



*"Working within CITES for the protection and conservation of species in international trade"*

## Porbeagle

### *Lamna nasus*

**CoP14 Prop. 15** (Germany on behalf of the Member States of the European Community) Inclusion in Appendix II in accordance with Article II 2(a) of the Convention and Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13) Annex 2 a, paragraph A and B.

#### **SSN VIEW: Support Adoption of Proposal**

#### **PORBEAGLE POPULATIONS HAVE DECLINED DRAMATICALLY AND INSHORE FISHERIES HAVE COLLAPSED, PRIMARILY DUE TO OVER-EXPLOITATION FOR TRADE**

The porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*) is a large, warm-blooded shark that occurs in the temperate North Atlantic Ocean and in a circumglobal band in the Southern Oceans. It is most commonly found on continental shelves between the surface and depths of 200m, but has occasionally been caught at depths of 350 – 700m. Porbeagles are found individually, in shoals, and in feeding aggregations, and their distribution ranges from close inshore (especially in summer), to far offshore, where they are often associated with submerged banks and reefs. Over-exploitation by unregulated longline fisheries is the major threat to this species. Unsustainable fisheries, driven by the high market value of the porbeagle meat and fins in both international and national markets, have led to population declines worldwide. Both the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean populations are listed as Critically Endangered on IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species. The Northwest Atlantic population is listed as Endangered, and stocks in the Southern Ocean are listed as Near Threatened.

#### **INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN PORBEAGLE IS CURRENTLY UNREGULATED. THERE ARE NO INTERNATIONAL CONTROL MEASURES OR MONITORING SYSTEMS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, ONLY THREE RANGE STATES HAVE MANAGEMENT PLANS IN PLACE, AND THESE PROVIDE INADEQUATE PROTECTION FOR THE SPECIES.**

Despite listings on Annex 1 (Highly Migratory Species) of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, Annex III (Species whose exploitation is regulated) of the Barcelona Convention Protocol, and Appendix III of the Bern Convention (the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats), international management actions for this species have yet to be implemented.

Porbeagles are vulnerable to over-exploitation by fisheries due to their late maturity, low reproductive rate (litter of 4 pups every 1 – 2 years), long gestation (8 – 9 months), long generation time (20 – 50 years), and a low intrinsic rate of population increase (5 – 7% per year). Due to the high value of porbeagle meat and fins, and the absence of international catch limits, regulations or management systems, porbeagle stocks have shown serious declines worldwide. The species has almost completely disappeared from the Mediterranean, while in the Northeast Atlantic, target fishery catches have declined by 90% from baseline levels and there are no indications of stock recovery. In the Southwest Pacific, there has been a 50 – 80% decline in the last 10 years, and an 80 – 90% decline in the Southwest Atlantic has been inferred from pelagic longline catch per unit effort (CPUE) data. In Canadian coastal waters, the recent annual catch was less than the total allowable catch, indicating that this fishery has effectively collapsed. Scientific recommendations to completely close the Northeast Atlantic fishery due to plummeting stocks have been ignored.

Porbeagle meat is the most valuable shark meat on the market. It is worth approximately \$US 4 per kilo or up to \$US 1000 per shark to the fisher, with its value escalating with consumer demand. Although both meat

and fins are in international trade, the absence of trade regulations makes the total amount of porbeagle products entering the market difficult to quantify. Meat is traded fresh, frozen and dried-salted, and is exported primarily to the EU from Canada and Japan, from Canada to the USA, and from the EU to the USA. Byproducts also enter international trade markets. Hides are processed for leather and liver oil, while other parts of the shark are used for fishmeal fertiliser.

## **PORBEAGLE MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR LISTING UNDER CITES APPENDIX II**

As evidenced by large declines in porbeagle populations worldwide, current exploitation of the porbeagle far exceeds a level that could be continued in perpetuity (Resolution Conf. 9.24, Annex 2a). An Appendix II listing will help ensure that international trade in porbeagles is supplied by sustainably managed accurately recorded fisheries that are not detrimental to the status of wild populations, and would promote regional cooperation for the conservation of the species. The implementation of CITES control measures for the regulation and monitoring of international trade will also contribute to the implementation of the U.N. FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks.

**Porbeagle satisfies the biological and trade criteria for inclusion in CITES Appendix II. It porbeagle falls into FAO's lowest productivity category of the most vulnerable species, and meets the guidelines suggested by FAO for the listing of commercially exploited aquatic species in CITES Appendices. The increased protection, monitoring and regulation provided by Appendix II are necessary to bring international trade in this species under control and ensure the long-term viability of porbeagle populations. SSN urges Parties to support this proposal.**