



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
ON THE CONSERVATION OF  
MIGRATORY SHARKS**

CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.7.3  
30 January 2023  
Original: English

4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Signatories (Sharks MOS4)  
Bonn, 28 February – 2 March 2023  
Agenda Item 7

**REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*(Prepared by the Chair of the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat)*

**Composition of the Advisory Committee**

1. The Advisory Committee (AC) should be appointed by the Signatories from each region, with two representatives each for Africa, Asia, Europe, and South, Central America & the Caribbean, and one representative each for North America and Oceania. As of January 2023, nine out of 10 regional positions were filled, with one vacancy for the Africa region. The members of the AC, the regions they represent, and their terms served are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Members of the AC per region and the number of terms served. A term served is equal to one triennium.

<b>Members</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Term</b>
<b>John CARLSON (Chair)</b>	North America	3 <sup>rd</sup> term
<b>James ELLIS (Vice Chair)</b>	Europe	3 <sup>rd</sup> term
<b>Marino VACCHI</b>	Europe	3 <sup>rd</sup> term
<b>Carlos Julio POLO SILVA</b>	South, Central America & the Caribbean	1 <sup>st</sup> term
<b>Mario ESPINOZA</b>	South, Central America & the Caribbean	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
<b>Not filled</b>	Africa	
<b>Mika SAMBA DIOP</b>	Africa	3 <sup>rd</sup> term
<b>Lesley GIDDING-REEVE</b>	Oceania	3 <sup>rd</sup> term
<b>Rima JABADO</b>	Asia	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
<b>Moonyeen ALAVA</b>	Asia	2 <sup>nd</sup> term

2. Following a concern raised by the AC, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Signatories (MOS3) agreed new rules regarding the composition of the AC, the number of terms that members may serve, and the replacement of members ([CMS/Sharks/Outcome 3.7](#)). Based on these rules, this meeting will decide on the future composition of the AC under agenda item 13 ([CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.13.1](#)). In this context, the AC would like to emphasize that it would be important, with a view to maintaining continuity of the committee's work, to avoid replacing both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the AC at this meeting.

## Meetings

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Committee

3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the AC (AC3) was held on 10-12 December 2019 in Bonn, Germany, and was attended by eight members of the AC representing all six regions, one member of the Conservation Working Group (CWG), and observers from two Signatories and three Cooperating Partners of the MOU. AC3 agreed on priorities for its work during the triennium and discussed the draft new format for National Reports as submitted by the Intersessional Working Group “National Reporting”.

### Virtual Meetings

4. Due to Covid-19 related travel restrictions, the AC and members of the CWG were not able to meet in person in the last intersessional period. To continue work on important tasks, the AC shifted to meeting online. To accommodate for the fact that members were located in different time zones across the globe, meetings were kept short in time but held more frequently. During the triennium the AC held eleven online meetings. Numerous additional meetings on specific topics were held with individual members of the AC.
5. The AC notes that although regular virtual meetings are important for its work, these cannot replace in person meetings because of their time restrictions and limited communication and working abilities. Specifically, those tasks that require further thinking and discussions need more time and direct interaction between members. Consequently, some activities that the AC was tasked with by MOS3 had to be postponed to the next triennium.

### Work undertaken during the triennium

6. The AC prepared an updated assessment of the proposal for the inclusion of the Tope Shark in Annex 1 of the Sharks MOU, which encompasses the conservation status and migratory nature of the species and focuses specifically on the connectivity between Australia and New Zealand, including evidence of movements and genetic connectivity. Further details can be found in [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.9.1.1](#). In the assessment, the AC concluded that the Tope Shark meets the criteria for inclusion in Annex 1 of the Sharks MOU.
7. To implement activity 2.3 of the Concerted Action for Angelsharks ([CMS/Sharks/Outcome 3.8](#)), a Single Species Action Plan for the Angelshark in the Mediterranean Sea (SSAP) was developed. The SSAP was authored by AC members Jim Ellis and Marino Vacchi, in cooperation with the Secretariat. Workshops were held in April 2021 to brief the Range States on the development of the SSAP. A Range State Meeting was held in July 2022 to review the draft SSAP and agree on a final version. Please refer to [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.10.1](#) for further information on the SSAP, recommended future work and Range State involvement.
8. To implement activity 16 of the Programme of Work (2019 – 2021), the following initiatives are being led:
  - a) An initiative, in partnership with the IUCN Species Survival Commission Shark Specialist Group (SSC SSG), has been developed that aims to develop a global conservation strategy and regional action plans for pelagic sharks and rays. Further

