



“Working within CITES for the protection and conservation of species in international trade”

Sharks at CITES CoP 15

Reasons for the Latin American and Caribbean region to support Proposal 15 and Proposal 16

Scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*) and Oceanic whitetip (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)

For inclusion in Appendix II

- These proposals are for Appendix II, so international trade would be regulated, not banned.
- The main problem for both of these species is shark finning. This is mostly done by large, industrial fleets to supply the Asian demand for shark fin soup. Local consumption would not be affected by this listing.
- Many countries in the LAC region would not be impacted by this listing, since they do not have targeted fisheries or fisheries where significant bycatch of these species could occur.
- The scalloped hammerhead is a coastal species, mostly captured in local fisheries for local consumption. Normally, only the fins are exported.
- A CITES listing will help fishery authorities to stem illegal captures of these species. Illegal fishers will have difficulty exporting the fins from illegally-captured sharks, thus benefiting legal fishers and promoting improved management of the species.
- In recent years, the LAC region has led the global fight against shark finning in fora such as the United Nations General Assembly, the FAO and IATTC. Supporting the listing of these species in Appendix II would be entirely consistent with regional efforts to obtain a global ban on finning, while supporting local fishers.
- Estimates based on the fins of oceanic whitetip and hammerhead sharks found on the market in Hong Kong, reveal that between 220,000 and 1,210,000 oceanic whitetip sharks were traded globally in 2000 and that between 1.3 and 2.7 million hammerhead sharks (from the three proposed species), equivalent to a biomass of 49,000–90,000t, are harvested for the fin trade annually.
- Appendix II listings for these species will encourage stronger regional and national management measures and contribute to the implementation of the UN FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks.
- The FAO Ad Hoc Panel that convened to analyse these proposals agreed that they both meet the criteria for inclusion in Appendix II.
- Both of these species are very easily identified by local fishermen and authorities. Some countries in the region – for example, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia and El Salvador - have regulations requiring that sharks be landed with fins attached, which will make species identification even easier.
- The proponents are proposing an 18 month delay prior to the entry into effect of the proposed listing, to allow Parties to resolve any technical and administrative issues that may arise. Inexpensive and relatively fast genetic identification tools are already available. Guides and other technical support will be developed before the end of that period.