

SSN Sharks

Spring 2014, Issue 1



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

CITES Shark Implementation Workshop in Brazil

On December 2-4, 2013, in the city of Recife, Brazil, the governments of Brazil and the United States held the first "Regional Workshop on Sharks Listed in Appendix II of CITES – Preparing for Implementation" for Latin American and Caribbean governmental authorities. More than 70 representatives from 28 countries participated in person at the workshop. The workshop was held in collaboration with the Species Survival Network, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Society International, Teyeliz, the Organization of American States (OAS)/ Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI), and the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Secretariat.

The workshop's aim was to assist CITES authorities and fisheries agencies in the implementation of, and compliance with, the recently adopted shark listings in Appendix II of CITES. These listings include three hammerhead species (Sphyrnidae), and oceanic whitetip (*Carcharhinus longimanus*) and porbeagle sharks (*Lamna nasus*). The listings will come into effect on 14 September 2014, and will require agencies of signatory governments to issue export permits for these species.



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The workshop was structured around informational training presentations and hands-on activities, including: improving the accuracy of shark catch data to comply with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMO) recommendations;

CITES Notification of Interest

No. 2013/054 concerning a [New section](#) on sharks and rays on the CITES website:

Beginning on 14 September 2014, Parties must regulate international trade in the oceanic whitetip shark (*C. longimanus*), scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*), great hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*), smooth hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna zigaena*), porbeagle shark (*L. nasus*) and manta rays (*Manta* spp.). (22 November 2013).

2014 CITES Calendar

1 May – 1 June: Expert Workshop to Test Shark NDF Protocols

2 – 3 May: Joint sessions of the 27th meeting of the Animals Committee and the 21st meeting of the Plants Committee, Veracruz, Mexico.

8 May: Deadline to submit to CITES Secretariat documents for consideration at the 65th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee

13 – 15 May: FAO/CITES Regional consultative workshop on sharks for Asia, Xiamen, China

2 – 6 June: Second Sharks International Symposium, Durban, South Africa

9 – 13 June: Thirty-first session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, Rome, Italy

1 July: 86th meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), Lima, Peru

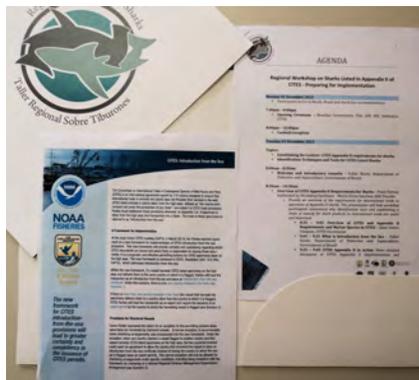
7 – 11 July: 65th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, CIGG, Geneva, Switzerland

learning to correctly identify shark species and their fins; and developing a chain of custody to facilitate making legal acquisition findings for exports of sharks listed in CITES Appendices. The hands-on part of the workshop included two half-day sessions. During the first session, the participants were rotated through four groups to learn different methods of identifying shark species and fins using Defenders' shark identification guides, shark fin identification guides, DNA testing, and the FAO software program for fin identification that is under development. During the second session, the participants were divided into regional groups (South Atlantic, South Pacific, Caribbean, and Central America) to discuss and evaluate regional capabilities and needs for implementing CITES shark listings.

The workshop was also a platform for increasing awareness of international and regional regulations relating to shark conservation and management and for facilitating communications between the CITES and fisheries authorities. Participants were provided with a contact list and a Gmail group account to continue active communication following the event.

For those who could not attend in person, a webinar was used to stream all the presentations in real time. Around 80 participants connected to the link. A recording of the workshop will be made available soon. In addition, OAS developed a [website](#) where the presentations and materials will be made publically available.

Workshop materials were collated and distributed at the conclusion of the workshop. This included USBs containing all the presentations as well as regional [shark identification guides](#).



Regional News

CANADA:

Department of Fisheries and Oceans investigates possible shark finning.

A [24 July 2013 article](#) included pictures of fishermen posing alongside dead porbeagle sharks (*L. nasus*), and removing fins from the bodies, in Bradford's Cove weir in Grand Manan, Canada. Shark finning is illegal in Atlantic Canada, and under the Fisheries Act, any bycatch from a weir must be returned to the ocean, regardless of species. The investigation suggested the sharks were likely found alive in the weir and killed on board the ships; however, no charges were brought.

INDIA:

Government bans shark finning.

A [27 August 2013 article](#) reported that India's Ministry of Environment and Forests banned shark finning by issuing a "fins naturally attached" policy. The penalty for hauls that include detached fins is up to 7 years in prison.



INDONESIA:

Government considers new shark regulation.

