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26.2.7 Proposal for a Concerted Action for the Whale Shark (*Rhincodon typus*)

CMS COP12 Regional Preparatory Workshop
For Oceania

Andrea Pauly
Associate Programme Officer Shark, UNEP/CMS Secretariat
28-30 August 2017
Brisbane, Australia



Proposal for a Concerted Action

- **Species:** Whale Shark
- **Appendices:** Already listed in Appendix II of the Convention in 1999
 - Proposed for listing in Appendix I (See Doc.25.1.20)
- **Proponents:** Philippines



Justification for actions

- Listed as “Globally Endangered” on IUCN Red List.
- Major threats to whale sharks:
 - Fisheries catches & bycatch
 - Vessel strikes
 - International trade in whale sharks is still occurring despite listing on Appendix II of CITES
- Benefit from improved management and conservation efforts across its boundaries, involving Range States with implementation.
- Whale shark ecotourism would significantly support local communities and create alternative livelihoods.



Proposed actions

1. Research and Monitoring:

- Investigate connectivity of local populations, migratory routes, and critical habitats through research, satellite tagging and genetic studies.
- Assess impacts of bycatch, fisheries interactions, entanglements and collisions, leading to better guidelines, protocols and identification of critical areas.

2. Unified Tourism Guidelines:

- Unified basic tourism guidelines to limit negative impacts from tourism interactions.
- Capacity building to deliver educational campaigns and raise awareness.
- Engagement with local communities to mitigate any negative impacts from conservation efforts.

3. Increased onboard Observers:

- Improved surveillance and reporting on catch, bycatch, entanglement and collisions on commercial shipping lines and vessels through a minimum number of onboard observers.



Proposed actions

4. Engage non-CMS Range States:

- Regional workshop with other Range States to increase interest in CMS and Sharks MOU across the region; increased signatories brings more homogenous protection.

5. Legislation, Policy and Management:

- Implementing national legislation for the protection and management of whale sharks.
- Develop management plans for marine sanctuaries and MPAs.

6. Address External Threats:

- Address climate change, ocean acidification, and plastic pollution of the seas as well as other global issues through whale shark conservation initiatives.



Implementation

!The Philippines are calling for support by all Range States!

- Philippines might offer a joint workshop in the near future, all Range States are highly invited to attend (delegates need to bear their own travelling costs)
- The workshop could help clarifying tasks and responsibilities
- Need for strong NGO partners



Thank you for your attention!

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“Report to your government and decide which role you can take in the conservation of the Whale Shark!”

