



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/Concerted Action 15.6

Original: English

**CONCERTED ACTION FOR
THE SAND TIGER SHARK (*Carcharias taurus*)¹**

Adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its 15th Meeting (Campo Grande, March 2026)

Proponent(s)

Brazil

Target species, lower taxon or population, or group of taxa with needs in common

Class: Chondrichthyes

Subclass: Elasmobranchii

Order: Lamniformes

Family: Odontaspidae

Genus: *Carcharias*

Species: *Carcharias taurus* (Rafinesque 1810)

Common name(s), in all applicable languages used by the Convention:

English: Sand Tiger Shark, Grey Nurse Shark, Spotted Ragged-tooth Shark or Blue-Nurse

French: Requin Taureau

Spanish: Toro Bacota, Escalandrún, Sarda

Portuguese: Mangona, tubarão- mangona

Listed on CMS Appendix I and II

Geographical range

Carcharias taurus inhabits warm temperate and warm temperate coastal waters of all oceans, with the exception of the eastern Pacific (Compagno 2001). It is generally found associated with the bottom at depths between 15 and 25 m, although it can reach depths up to 200 m (Compagno 2001).

In the Southwestern Atlantic Ocean, Sand Tiger Shark was historically common from Espírito Santo (Brazil) to Chubut Province (Argentina) (Ebert et al. 2013, Cuevas et al. 2021). However, its southern distribution has contracted significantly to the southern coast of Buenos Aires (Argentina) (Burg Mayer et al. 2025).

¹ The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CMS Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

Genetic studies support at least five subpopulations of the Sand Tiger Shark where it has been sampled, that is, Northwest Atlantic, Japan, west Australia, east Australia, and South Africa which is possibly also the same subpopulation as Brazil and the Mediterranean Sea (Stow et al. 2006, Ahonen et al. 2009, Fioravanti et al. 2020). Genetic data implies a low frequency of migration among each of these five regions and that the populations are genetically discrete (Ahonen et al. 2009, Fioravanti et al. 2020) and should be managed regionally (Ahonen et al. 2009). Although, Australian populations are genetically isolated from Japan, USA, Brazil, and South Africa (Ahonen et al. 2009), comparisons with Papua New Guinea and Indonesia have not yet confirmed the complete isolation of Australia's populations.

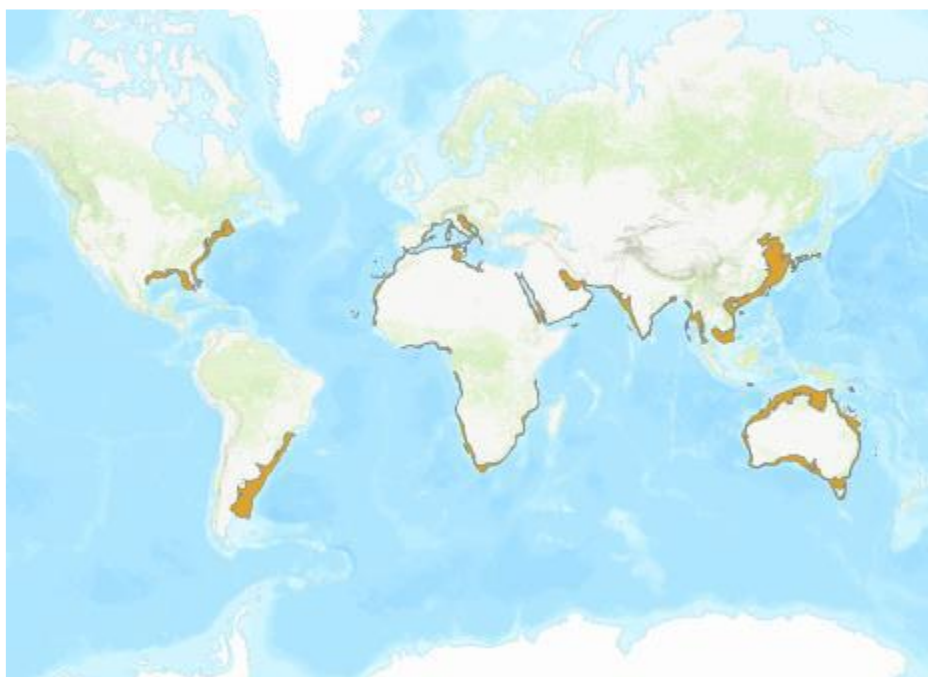


Figure 1. Global range of *Carcharias taurus* (Source: Rigby et al. 2025).

