



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

Aggregation of *Sphyrna lewini* © Image Broker Robert Harding

THE SHARKS MOU

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

An alarming proportion of 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 and rays 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 already depleted many populations of sharks and rays worldwide².

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

| Species | 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 | | 2008 |
| Shortfin mako (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>) | 2010 | | 2008 |
| Longfin mako (<i>Isurus paucus</i>) | 2010 | | 2008 |
| Devil rays (<i>Mobula</i> spp. - 9 species) | 2016 | 2014 | 2014 |
| Manta rays (<i>Manta</i> spp. - 2 species) | 2016 | 2011/2014 | 2011/2014 |
| Thresher Sharks (<i>Alopias</i> spp. - 3 species) | 2016 | | 2014 |
| Sawfishes (<i>Pristidae</i> spp. - 5 species) | 2016 | 2014 | 2014 |
| Scalloped hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>) | 2016 | | 2014 |
| Great hammerhead (<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>) | 2016 | | 2014 |
| Silky Shark (<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>) | 2016 | | 2014 |



Manta ray © Guy Stevens, Manta Trust

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

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The CMS Sharks MOU Conservation Plan

An international **Conservation Plan** forms the basis of the ongoing work under the MOU calls for cooperation among governments, fishing industries, NGO's, local communities and scientists. The MOU's **Advisory Committee** provides expert advice and suggestions on new initiatives for the implementation of the Conservation Plan.

Objectives of the CMS Sharks MOU Conservation Plan

- > 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 December 2016, the CMS Sharks MOU has 41 Signatories: 39 national governments and the European Union.

The Sharks MOU is open for signature by all Range States³ (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.

³ 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 vessels of which are engaged outside its national jurisdiction limits in taking migratory sharks and rays.