



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
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Agenda Item 27.7

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN
FOR THE ANGELSHARK IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document presents a draft Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark in the Mediterranean Sea (SSAP Angelshark Med) and contains a proposed Resolution and Decisions for the adoption of the SSAP.

SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN FOR THE ANGELSHARK IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Background

1. The Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) is 'Critically Endangered' according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) *Red List of Threatened Species* and requires urgent conservation action. Although the species was very common during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the global population has been severely depleted by targeted fishing and, more recently, by incidental catch as non-targeted species. Habitat destruction and degradation are also major concerns as the Angelshark relies on specific coastal and shelf habitats for feeding and reproduction. The species' last remaining stronghold is around the Canary Islands, but sightings are still recorded – albeit very infrequently – across much of its former coastal range, including the Mediterranean Sea.
2. Alongside the inclusion of the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) in Appendices I and II at the 12th Conference of the Parties (COP12), Parties approved a Concerted Action for the species, which was updated and extended until 2023 by COP13: [Concerted Action 12.5 \(Rev.COP13\)](#). Among other activities, Parties agreed to develop regional conservation plans, including for the Mediterranean region.
3. At the 3rd Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU), held in December 2018, Signatories agreed to contribute to the implementation of the Concerted Action. To this end, the Sharks MOU Advisory Committee (Sharks AC) developed a draft Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark in the Mediterranean Sea (SSAP Angelshark Med), which is presented in Annex 2 to this document, to provide guidance for Range States on the implementation of conservation measures for this species. This draft has also been reviewed by experts from the Angel Shark Conservation Network (ASCN).
4. In advance of the drafting process, Range States of the Mediterranean Sea region were consulted on the procedure and timeline during a series of online workshops held in April 2021. Comments on a first draft were then solicited from Range States via several rounds of written consultations. An online Range States meeting was held in July 2022 at which the final version of the draft SSAP Angelshark Med was agreed. Range States recommended that this document should be presented to COP14 for formal adoption by Parties.
5. A governance structure to support the implementation of the SSAP Angelshark Med is currently being developed by a Working Group established by the Range States meeting.
6. At the 4th Meeting of the Signatories to the Sharks MOU in February 2023, Signatories welcomed the work of the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat to develop the SSAP Angelshark Med. Signatories recommended that CMS Parties adopt the Action Plan at COP14 and called on CMS Parties and Sharks MOU Signatories to implement the SSAP Angelshark Med, once adopted by CMS. Implementation activities were agreed and included in the Sharks MOU Programme of Work (2023-2025).

7. The SSAP Angelshark Med includes information on biology, threats and existing legislation for the Angelshark, as well as a comprehensive framework for action. Activities were developed based on four main objectives:
 - Ensure appropriate species-level protection for the Angelshark;
 - Identify Angelshark sites and habitats;
 - Support and undertake scientific studies, including data-collection and liaison with the fishing sector, to improve scientific knowledge of Angelsharks, including population trends;
 - Secure sufficient resources for long-term conservation actions.
8. The draft SSAP Angelshark Med builds on the *Mediterranean Angel Sharks: Regional Action Plan (MedRAP)*¹, developed by the Shark Trust in collaboration with the ASCN and local and global experts in the Mediterranean.
9. The development of the SSAP Angelshark Med was partially funded by the Principality of Monaco under the Migratory Species Champion Programme.

Discussion and analysis

10. Due to the alarming decline in the Angelshark population, urgent conservation action is key to the survival of the species. CMS plays an important role in conserving the species and its habitats by promoting coordinated conservation efforts among Range States. The SSAP Angelshark Med was developed to provide guidance to Range States in the Mediterranean region on high priority activities to improve the conservation status of the species.
11. It is critical that, following its adoption, urgent steps are taken to implement the actions set out in the SSAP. The Secretariat is expected to continue working with Range States on the finalization of a governance structure to implement the SSAP and will seek to ensure that sufficient technical and financial resources are provided, and that Range States continue to monitor implementation activities and regularly update the framework of action.

Recommended actions

12. The Conference of the Parties is recommended to:
 - a) adopt the draft Resolution contained in Annex 1 of this document, including the SSAP Angelshark Med, which is annexed to the Resolution (Annex 2);
 - b) adopt the draft Decisions contained in Annex 3 of this document.

¹ <https://angelsharknetwork.com/>

DRAFT RESOLUTION

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN
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Noting that the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) was listed on CMS Appendices I and II in 2017 and in Annex 1 of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks in 2018,

Alarmed by the significant population declines over the past 50 years due to extensive exploitation, slow growth and low productivity, the species has become exceedingly rare throughout most of its historical range,

Concerned that the Angelshark was assessed by the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* in 2017 as 'Critically Endangered' and the population assessed as decreasing, raising serious concerns about the viability of the species given ongoing high threat levels,

Deeply concerned that the species and its habitat are persistently threatened by intense demersal fisheries, recreational fisheries, coastal commercial and tourism development, and habitat degradation throughout its range,