Summary of activities

1. Encourage Parties to continue collaborating and engaging to improve sand tiger shark conservation in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in coordination with those related actions included in the National Plan of Action in each country.
2. Create and implement a network of researchers, NGOs, aquariums, fishers, government authorities and key stakeholders of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay* , with strategies for joint monitoring and data sharing.
3. Update the Regional Conservation Action Plan (RCAP) for the species in the SWA focusing on the connectivity of key ISRAs and improving the following aspects: outreach and communication; science and monitoring; policy and enforcement; and use and trade.
4. Increase data collection and research with focus on: identification of sub-population and genetic differences and understanding the connectivity and migrations between key ISRAs of the SWA in order to improve its management and protection in the region.
5. Champion and leverage conservation actions in those Important Sharks and Rays Areas (ISRAs) where the species inhabits in the three countries.

* countries mentioned in alphabetical order

6. Identify inconsistencies in the level of protection ensured by different Party Range States.
7. Support and encourage new policy-based protections for the Sand Tiger Shark in each country as well as strengthen and improve those already established.

Associated benefits

The goal of all activities proposed is to generate a unique momentum to speed up effective conservation actions for the Sand Tiger Shark in the Southwest Atlantic Ocean (SWA) in order to provide opportunities for Parties to collaborate and coordinate their conservation actions in the region. In this sense, the update of the Regional Conservation Action Plan (RCAP) for the Sand Tiger Shark in the SWA via specific workshops will engage and allow Range States to encourage continued growth and reactive the participation of a developing stakeholder network.

Also, hammerheads sharks (*Sphyrna zygaena* and *S. lewini*), Tope sharks (*Galeorhinus galeus*) and the Spiny Dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), share similar coastal habitats as the Sand Tiger Shark along the SWA, suffering from the same threats, mainly from illegal recreational fishing in Argentina. The Scalloped Hammerhead *S. lewini* was listed on CMS Appendix II in 2014 while the Smooth Hammerhead *S. zygaena* in 2020 in the same App. The Tope shark is also listed on CMS in Appendix II (2020) while the Spiny Dogfish is listed since 2008 in App. II too. All these four species are also listed in Annex 1 of the Sharks MOU of the CMS and will be truly advantaged from improved and effective enforcement of regulations in the SWA via the implementation of the already mentioned activities in this document.

Timeframe

Please refer to the Table 1 for details.

Relationship to other CMS actions

By listing the Sand Tiger in Appendix I and II of the Convention, CMS Parties have already agreed that the species would significantly benefit from international cooperation wrapped here in a Concerted Action document.

Also, in order to contribute to the implementation of the following mandates established under CMS and the Sharks MOU these Concerted Actions will support substantially to³:

- Resolution 12.22⁴ and Decisions 13.62 to 13.63 on Bycatch.
- Resolution 13.3 and Decisions 13.71 to 13.73 on Chondrichthyan Species.
- Decisions 13.66 to 13.68 on Marine Wildlife Watching.

Conservation priority

The Sand Tiger Shark is estimated and suspected to be declining across its entire range due to exploitation, except for west Australia, with signs of the onset of recovery where management measures have been in place for some time which prohibit retention or reduced fishing mortality, that is, in the Northwest and Southwest Atlantic, South Africa, and east Australia. The east Australian subpopulation is estimated to have undergone a reduction of >80% over the past three generation lengths (74 years), while the Northwest Atlantic and

³ Editorial note from the Secretariat: All Decisions adopted at previous COPs were deleted by COP 15, which adopted a new set of Decisions: <https://www.cms.int/document/decisions-conference-parties-cms-effect-after-its-15th-meeting>

⁴ Editorial note from the Secretariat: The Resolution was revised at COP15.

South African subpopulations are inferred to have undergone reductions of 30–49% over the past three generation lengths. The species is suspected to be Critically Endangered in the Southwest Atlantic, Mediterranean, and the Arabian Seas region, that is, reductions of >80% over the past three generation lengths. Elsewhere, in Southeast Asia and West Africa, fishing pressure is high across the spatial and depth range of this species, and it is suspected similar levels of dramatic decline have occurred. Overall, it is suspected that the Sand Tiger Shark has undergone a population reduction of >80% over the past three generation lengths (74 years) due to levels of exploitation (Rigby et al. 2021).

