



SIXTH REGULAR SESSION
Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia
7-11 December 2009

WWF AND TRAFFIC BRIEFING NOTE – SHARK CONSERVATION

WCPFC6-2009/OP03
4 December 2009

Submitted by WWF and TRAFFIC

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Shark Conservation in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission: Issues for WCPFC—WWF & TRAFFIC briefing note

WWF and TRAFFIC support the inclusion of Silky Sharks *Carcharhinus falciformis* as “key species” as identified by the current shark Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) of the WCPFC. However, WWF and TRAFFIC also note that the list of “key species” is flawed, as it was originally proposed to comprise easily identifiable species. As such, it does not list species at highest risk, such as those to be identified through the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) process being undertaken by WCPFC. While there is specification of stock assessments in 2010 for the three threshers *Alopias* spp., Blue Shark *Prionace glauca*, Oceanic White Tip *Carcharhinus longimanus* and the two mako sharks *Isurus* spp., with the suggested inclusion of the Silky Shark, WWF and TRAFFIC believe there needs to be further amendment of the shark CMM with recognition and inclusion of:

1. All the species noted in Table 5, page 30 of the newly released Shark Regional Plan of Action (RPOA)¹ for the South Pacific as “key species”. (*Note: this is not a comprehensive list of shark species caught in the convention area, but generally reflects coastal species of Pacific Island Countries.*) While the RPOA has been made public, it is only a “guide” to developing a Regional Plan at this stage, as it has not yet gone through any process to get country support.
2. Species caught throughout the WCPFC convention area, including species highlighted by the ERA process, with immediate inclusion of the three hammerhead species *Sphyrna* spp., Sand Bar Shark *Carcharhinus plumbeus*, Porbeagle *Lamna nasus* and Dusky Shark *Carcharhinus obscurus*.
3. Language to ensure the shark CMM in all parts is mandatory, noting recommendations for the implementation of the CMM as mandatory from the Shark RPOA (pages 26 and 27).
4. A requirement that the landing of sharks should be mandatory, with fins naturally attached and all products tagged for traceability until their final destination (see page 131 of Scientific Committee report, paragraph 7).
5. The recommendation of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Specialist Working Group that there be a specific objective within the CMM to reduce mortality and with a reference to particular year(s) to enable measurability (again see page 131 of Scientific Committee report, paragraph 7).

It is worth noting that there will probably be relevant guidance to the WCPFC on sharks from the agreed course of action of the Second Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs (Kobe II), held in San Sebastian (Spain), 29 June–3 July 2009, and the workshop on by-catch that the USA has agreed to support.

Position: Note that the CMM for sharks still needs further strengthening beyond adding Silky Shark to the list of “key species”. It needs to be made mandatory; the term “key species” needs to reflect species at high risk; and the finning measures need strengthening to ensure fins are naturally attached, with the introduction of a product-labelling scheme to monitor compliance with the measures. There also needs to be a review of what mitigation measures are required.

¹ The RPOA is available at: http://www.ffa.int/system/files/Pacific_Islands_RPOA_Sharks_Final_Report__3_.pdf