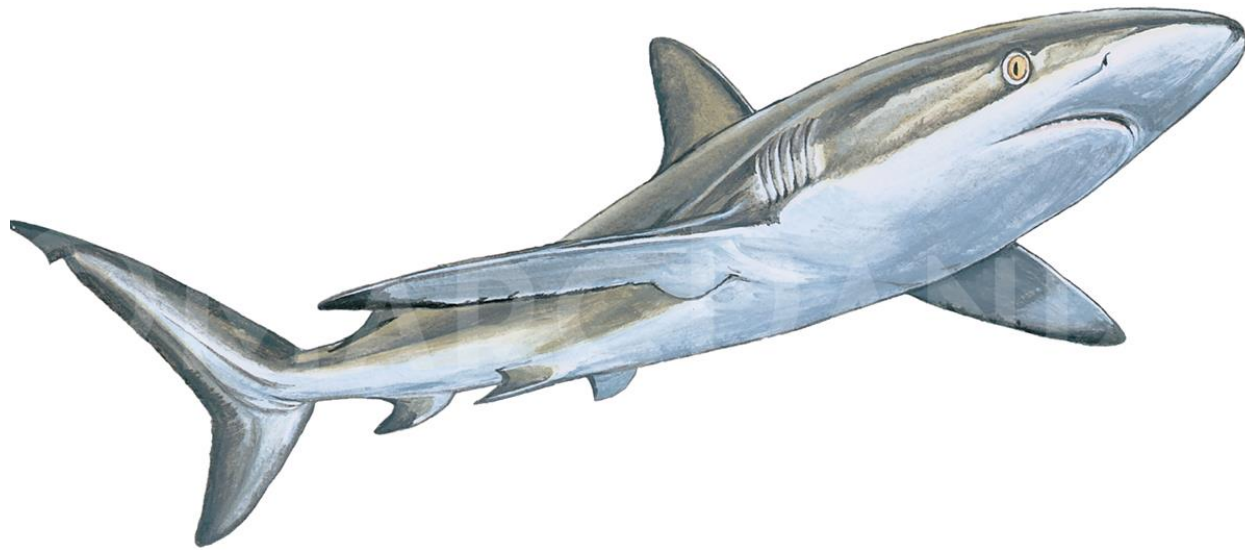


# Fact Sheet

SILKY SHARK  
REQUIN SOYEUX  
TIBURON SEDOSO



Silky Shark  
*Carcharhinus falciformis*

## SILKY SHARK

**Class:** *Chondrichthyes*  
**Order:** *Charcharhiniformes*  
**Family:** *Charcharhinidae*  
**Species:** *Carcharhinus falciformis*

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This fact sheet was produced by the Advisory Committee of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU).

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## 1. Biology

The Silky Shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) is an abundant, oceanic and epipelagic shark (Compagno et al. 2005). The Silky Shark can be characterized as a long lived (up to 30 years) species, relatively slow growing, and maturing at between 5-10 years of age. Depending on the study, litter size ranges from 2-25 individuals.

## 2. Distribution

Silky Shark is an oceanic and coastal species with circumtropical distribution found along continental shelves and slopes from the surface to 500 m of depth, with adults tending to occupy deeper waters than its juveniles. Silky Sharks are often associated with seamounts, and juveniles with floating objects (Ebert et al. 2016).



**Figure 1:** Distribution of Silky Shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)<sup>i</sup>.

## 3. Critical Sites

Critical sites are those habitats that may have a key role for the conservation status of a shark population, and may include feeding, mating, pupping, overwintering grounds and other aggregation sites, as well as corridors between these sites such as migration routes. Critical sites have not been accurately defined for these species in all areas, but some potentially important grounds may be around oceanic seamounts (e.g. Filmalter et al. 2013).

<sup>i</sup> Map obtained from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on 20 November 2017.

