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna \(CCSBT\)](#)