Species-specific measures are in place in a number of countries and regions. In the United States (US), it was listed as a prohibited species in 1997 under the Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sharks (Carlson et al. 2009). In Australia, game fishers voluntarily banned capture of this species in Australian waters in 1979, and it was protected in 1984 in New South Wales. In 1997 it was listed as threatened under the national Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act, making the take and retention of this species illegal throughout its Australian range. A National Recovery Plan for the species was adopted in 2002 and updated in 2014. From 2001 to 2009, 26 Marine Protected Areas were established in east Australia, at least in part, to manage interactions with the Sand Tiger Shark (Lynch et al. 2013). In Argentina, the landing of this species is prohibited in industrial fisheries from national waters and catch and release is mandatory for recreational fishery in one of the three maritime provinces where the species inhabits. In Brazil, the capture and commercialization of the species have been prohibited since 2014 as the species is in the official red list (Ordinance MMA n° 148/2022). In the Mediterranean, Parties to the Barcelona Convention agreed that the Sand Tiger Shark is prohibited to be retained and must be released unharmed and alive, to the extent possible. In South Africa, it was protected from commercial fishing through the Marine Living Resources Act of 1998, as a precautionary approach in response to declining population trends elsewhere in the world.

Relevance

CMS provides a global and regional platform for the conservation of migratory animals and their habitats, aiming to ensure that their use does not exceed sustainable levels. So, there is limited evidence of protection for the Sand Tiger Shark outside those countries mentioned above, despite a clear need for such action. The CMS Appendix I and II listing, with collaborative action coordinated is essential to ensure that protections allow recovery are extended throughout this species range in the Southwest Atlantic, both at the national level and through cooperation and collaboration between range States in the region.

Absence of better remedies

Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay have developed action plans for cartilaginous fishes that identify threats and propose conservation actions. However, considering the life history traits of the Sand Tiger Shark, the threats it faces in the region, and its IUCN Critically Endangered status, there is a clear necessity to propose new and urgent conservation actions within the Southwest Atlantic Ocean.

Therefore, the Concerted Action proposed herein provides a critical and unique framework for addressing these threats at the regional level, effectively bridging the lack of cooperative management among Parties for this species. This framework aims to encourage essential, currently deficient research and to facilitate the implementation of strategic conservation actions.

Readiness and feasibility

In 2020, two virtual workshops were held that brought together sectors and stakeholders

involved in activities relevant to the use, management, and conservation of the Sand Tiger Shark in the Southwest Atlantic Ocean including regional CMS Parties. Proposals were developed to prevent the local extinction of *Carcharias taurus*. Representatives from Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay participated, as well as from the government, conservation, recreational and commercial fishing, education, and science sectors, among others. Thus through a participatory and collaborative process, contributions were obtained in recent years for the strategic planning of coordinated actions among the three countries, and for the purposes of conservation in a single document (Regional Conservation Action Plan - RCAP).

Additionally, support will be appreciated from the Sharks MOU and Cooperating Partners, to support the development and implementation of these Concerted Actions as well as the RCAP for the SWA.

Likelihood of success

In the Southwest Atlantic Ocean (SWA) there are users, experts and NGOs already engaged and ready to support Range States to develop, fund and implement collaborative work. Initiatives in the past as Mult stakeholders' workshops to develop the Regional Action Plan for the species in SWA, show that the creation of a network of experts and other stakeholders is possible to support Range States with the implementation of the proposed activities.

Thus, no risk factors were identified that have the potential to significantly threaten the success of the proposed activities.

Magnitude of likely impact

The implementation of Concerted Actions under the auspices of the CMS is crucial and urgent for *Carcharias taurus* in the Southwest Atlantic, due to its biological condition, migratory pattern, and critical conservation status in the region.

It is essential to identify and protect aggregation sites (feeding and reproduction) in the SWA (such as the mouth of the La Plata River, Southern Brazil, and Argentina), which are vital for the subpopulation's survival, especially the locations where pregnant females gather.

Opportunities may arise to develop regional strategies to mitigate bycatch in gillnet, trawl, and particularly, bottom longline and surface longline fisheries, as also coordinate tagging and monitoring programs (e.g., satellite telemetry) to precisely map migratory routes, which is fundamental for the delimitation of transboundary marine protected areas or the seasonal management of fisheries.

