

Please provide your comments by **14h** on Tuesday 9 August to:
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ISG 5 on the designation of new key shark species

1. BACKGROUND

SC11 developed a new SRP (2016-2020) and a schedule of work approved by WCPFC12. It included a review of the available observer and reported catch data for non-key shark elasmobranchs scheduled in 2016. In addition it was recommended that available information on Mantas and Mobula rays is reviewed in view of considering these species for designation as WCPFC key sharks. This review has been presented to SC12 in the document SC12-EB-WP-08 "*Review of available information on non-key sharks species including mobulids and fisheries interactions.*"

(<https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/EB-WP-8%20non%20key%20sharks-and-rays.pdf>)

A process for the designation of new key shark species developed at SC8: <https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/Key-Doc-SC-08-Process-Designation-Key-WCPFC-Shark-Species.pdf>

According to this process, the following four factors should be taken into consideration:

1 Is the species found within the WCPF Convention Area?

Objective: Proposed key shark species should be chondrichthyan (shark, skate, ray or chimaera) taxa whose documented range includes habitats within the WCPF Convention Area.

2 Is the species impacted by fishing activities in the WCPF Convention Area?

Objective: Proposed key shark species which are caught, or otherwise impacted, by fisheries in the WCPF Convention Area should be given priority for designation.

3 Is there evidence of particular ecological concern for the species?

Objective: In addition to potential fishery impacts and international conservation status, the ecological basis for concern, e.g. a particularly vulnerable life history or documented population declines, should be considered.

4 Are current data adequate to support detailed assessment of stock status and if not, is collection of such data practical?

Objective: The availability of existing data and the feasibility of obtaining more data should be considered when designating a key shark species for data provision and/or for assessment.

2. SUMMARY OF THE OUTPUTS OF SC12-EB-WP-08

2.1 Assessment output grid

Species	Factors			
	<i>Presence in CA</i>	<i>Impacted by fishing</i>	<i>Particular ecological concern</i>	<i>Availability of data for quantitative assessment</i>
<i>M. birostris</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>M. alfredi</i>	Yes (but coastal)	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Mobulas</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Pel. stingray</i>	Yes	Yes	Medium risk	No

The rationale for the assessment is summarized in pages 71-72 (Manta rays), 73-74 (Mobula rays), 75-76 (pelagic stingray), as well as in SC12-EB-IP-09 "FAO Report of the fifth FAO Expert Advisory Panel for the Assessment of Proposals to Amend Appendices I and II of CITES Concerning Commercially-exploited Aquatic Species".

2.2 Recommendations related to the designation as key shark species for data provision and assessment¹

Manta birostris: "It is therefore likely that, given the current management regime, perceived stock status, ease of identification and wide distribution through the low latitudes of the WCPO, listing of *Manta birostris* as a key shark species would enhance its management by the WCPFC."

Mobula rays: "listing mobula rays as a key shark species will probably not enhance the management of individual species in this group by the WCPFC at this stage".

Pelagic stingray: "It is therefore likely that, given the current management regime, perceived stock status, ease of identification and wide distribution through the WCPO, listing *P. violacea* as a key shark species could enhance its management by the WCPFC."

3. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

According to the designation process developed by SC8, there are five potential outcomes from the process of evaluating a nomination:

- i) The species is not found in the Convention Area and is not suitable for designation;
- ii) The species is found in the Convention Area but is not of sufficient priority to designate as a key shark species either for data provision or for assessment;

¹ When key shark species are designated for data provision they are included in the Scientific Data to be Provided to the Commission . When key shark species are designated for assessment, they are included in the WCPFC's Shark Research Plan.

iii) *The species is found in the Convention Area and is of sufficient priority to designate as a key shark species for data provision, but there are insufficient data for assessment at present;*

iv) *The species is of sufficient priority to designate as key shark species for assessment, but additional logsheet data collection is not practical and thus it will be assessed on the basis of existing information (e.g. observer data and/or existing (partial) logsheets);*

v) *The species is of sufficient priority to designate as a key shark species for both data provision and assessment.*

CCMs are invited to provide comments to the recommendations listed below:

Recommendations with the regards to the designation or not of new key shark species

Recommendation 1:

Noting the information and assessment presented in EB-WP-08, SC12 concludes **one of the five options above** and recommends that WCPFC13 **list/does not list** Manta rays as a key shark species.

Recommendation 2:

Noting the information and assessment presented in EB-WP-08, SC12 concludes **one of the five options above** and recommends that WCPFC13 **list/does not list** Mobula rays as a key shark species.

Recommendation 3:

Noting the information and assessment presented in EB-WP-08, SC12 concludes **one of the five options above** and recommends that WCPFC13 **list/does not list** pelagic stingray as a key shark species.

General Recommendations (from SC12-EB-WP-08)

Recommendation 4:

SC12 recommends that Purse seine observer training programmes add emphasis to *Mobula spp.* identification as part of their curricula.