A [4 November 2013 article](#) reported that the government is considering a new regulation to increase the number of shark species protected or regulated by law. The Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry is working with the Indonesian Institute of Sciences to choose four shark species to address. In 2010, Indonesia caught 109,248 tons of sharks, up from 70,000 in 2000. In 2012, Indonesia exported 434 tons of shark fins, worth \$6 million. The Indonesian Fisheries Product Processing and Marketing Association supports the regulation but not a complete ban on shark finning.

CHINA:

Shark fin imports drop in Hong Kong.

A [14 August 2013 article](#) reported that the Chinese shark fin market shrank by 50-70% in 2012, and 30% of shark fin shops in Hong Kong closed. Luxury hotels and airlines have also banned use and transport, respectively, of shark fins.

A [9 September 2013 article](#) reported that there was a 30% drop in shark fin exports to the Chinese mainland from Hong Kong in 2013. In 2012, Hong Kong imported 1,162 tons of shark fins. Pressure from 60 advocacy groups and a slowing economy have contributed to the decline.

A [9 December 2013 article](#) reported that the Chinese government has banned shark fin soup from official dining tables. The ban applies to state-owned companies and state-sponsored organizations.

An [11 January 2014 article](#) reported that since the Chinese government banned shark fin soup from official dining tables, the price of shark fins in Hong Kong has dropped by 20-30%.

JAPAN:

Analysis of the shark fishing market's sustainability.

A [12 September 2013 article](#) reported that data on shark fin prices vary greatly depending on many factors from the time of day to the stock on hand. Shark fins are also increasing in value due to decreasing supply and market fluctuations. Sustainable shark fishing is a possibility, but would require an initial moratorium to allow species to rebound, different limits for different species, and strict monitoring.

Regional News

MARSHALL ISLANDS:

Marshall Islands dispose of confiscated shark fins.

A [3 September 2013 article](#) reported that the Marshall Islands disposed at sea, fins and skins from approximately 50 sharks that were seized from a Chinese longline vessel that was subsequently fined US\$120,000. In 2011, Marshall Islands adopted a ban on commercial shark fishing.



Iris Ho, HSI



Jake Li

NEW ZEALAND:

Government bans shark finning.

A [9 January 2014 article](#) reported that Nathan Guy, the Primary Industries Minister, and Dr. Nick Smith, the Conservation Minister, announced a ban on shark finning in New Zealand waters after receiving 45,300 submissions in favor of the National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks. The ban will cover a first division of the 113 shark species beginning October 1st 2014, a second October 1st 2015, and a third October 1st 2016 that only includes the highly migratory blue shark (*Prionace glauca*).

THAILAND:

Hammerhead shark fetuses displayed at local restaurant.

A [4 May 2013 article](#) reported that a restaurant in Phuket displayed scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) fetuses, a species listed in CITES Appendix II at CITES CoP16. The species also falls under the Phuket Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's list of "beautiful protected fish species." The sale or possession of the species (alive) could lead to one year in prison and a fine of up to 100,000 baht.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:

A [17 February 2014 article](#) reported that the United Arab Emirates and eight other countries signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks concluded under the UN Convention on Migratory Species. The other nations who signed include the Comoros Islands, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Sudan, Yemen and Syria.

UNITED STATES:

Shark poacher arrested and pled guilty.

A [13 November 2013 article](#) reported that a shark poacher in Milpitas, California was sentenced to 5 months home detention, and ordered to pay a total of \$24,000 in fines for the illegal take, sale and export of California leopard sharks from the San Francisco Bay. The sharks were exported to pet stores and private buyers around the world.

International News

European Union increases shark protection under new regulation:

A [6 June 2013 article](#) reported that the European Union banned shark finning by all EU-registered vessels and all vessels in EU waters. This new regulation prevents fishermen with special use permits from removing fins.

European Union food safety alerts for shark products:

A [30 September 2013 article](#) reported that EU member countries have issued 34 safety notifications for shark products, 70% due to intolerable mercury concentrations. Germany, France, and Italy rejected imports of spiny dogfish from U.S. fisheries due to industrial contamination with Polychlorobiphenyl (PCB).

IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG) publishes global study of endangered sharks and rays:

A [21 January 2014 article](#) reported that 300 experts from 64 countries found that 30% of the 1,041 known species of sharks, rays, and deep-sea chimaeras are endangered, threatened, vulnerable to extinction, or near threatened. While 46% of the species lack adequate data, the study applied statistical probability to show these species are likely threatened.



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Useful Websites

[Species Survival Network](#)

[CITES](#)

[IUCN Red List](#)

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

[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 \(CCSBT\)](#)