- details can be found in [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.10.2](#), which additionally details the plan to establish a regional action plan for the Indian Ocean, with the aim to collect data on pelagic sharks and rays in the region and infer a measure of risk for each species.
- b) The Sharks MOU is working towards collaborating with the IUCN SSC SSG on an initiative, which also aims to develop a global conservation strategy and regional action plans for rhino rays, which will help to implement [Concerted Action 13.9](#). Details can be found in [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.10.3](#), which also describes the plan to produce a regional action plan for the Indo-West Pacific Region.
9. To implement activity 3 of the Programme of Work (2019-2021), the AC developed a methodology to prioritize listed sharks and rays for increased research and conservation efforts per FAO<sup>1</sup> Major Fishing Area. The methodology was applied to two areas and are presented as case studies in [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.10.5](#). This document also details the methodology and recommendations for future work.
10. Results of an analysis performed by the AC are presented as document [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.10.6](#), which contributed to implementing multiple activities (3, 8, 10, 12, 20, and 21) within the Programme of Work (2019-2021). Global average annual landings of CMS- and Sharks MOU-listed sharks and rays reported between 2015-2019 were analyzed to evaluate the level of exploitation of listed species for all FAO Major Fishing Areas. Based on the findings of this analysis, recommendations on the improvement of data collection and reporting were developed as included in Annex 1 of document 10.6. The data analysis was performed by Ms. Maria Pozo-Montoro (MRes Biological Sciences) who supported the work of the Secretariat and the AC during her 6-month internship at CMS and thereafter as a research associate.
11. The AC was invited by CMS Parties to support the implementation of CMS COP13 Decisions 13.62 and 13.63 on bycatch. The AC has supported this work and developed the proposed approach for assessing fisheries induced mortality. To this end, [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.10.7](#) provides details on a pilot study planned to be conducted for two FAO Major Fishing Areas. The study aims to establish a standardized methodology that can also be applied to other areas to understand overall fisheries induced mortality<sup>2</sup>, which includes bycatch.
12. Members of the AC were highly engaged in the development of capacity building materials for Sharks MOU Signatories, including:
- a) Learning materials for observer training workshops that were held in West Africa in collaboration with BirdLife International in the context of a MAVA funded project on minimizing bycatch in West African Industrial Fisheries. The workshops and the associated learning materials were funded by the Principality of Monaco and the government of Germany. These workshops were the first of their kind and consisted of in person workshops in The Gambia and Senegal, with 54 and 25 attendees respectively, and an online workshop in Cabo Verde, with fifteen (15) attendees. A report is available as [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.10](#).

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

<sup>2</sup> As further explained in [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.10.7](#), the AC suggests assessing “fisheries induced mortality” rather than bycatch, as the latter is not defined homogeneously. Reported data on bycatch are therefore not consistent, which makes it difficult to analyze them. Moreover, from a population management perspective it does not matter whether catch was intentional, or how the dead animals were handled. The important measure would be the overall fisheries-induced mortality.

- b) An on-board guide for the identification of sharks and rays in West Africa listed on international treaties ([CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.4](#)). These were used and distributed at the training workshops.
- c) Factsheets about the threats and human impacts on sharks and rays ([CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.7](#)), which have been developed by CMS and the IUCN SSC SSG, and authored by Simon J Pierce and Ryan Charles, with funding provided by the government of Germany and the Principality of Monaco.
- d) Two posters highlighted species that are listed on international treaties, one highlighting all species of sharks and rays ([CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.9](#)), and one more specifically on rhino rays ([CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Inf.8](#)). These were developed in collaboration between CMS and the IUCN SSC SSG, with funding provided by the government of Germany and the Principality of Monaco.
- e) Eleven (11) updated species factsheets published on the [Info Hub](#) of the Sharks MOU website. Over the last triennium, the AC has further developed draft factsheets for Angelshark, Dusky Shark, Common Guitarfish and for the family Rhinidae (Wedgefishes). These will be checked for new information before being published on the Info Hub following MOS4. In addition, the AC drafted one for the Tope Shark, which is currently listed on CMS, but not the MOU.

### **Involvement with the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (CMS)**

- 13. In 2019, the AC submitted comments on proposals for inclusion of three shark species in CMS Appendices at the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (CMS COP13). These were the Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), which was proposed for inclusion in Appendix I, the Smooth Hammerhead Shark (*Sphyrna zygaena*), and the Tope Shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*), which were both proposed for inclusion in CMS Appendix II (see [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.9.1.1](#) for further details).
- 14. The Vice-Chair of the AC participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC4) held in Bonn, Germany, from 12-15 November 2019, and provided scientific advice to CMS Councillors on all discussions relevant to sharks and rays in preparation for CMS COP13.
- 15. The Chair of the AC attended CMS COP13 and provided an update to the Parties as to the work of the AC. The Chair also drew attention to the comments on the listing proposals provided by the AC and supported the decision making process with scientific information (see [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.7.1](#) for further details on COP13 discussions and outcomes).
- 16. To strengthen the expertise in sharks and rays of the Scientific Council, CMS COP13 decided to enlarge the scope of migratory fish covered, by splitting the role between marine and freshwater species. CMS COP13 appointed Dr. Rima Jabado for her experience with marine fish, to compliment the position of the existing Councillor, Dr. Zeb Hogan, who is an expert in freshwater fish. Dr. Rima Jabado also currently serves as member for Asia in the AC.
- 17. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the AC attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC5), held online in from 28 June to 9 July 2021, to provide guidance on the implementation of CMS COP13 Decisions directed to the Scientific Council that were of relevance for migratory sharks.

**Future activities of the AC and CWG work**

18. AC4 is proposed to take place in 2023 in order to: follow up on outstanding decisions taken at MOS3, address decisions taken by this meeting, set priorities, and plan the implementation of its tasks as agreed by this meeting.
19. AC5 should ideally take place six months prior to MOS5 to prepare deliverables and new initiatives to be presented to MOS5 (see [CMS/Sharks/MOS4/Doc.14.2](#)). Between meetings, the AC proposes to continue working through regular online meetings and written consultations.

Action requested:

20. The Meeting is requested to:
  - a) Note the report of the Advisory Committee and to provide guidance.