## 4. Population Status and Trends

Information available on the population status and trends in this taxon consists of fisheries data and stock assessments. Attempts have been made to conduct stock assessments from the eastern Pacific, although results contain major uncertainties due to catch data from the early years of the time series that hindered calculation of stock status (Aires da Silva et al. 2014; Lennert-Cody et al. 2016). The current IUCN Red List status for the global populations of Silky Shark is 'Vulnerable' (Rigby et al. 2017). More details of the population status and trends can be found in the IUCN assessment<sup>ii</sup>.

## 5. Threats

- **Fisheries:** The Silky Sharks are caught as bycatch in longline and purse-seine fisheries (Clarke et al. 2013; Oliver et al. 2015). Entanglement of Silky Sharks in Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs, used in large scale purse seine fisheries) is also a large source of mortality (Filmatler et al. 2013).
- **International trade:** Silky Shark meat is used for human consumption where permitted. Its fins are also commonly taken for international trade, and in at least in the past represented 3-4% of the fin trade in the Hong Kong markets (Clarke et al. 2006). Recent updates using fin trimmings estimate Silky Shark make up 10% of the Hong Kong markets (Fields et al. 2017).

## 6. Key Knowledge Gaps

- Recent and accurate estimates of population sizes and demographic structure with regard to sustainable levels of fishing pressure are urgently needed.
- Further, the distribution, life-history, and ecological parameters of Silky Sharks are lacking.
- Habitat use relative to critical habitats beyond seamounts.

## 7. Key Management and Conservation Gaps

- High mortality associated with fish aggregation devices (FADs).
- National fishery or conservation measures are limited.
- Full stock assessments have only been conducted in the Pacific Ocean.
- Critical habitats have not been identified and delineated.
- Fishery data (landings, discards, size frequency, catch and effort) are lacking in some areas.

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<sup>ii</sup> The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species uses a set of criteria to evaluate the extinction risk of species and subspecies. For more information see <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>.

## 8. Suggestions for Conservation and Management Action

- a) Incorporate conservation measures for Silky Sharks into national legislation of all Parties/Signatories (in compliance with the obligations of the for the Appendix I listed species of CMS<sup>iii</sup> and in line with the objectives of the Sharks MOU)**
- Implement relevant international measures (e.g. CMS, CITES<sup>iv</sup> and RFMOs<sup>v</sup>);
  - Consider adopting fins attached measures to effectively prohibit finning.
- b) Improve the understanding of Silky Shark through strategic research, monitoring and information exchange, including data collection of biological and distributional data and population status**
- Identify critical sites of Silky Shark, with regards to abundance, and seasonality and reproductive patterns.
  - Further investigate post-release survivorship of Silky Sharks to inform improved handling and release protocols especially associated with purse seine fisheries.
  - Address data gaps in biological knowledge (life-history and ecological parameters) of Silky Sharks.
  - Enhance or develop, where necessary, collection of fishery data (including landings, discards, size frequency, catch and effort where needed).
- c) Improve multilateral cooperation among regions and RFBs<sup>vi</sup>**
- Support the introduction of appropriate management and conservation measures for Silky Sharks at international and regional fora (e.g. Co-sponsor proposals/resolutions within multilateral agreements).
  - Promote better regional cooperation between RFMOs and RFBs (e.g. data-sharing or involvement in the Kobe process<sup>vii</sup>).
  - Support development and implementation of appropriate management plans for Silky Sharks.
  - Identify synergies with other Range States/stakeholders to support coordinated and resource-effective research and conservation programs.
- d) Identify the effective approaches to reduce bycatch and improve survivorship of Silky Sharks**
- Including gear modifications e.g. hook and trace type and fishing practices and safe release handling guidelines.

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<sup>iii</sup> Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

<sup>iv</sup> Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

<sup>v</sup> Regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs).

<sup>vi</sup> Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs).

<sup>vii</sup> The joint tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organization (tRFMO), also known as the Kobe process seeks to harmonize the activities of the five tuna regional fisheries management organizations. For more information see <http://www.tuna-org.org>.

