



HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

Report to the First Meeting of Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks Bonn, Germany, 24-27 September 2012

Humane Society International (HSI) is the global arm of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Founded in 1991, HSI carries out and supports activities and programs in 35 countries around the world and has over 11 million members.

HSI has an active shark conservation program, operating out of both its international office in the US as well as Australia. The focus of this program is to defend threatened shark species and increase the protection afforded to them through a number of mechanisms.

Internationally, HSI is actively working to ensure better protection for migratory sharks through inclusion of threatened species in the Appendices of the Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), as well as the Convention for Migratory Species (CMS). We have a significant interest in the CMS MoU on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks having attended every meeting to date regarding this interest. We strongly advocated for the development of a binding MoU and continue to work to ensure the best possible conservation plan under the MoU.

The practice of shark finning - cutting the fins off a shark and throwing the animal back into the ocean to die – became a focus of HSI's in 2005 due to the inherent cruelty of this dangerously efficient and ecologically destructive technique. Tens of millions of sharks suffer this fate each year as a result of the demand for shark fin soup. Our early efforts to address shark finning focused on banning the practice itself by promoting regulations that require all sharks to be landed with fins still attached as well as on educating consumers using our No Shark Fin pledge. Internationally we have a strong program in support of local and national legislation that is increasingly being introduced to ban the practice of shark finning, and the subsequent trade in shark products that drives this trade. Since our efforts began, strict regulations to ban the practice of shark finning have been endorsed by various bodies of the United Nations and implemented by the United States, Taiwan, Chile, and Central America among others. HSI was instrumental in lobbying for text in the United Nations General Assembly 2007 resolution on shark finning which requested specific measures such as limiting catch or fishing effort, requiring that vessels collect and regularly report data on shark catches, discards and landings as well as undertaking comprehensive stock assessments of sharks and reducing bycatch. Nowadays, most fishing authorities say they are opposed to the practice of finning, however the removal of shark fins at sea continues to be legal in much of the world's oceans.

HSI is also a strong international advocate for the introduction of 'fins attached' legislation in all tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and plays an active role in these fora. With partner conservation groups, HSI published the [Compendium of Conservation and Management Measures to address the impacts of species bycatch in tuna RFMOs](#), which provides best practice conservation and management measures for sharks and other species in tuna fisheries. We continue to promote the compendium when attending all RFMO meetings.

In Australia, HSI has been responsible for the inclusion of a number of shark species under Australian environmental legislation, and we continue to play an active role in advocating for the conservation of sharks in Australia. This is often in response to fatalities or where this is a call to cull migratory sharks in response to a shark attack.