These Concerted Actions can improve significantly the management of the Sand Tiger Shark use and trade, with a greater degree of protection for the species across its distribution along the SWA by ensuring Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay are engaged in these activities.

Cost-effectiveness

These Concerted Actions will complement and promote the implementation of the Action Plans for the conservation of chondrichthyans in each CMS Party, as well as the Regional Plan between Argentina and Uruguay (CTMFM, 2018), championing and encouraging cooperation between Parties of the SWA. It is important to mention that the support of Parties is essential to carry out these actions that foster intra and intersectoral coordination, with the goal of promoting the implementation of regulations within each country on the management of the species, including best commercial and recreational fishing practices. At the same time, given that the Sharks MOU Signatories have not yet listed the Sand Tiger Shark in Annex 1 of the MOU these Concerted Actions are of significant relevance.

Consultations planned / undertaken

Table 1. Activities and expected outcomes with timeframe

Activity	Outputs/Outcomes	Timeframe	Responsibility	Funding
<p>1.Encourage Parties to continue collaborating and engaging to improve sand tiger shark conservation in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in coordination with those related actions included in the National Plan of Action in each country.</p>	<p>Regional awareness for the critical conservation status of the Sand Tiger was established in each Party Range State</p>	<p>2026-2027</p>	<p>*Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and NGOs</p>	<p>No funding required.</p>
<p>2.Create and implement a network of researchers, NGOs, aquariums, fishers, government authorities and key stakeholders of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, with strategies for joint monitoring and data sharing.</p>	<p>A detailed matrix of the network created including members' roles and responsibility. Meetings and workshops (at least 2 in person) carried out with specific aims and objectives. Data and research are shared and promoted among researchers and stakeholders. Collaboration opportunities are identified and promoted to increase conservation action. Local communities are engaged through citizen science projects. Students are engaged in research projects for long term capacity building determined.</p>	<p>2026-2028</p>	<p>Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and NGOs</p>	<p>Funding required for in person workshops</p>

Activity	Outputs/Outcomes	Timeframe	Responsibility	Funding
<p>3. Update the Regional Conservation Action Plan (RCAP) for the species in the SWA focusing on the connectivity of key ISRAs and improving the following aspects: outreach and communication; science and monitoring; policy and enforcement; and use and trade.</p>	<p>A virtual workshop and a workshop in person carried out in order to update the RCAP.</p>	<p>2026-2027</p>	<p>Researchers, NGOs, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.</p>	<p>Funding required for in person workshop</p>
<p>4. Increase data collection and research with focus on: identification of sub-population and genetic differences and understanding the connectivity and migrations between key ISRAs of the SWA in order to improve its management and protection in the region.</p>	<p>Key ISRAs selected. Critical areas identified in the SWA including movement pathways and aggregation sites for breeding, nursing, feeding, and mating; Improved species-specific estimates of legal and illegal catch and abundance to generate better understanding of the current distribution Sub-populations identified.</p>	<p>2026-2028</p>	<p>Research groups and NGOs</p>	<p>Funding required</p>
<p>5. Champion and leverage conservation actions in those Important Sharks and Rays Areas (ISRAs) where the species inhabits in the three countries.</p>	<p>Key conservation actions identified and implemented in key selected ISRAs in each country.</p>	<p>2028-2030</p>	<p>Research groups and NGOs</p>	<p>Funding required</p>
<p>6. Identify inconsistencies in the level of protection ensured by different Party Range States.</p>	<p>Protection gap analysis undertaken focusing on regional connectivity.</p>	<p>2026-2028</p>	<p>NGOs</p>	<p>No funding required</p>

Activity	Outputs/Outcomes	Timeframe	Responsibility	Funding
<p>7.Support and encourage new policy-based protections for the Sand Tiger Shark in each country as well as strengthen and improve those already established.</p>	<p>Increased number of Range States as Signatories to the Sharks MOU. Range States encouraged to set and enforce actions for the Sand Tiger population recovery through no-take zones, temporal restrictions, or prohibiting certain fishing gear. Parties to develop and implement national legislation for Sand Tiger protection</p>	<p>2028-2030</p>	<p>Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and NGOs</p>	<p>No funding required.</p>

*: countries mentioned in alphabetical order.

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