ADDENDUM 1

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL COMMENTS
(arising from ScC-SC6)

PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE SAND TIGER SHARK (*Carcharias taurus*) IN APPENDIX I AND II OF THE CONVENTION

UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.31.4.9

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COP14

- The Scientific Council concluded that the species meets the criteria for inclusion in Appendix I and II, with reference to its regular and cyclical migratory behaviour associated with seasonal and reproductive events in most areas along its range distribution, as well as to its conservation status as a globally 'Critically Endangered' species.

- However, the Scientific Council did not reach consensus on whether the two Australian populations qualify as migratory in accordance with the CMS definition.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE DOCUMENT

- For the review of this listing proposal the Scientific Council took into consideration the analysis of listing proposals provided by the Sharks MOU Advisory Committee (Sharks AC) contained in UNEP/CMS/ScC-SC6/Inf. 13.4, and welcomed their overall findings and comments.

- It was agreed that evidence for transboundary movements exists for most populations across its range distribution, including in the Northwest Atlantic, the West Africa/Mediterranean Sea, the Southwest Atlantic, and in South Africa. But there was a lack of information for some other populations, such as for the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, Japan, Southeast Asia/Papua New Guinea, and Australia.

- It was agreed there was no evidence of whether individuals of the two genetically distinct Australian subpopulations would leave the Australian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), but concerns were raised that the species might be already too depleted to obtain sufficient data to prove migratory behaviour. It should be noted that even highly depleted populations can retain high levels of genetic diversity – for example, the Magenta Petrel. However, it was pointed out that there is evidence for shark species having low genetic diversity despite being highly migratory – for example, Great White Sharks and Basking Sharks.[1]

- It was noted that the genetic studies undertaken to date, demonstrate that the two Australian populations are genetically isolated from all other studied populations and there is no regular movement outside of these populations. Records from neighbouring countries are rare and are considered as either misidentification or vagrant records, possibly indicating a dispersal movement by a very limited number of individuals.

[1] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308134029_Low_genetic_diversity_of_sharks_natural_patterns_or_induced_by_exploitation

- It was noted that listing in Appendix II of CMS requires that the species would benefit from international cooperation; while internal migrants that do not leave national waters would require national protection, they would not benefit from international cooperation. In this context, it was noted that the species is strictly protected in Australia by national environmental law.

- Some members of the Scientific Council considered it appropriate to recommend the reduction in scope of the proposal to exclude the Australian populations, while others were not supportive of this idea or suggested only including the Australian populations in Appendix II.

- The Scientific Council recommended that the proponents should consult with Australia to discuss a way forward.

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC SECTIONS/ INCLUDING POSSIBLE PROPOSALS FOR TEXT REVISION

- The proposal states, in paragraph 3 of the 'Overview' and in paragraph 1 of section 4.2, 'Population (estimates and trends)', that the west coast of Australia population has shown "signs of the onset of recovery where management measures have been in place for some time..." The Scientific Council agreed with the Sharks AC that this is likely incorrect. They noted, however, that Bradford et al. (2018) provides evidence for possible recovery of the east coast Australian population.