



# Species Survival Network

CITES COP15 2010 • Doha, Qatar



## Porbeagle *Lamna nasus*

CoP15 Prop. 17 (Palau and Sweden on behalf of the European Community's Member States acting in the interest of the European Community) Inclusion in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraphs 2(a) and (b) of the Convention and satisfying Criteria A and B in Annex 2a and Criterion A in Annex 2b of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14). The entry into effect of the inclusion of *Lamna nasus* in Appendix II of CITES will be delayed by 18 months to "enable Parties to resolve related technical and administrative issues, such as the possible designation of an additional Management Authority and adoption of Customs codes."

### **SSN VIEW: SUPPORT Adoption of Proposal**

#### **PORBEAGLE POPULATIONS HAVE DECLINED DRAMATICALLY OWING TO OVER-EXPLOITATION FOR TRADE.**

The porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*) is a large shark that occurs in temperate and cold-temperate waters worldwide, with centers of distribution in the North Atlantic Ocean and in a circumglobal band in the southern Atlantic, southern Indian, southern Pacific and Antarctic Oceans.

The 2009 IUCN Red List classifies the global porbeagle population as Vulnerable. The species is also classified as Critically Endangered in the Northeast Atlantic and the Mediterranean, Endangered in the Northwest Atlantic and Near Threatened in the Southern Ocean.

Overexploitation by unregulated longline fisheries constitutes the major threat to this species. Unsustainable fisheries practices, driven by the high market value of porbeagle meat and fins in both international and national markets, have led to population declines worldwide.

Target fisheries for this species in the North Atlantic have been unsustainable for decades. Stocks have been severely depleted, with landings falling from thousands of metric tonnes per year to a few hundred over a period of less than 50 years. In December 2009, the Council of the European Union agreed on a zero Total Allowable Catch for porbeagle sharks for the year 2010.

Assessments in 2009 of both North and South Atlantic stocks have shown historical declines to less than 30% of baseline, and more recent rates of decline of more than 50%. Where data are available for other southern hemisphere stocks, which are caught in both targeted fisheries and as bycatch, these also show declining trends.

The table below shows the extent of the declines suffered by both northern and southern hemisphere stocks of *L. nasus*.

#### SUMMARY OF POPULATION AND CATCH TREND DATA\*

| YEAR               | LOCATION       | DATA USED                      | TREND                                                | SOURCE                                                     |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1936–2007          | NE Atlantic    | Norwegian fishery              | >99 % decline from baseline                          | Norwegian and ICES data                                    |
| 1973–2007          | NE Atlantic    | Norwegian fishery              | 96% decline                                          | Norwegian and ICES data                                    |
| 1954–2007          | NE Atlantic    | Danish fishery                 | 99% decline from baseline                            | ICES data                                                  |
| 1973–2007          | NE Atlantic    | Danish fishery                 | 90% decline                                          | ICES data                                                  |
| 1973–2007          | NE Atlantic    | Faroese fishery                | Decline & closure                                    | ICES data                                                  |
| 1936–2007          | NE Atlantic    | All target catches             | 80% decline since post-WWII peak                     | Norwegian, French & ICES data                              |
| 1926–2008          | NE Atlantic    | Stock assessment               | 94% decline in biomass, 93% in numbers from baseline | Surplus production age-structured model<br>ICCAT/ICES 2009 |
| 1972–2008          | NE Atlantic    | Stock assessment               | 60% decline in biomass, 59% decline in numbers       | Surplus production age-structured model<br>ICCAT/ICES 2009 |
| Various, 1800–2006 | Mediterranean  | Abundance & biomass of lamnids | >99% decline in tuna traps over 50–100 years         | Ferretti <i>et al.</i> 2008                                |
| 1963–1970          | NW Atlantic    | Norwegian & Faroese landings   | ~90% decline in catch and collapse of fishery        | Landings data                                              |
| 1961–2005          | NW Atlantic    | Stock assessment               | 73–78% decline from baseline biomass                 | Campana and Gibson 2008, ICCAT/ICES 2009                   |
| 1961–2005          | NW Atlantic    | Stock assessment               | 84–88% decline in mature females                     | Campana and Gibson 2008, ICCAT/ICES 2009                   |
| 1994–2003          | North Atlantic | Catches                        | Decline, 1000 to near zero/year                      | Matsunaga and Nakano 2005                                  |
| 1993–2003          | North Atlantic | CPUE                           | Decline with slope -0.6                              | Matsunaga and Nakano 2002                                  |
| 1961–2008          | SW Atlantic    | Stock assessment               | 82% decline in biomass (SSB)**                       | ICCAT/ICES 2009                                            |
| 1982–2008          | SW Atlantic    | Stock assessment               | 60% decline in biomass (SSB)**                       | ICCAT/ICES 2009                                            |
| 1992–2002          | SW Pacific     | Longline CPUE                  | >50–80% decline in 10 yrs                            | NZ Ministry of Fisheries 2008                              |
| 1998–2005          | SW Pacific     | Weight landed                  | 75% decline                                          | NZ Ministry of Fisheries 2008                              |