## 9. Legal Instruments

Instrument:	Description:
<b>CITES</b> Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	<b>Appendix II:</b> Species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.
<b>CMS</b> Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals	<b>Appendix II:</b> Migratory species that have an unfavourable conservation status and need or would significantly benefit from international cooperation; CMS Parties shall endeavour to conclude global or regional agreements to benefit these species.
<b>EU</b> European Union	Council Regulation (EU) 2017/127 prohibits to fish for, to retain on board, to tranship or to land Silky Sharks for Union vessels in the ICCAT and WCPFC Convention Areas. When accidentally caught, the specimens shall not be harmed and promptly be released.
<b>FAO</b> Food and Agriculture Organization	<b>IPOA Sharks:</b> International Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks based on which states should adopt and implement a national plan of action for conservation and management of shark stocks (NPO Sharks) if their vessels conduct directed fisheries for sharks or if their vessels regularly catch sharks in non-directed fisheries.
<b>IATTC</b> Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission	<b>Res. C-16-01:</b> Amendment of resolution <u>C-15-03</u> on the collection and analysis of data on fish-aggregating devices. <b>Res. C-16-04:</b> Amendment to resolution <u>C-05-03</u> on the conservation of Sharks caught in association with fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean. <b>Res. C-16-05:</b> Resolution on the management of Shark species. <b>Res. C-16-06:</b> Conservation measures for Shark species, with special emphasis on the Silky Shark ( <i>Charcharhinus falciformis</i> ), for the years 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Instrument:	Description:
<p><b>ICCAT</b> International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas</p>	<p><b><u>Res. 95-02</u></b>: Cooperation with FAO to study status of stocks and Shark by-catches.</p> <p><b><u>Res. 03-10</u></b>: Resolution by ICCAT on the Sharks fishery.</p> <p><b><u>Rec. 04-10</u></b>: Recommendation by ICCAT concerning the conservation of Sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT.</p> <p><b><u>Rec. 07-06</u></b>: Supplemental recommendation by ICCAT concerning Sharks.</p> <p><b><u>Rec. 11-08</u></b>: Recommendation by ICCAT on the conservation of Silky Sharks caught in association with ICCAT Fisheries.</p> <p><b><u>Rec. 11-10</u></b>: Recommendation by ICCAT on information collection and harmonization of data on bycatch and discards in ICCAT fisheries.</p> <p><b><u>Rec. 13-10</u></b>: Recommendation on Biological Sampling of Prohibited Sharks Species by Scientific Observers.</p>
<p><b>Sharks MOU</b> Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks</p>	<p><b><u>Annex 1</u></b>: Signatories should endeavor to achieve and maintain a favorable conservation status for these species based on the best available scientific information and taking into account their socio-economic value.</p>
<p><b>UNCLOS</b> United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea</p>	<p><b><u>Annex I</u></b>: States whose nationals fish in the region for the highly migratory species listed shall cooperate directly or through appropriate international organizations to ensure the conservation and optimum utilization of such species throughout the region, both within and beyond the exclusive economic zone.</p>
<p><b>WCPFC</b> Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission</p>	<p><b><u>CMM 2008-04</u></b>: Conservation and management measures to prohibit the use of large scale driftnets on the high seas in the Convention Area.</p> <p><b><u>CMM 2009-02</u></b>: Conservation and management measures on the application of high seas FAD closure and catch retention.</p> <p><b><u>CMM 2010-07</u></b>: Conservation and management measures for Sharks.</p> <p><b><u>CMM 2013-08</u></b>: Conservation and management measure for Silky Sharks.</p> <p><b><u>CMM 2014-05</u></b>: Conservation and management measures for sharks.</p>

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## About the Sharks MOU

The Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU) is the first global instrument for the conservation of migratory species of sharks, rays, skates and chimaeras.

The Sharks MOU is an instrument of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) that engages all relevant stakeholders in addressing threats to migratory species in concert with all other aspects of wildlife conservation and management.

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