



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SHARKS (SHARKS MOU)

Whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) are extremely vulnerable to commercial fishing. © Commonwealth of Australia

THE CMS SHARKS MOU

The Sharks MOU, with its global reach, aims to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for migratory sharks and rays with policies based on the best available scientific information and taking into account the socio-economic value of these species.

At present time, it is estimated that one-quarter of chondrichthyan species are threatened worldwide¹, including a significant number of migratory shark and ray species. Some of these species travel large distances across and around ocean basins, and require special conservation and management measures on a global scale across their entire range.

Sharks are highly vulnerable to overexploitation as they grow slowly, mature late and produce very few offspring. The rapid and largely unregulated increase in target fisheries and by-catch have depleted many populations of sharks and rays worldwide. It is estimated that 63 to 273 million sharks are killed per year².

Species listed on the Sharks MOU and their status on the CMS Appendices³

Species	CMS Sharks MOU Annex 1	CMS Appendix I		CMS Appendix II
		Year of listing		
Whale shark (<i>Rhincodon typus</i>)	2010			1999
Great white shark (<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>)	2010	2002		2002
Basking shark (<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>)	2010	2005		2005
Porbeagle (<i>Lamna nasus</i>)	2010			2008
Spiny dogfish (<i>Squalus acanthias</i>)	2010			
Shortfin mako (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>)	2010			2008
Longfin mako (<i>Isurus paucus</i>)	2010			2008



Basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) © Dan Burton / Robert Harding

¹ Dulvy, Nicholas K., et al. „Extinction risk and conservation of the world’s sharks and rays.“ *Elife* 3 (2014): e00590.

² Worm, Boris, et al. „Global catches, exploitation rates, and rebuilding options for sharks.“ *Marine Policy* 40 (2013): 194-204

³ Additional shark and ray species listed on CMS Appendices I and II at COP 11 in 2014, will be considered for inclusion under the CMS Sharks MOU at the Second Meeting of the Signatories (MOS2) in 2016.

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The CMS Sharks MOU Conservation Plan

An international **Conservation Plan** forms the basis of the current work under the MOU and calls for cooperation among governments, fishing industries, NGOs, local communities and scientists. The **Advisory Committee** of the MOU provides expert advice and suggestions on new initiatives for the implementation of the Conservation Plan. Objectives of this plan are:

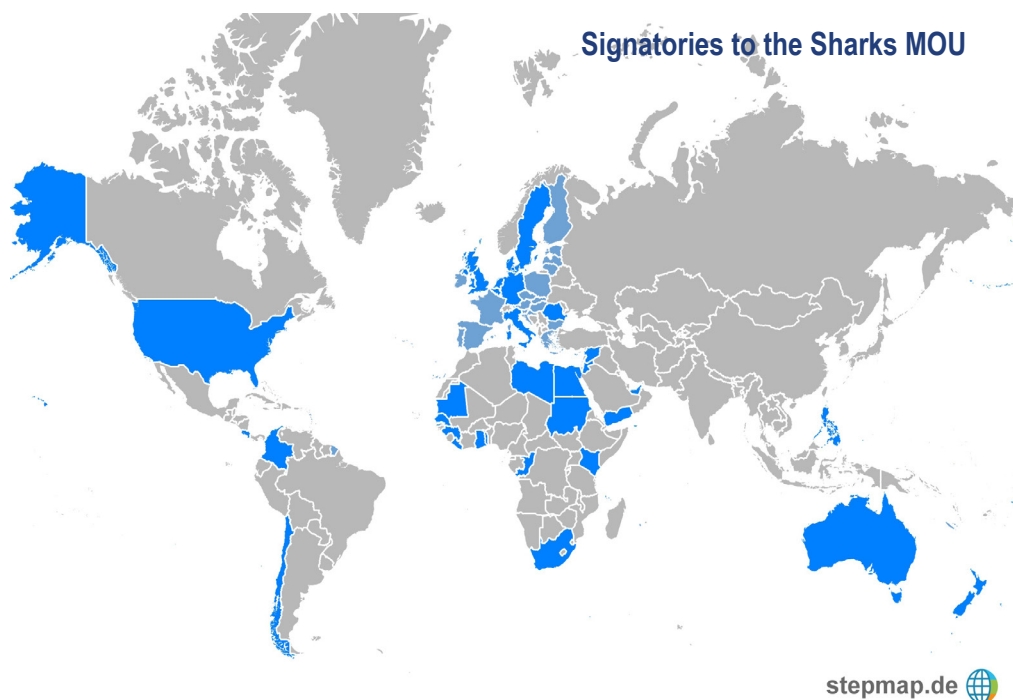
- > Improve understanding of migratory shark and ray populations through research, monitoring and information exchange,
- > Ensure that directed and non-directed fisheries are sustainable,
- > Protect critical habitats, migration corridors and critical life stages of sharks and rays,
- > Increase public awareness of threats and participation in conservation activities,
- > Enhance national, regional and international cooperation.

Signatories to the Sharks MOU

As of August 2015, the CMS Sharks MOU has 39 Signatories: 38 national governments and the European Union.

The Sharks MOU is open for signature by all Range States⁵ (and regional economic integration organizations) of listed shark species.

Signatories have the opportunity to help shape the policy direction of the Memorandum and adapt it to the needs of their shark population.



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Challenges for Signatories

A major challenge facing Signatories will be ensuring that both directed and non-directed fisheries for sharks and rays are sustainable. Proper monitoring schemes are required to collect data and information for each species throughout its range to inform the development of effective conservation measures and fisheries management.

⁵ Range States are defined as any State that exercises jurisdiction over any part of the range of migratory shark and ray species, or a State, flag vessel of which are engaged outside its national jurisdiction limits in taking migratory sharks and rays.