Recognizing that a multi-pronged approach is required that simultaneously addresses knowledge, resource, capacity and legal gaps that hinder effective conservation of the species, while, at the same time, implementing and enforcing existing laws and regulations that can mitigate threats to the species,

Recognizing the long-standing concern and support of many stakeholders working in the species' range that led to the Concerted Action for the Angelshark, as well as the support of the Angel Shark Conservation Network (ASCN) in its implementation,

Noting the links between the Single Species Action Plan and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU),

Further noting the high relevance of several work areas of the CMS to the conservation of the Angelshark, especially concerning bycatch, marine pollution and habitat conservation,

Affirming the need to address the threats to the species and its habitat in close collaboration with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM),

*The Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals*

1. *Adopts* the Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) in the Mediterranean Sea (SSAP Angelshark Med) contained in Annex 2, with the goal of promoting the long-term sustainability of its populations and their habitats by reducing the negative effects of human activities through legislation and enforcement, fisheries management measures, research, awareness-raising and capacity-building;
2. *Urges* Parties and *invites* non-Party Range States to implement the relevant provisions of the SSAP Angelshark Med;

3. *Calls on* Range States to strive for active collaboration between stakeholders within each range country to maximize the effective use of resources and expertise, to ensure that the results of research and awareness-raising activities can support the design and implementation of effective policy and management;
4. *Further calls on* Range States to facilitate regional collaboration between stakeholders in different *Squatina squatina* Range States to ensure that knowledge and experience gained in one country can be used to most effectively implement conservation action in another, especially in countries where cross-border populations are suspected to occur;
5. *Encourages* Parties and non-Party States to provide technical and/or financial support to implement the activities outlined in the SSAP Angelshark Med;
6. *Invites* other relevant intergovernmental frameworks, in particular the GFCM, to take into account the provisions of the SSAP Angelshark Med in the consideration of their activities and to support implementation of relevant SSAP Angelshark Med activities that fall within their mandate, as appropriate;
7. *Invites* the Angel Shark Conservation Network (ASCN) to continue its active support of research and conservation measures for this species; and
8. *Instructs* the Secretariat to bring the SSAP Angelshark Med to the attention of all Range States and relevant intergovernmental organizations and to assist with and monitor the implementation of the SSAP subject to the availability of resources.

ANNEX 2

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN
FOR THE ANGELSHARK (*Squatina squatina*) IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

NB: The Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) in the Mediterranean Sea is presented as a separate file [here](#).

ANNEX 3

DRAFT DECISION(S)

**SINGLE SPECIES ACTION PLAN
FOR THE ANGELSHARK (*Squatina squatina*) IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA*****Directed to Parties***

14.AA Parties that are Range States to the species are requested to:

- a) Undertake those actions of the Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) in the Mediterranean Sea (SSAP Angelshark Med) specified for immediate and short-term implementation and for delivery within three years as a matter of priority, continue ongoing and medium-term activities, and start implementation of long-term activities within five years;
- b) Provide relevant information and materials to update Annex III of the SSAP Angelshark Med Legislation relevant to the conservation of Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*), and to develop Annex IV, Tools and Guidelines to Support Implementation of the SSAP;
- c) Establish a governance structure, including a Working Group of Range States, as required, to support and monitor implementation and to facilitate cooperation and communication among Range States;
- d) Consider establishing additional national Working Groups, as required, to ensure active collaboration between stakeholders within each Range State to maximize the effective use of resources and expertise;
- e) Provide a brief report on the implementation of the SSAP Angelshark Med in time for the last meeting of the Sessional Committee before the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) using a template provided by the Secretariat;
- f) Review information provided by Range States on the implementation of the SSAP Angelshark Med and prepare a brief summary and analysis;
- g) Make recommendations on the further implementation of the SSAP Angelshark Med to COP15;
- h) Encourage non-Party Range States to adopt the SSAP Angelshark Med for their use.

14.BB Non-Party Range States are requested to engage with Party Range States in the implementation of activities outlined in the SSAP Angelshark Med;

Directed to intergovernmental organizations

14.CC Intergovernmental organizations, in particular the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks and its Advisory Committee, are encouraged to continue to engage with the implementation of activities outlined in the SSAP Angelshark Med;

Directed to non-governmental organizations and experts

- 14.DD Non-governmental organizations, the Angel Shark Conservation Network (ASCN) and other experts are encouraged to provide technical support to Range States for the implementation of the Action Plan and the development of Annex IV, *Tools and Guidelines to Support Implementation of the SSAP*.

Directed to the Secretariat

14.FF The Secretariat shall:

- a) Encourage non-Party Range States to adopt the SSAP Angelshark Med;
- b) Assist Range States in the establishment of a governance structure and monitoring system and provide a platform for communication upon request and subject to the availability of resources;
- c) Develop a simple reporting form, in collaboration with the Range States Working Group, to enable assessment of progress in the implementation of the SSAP Angelshark Med, and disseminate this to Range States to facilitate reporting in advance of COP15;
- d) Convene, subject to the availability of external resources, a meeting of Range States to stimulate implementation of priority actions and facilitate coordination across the region.