\*From CoP15 porbeagle proposal (Palau and Sweden)

\*\* Spawning stock biomass

## BOTH NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE STOCKS WOULD BENEFIT FROM LISTING ON APPENDIX II.

While the estimated generation time for *L. nasus* is at least 18 years in the North Atlantic, it is 26 years in the Southern Oceans. In addition, stocks in the southern oceans are much smaller, slower-growing and have a longer life-span than the northern stocks, making them even more vulnerable to overfishing than those in the north. In the absence of an incentive to adopt sustainable management measures, southern hemisphere stocks are likely to experience declines similar to those of the northern hemisphere stocks. The need to comply with an Appendix II listing would create such an incentive.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT ARE WELL WITHIN THE CAPACITY OF EXPORTING AND IMPORTING COUNTRIES.

Species-specific commodity codes and identification guides for the meat and fins of this species would need to be developed should the listing be accepted. The high-value meat is often identified by name, and a generic guide to the identification of shark fins is currently in preparation. Visual inspection can be backed up by the use of multiplex PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) screening, a technique that has been used to identify shark fins on the Hong Kong market. The cost per sample ranges from USD20–60 and results are available within days. The proposed 18-month grace period before the Appendix II listing of this species comes into effect should allow sufficient time for commodity codes to be adopted, and for Parties to familiarize themselves with available tests and to develop identification guides.

## PORBEAGLE MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR LISTING ON APPENDIX II.

The porbeagle satisfies the biological and trade criteria for inclusion in CITES Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraphs 2(a) and (b) of the Convention. Specifically, it satisfies Criteria A and B in Annex 2a and Criterion A in Annex 2b of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14). The species falls into FAO's lowest productivity category of the most vulnerable species, and the rapid recent rates of decline in the populations of stocks that have been studied meet CITES and FAO guidelines for the application of "decline" to commercially exploited aquatic species. Listing this species on Appendix II will ensure that international trade is regulated, accurately recorded, and not detrimental to the survival of wild populations.

The FAO Ad Hoc Expert Panel assessing the shark proposals concluded that the available evidence supports the proposal to include *L. nasus*, in CITES Appendix II. In making this finding, the Panel took note of the language in

CITES Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP 14), in which Parties agreed to adopt measures proportionate to the anticipated risks to the species when considering proposals to amend the Appendices.

The Panel concluded that the porbeagle populations “representing most of the historical abundance of the species globally” met the “decline criteria” (actually the definition of decline in Annex 5 and the footnote on aquatic species) for Appendix II and that, therefore, listing the smaller, less exploited southern hemisphere populations would be consistent with the proportionate risks to the species as a whole. Under the CITES Secretariat’s interpretation of the criteria for Appendix II, an aquatic species does not have to meet the definition of “decline” in order to qualify for listing on Appendix II, but may be listed in order to prevent a decline from occurring.

-Revised: 13 January 2010

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