



Species Survival Network

CITES COP15 2010 • Doha, Qatar



Scalloped Hammerhead Shark

Sphyrna lewini

Great Hammerhead Shark

Sphyrna mokarran

Smooth Hammerhead Shark

Sphyrna zygaena

Sandbar Shark

Carcharhinus plumbeus

Dusky Shark

Carcharhinus obscurus

CoP15 Prop. 15 (Palau and the United States of America) Inclusion of the scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(a) of the Convention and satisfying Criterion A in Annex 2a of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14). Inclusion of the great hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*), the smooth hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna zygaena*), the sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*), and the dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*) in Appendix II for look-alike reasons in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(b) of the Convention and satisfying Criterion A in Annex 2b of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14). Inclusion in Appendix II, with the following annotation: "The entry into effect of the inclusion of these species in Appendix II of CITES will be delayed by 18 months to enable Parties to resolve the related technical and administrative issues."

SSN VIEW: SUPPORT Adoption of Proposal

SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD SHARK POPULATION SIZES HAVE PLUMMETED DUE TO OVER-EXPLOITATION.

The scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*) is a coastal and semioceanic shark found in warm temperate and tropical seas. *S. lewini* is a wide-ranging species, found in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. There is genetic evidence for separate subpopulations in each ocean. The species is categorized as Endangered in the IUCN Red List (2009).

Steep population declines have been driven by extensive target fisheries, especially for fins, and by high bycatch mortality. Individuals of *S. lewini* tend to aggregate, and aggregations are targeted by fisheries, making the species

highly vulnerable to over-fishing. Catches are often unreported, particularly when only the fins are taken and the rest of the shark is discarded at sea. When reported, catches of *S. lewini* are often grouped with other hammerhead sharks as “*Sphyrna* spp.”

Data on the Northwest Atlantic population of *S. lewini*, from an annual survey conducted for 32 years (1972-2003) in North Carolina, USA, indicate a decline of 98%. The entire genus *Sphyrna* spp. is estimated to have declined by 76% in the Northwest Atlantic between 1992 and 2005. Landings of hammerhead sharks off southern Brazil in the Southwest Atlantic peaked between 1993 and 1994 (700 metric tonnes caught by directed fishing with gillnet). After this period, from 1995 to 2002, catches varied between 100 and 300 tonnes. Catch-per-unit effort (CPUE) of *S. lewini* in the spring gillnet fishery declined by about 60-90% in the years 1993-2001.

Reliable, species-specific catch information from shark nets off the beaches of Kwa-Zulu Natal show that CPUE of *S. lewini* declined from ~5.5/km net/year to ~2/km net/year between 1978 and 2003 -- a decline of approximately 64% over a 25-year period. Few species-specific data are available for fisheries in the Indian Ocean, but declines similar to those documented off South Africa are likely to have occurred where this species is heavily fished. In the Eastern Pacific, the number of adult individuals observed at a well-known *S. lewini* aggregation site, Espiritu Santo seamount in the Gulf of California, has declined sharply since 1980. In 1981 the estimated size of a school was 525 individuals, but despite at least 20 attempts to recreate this study to document a similar school size between 1998 and 2004, rarely have more than eight individuals been observed at one time.

Subpopulations of <i>S. lewini</i>	Status (IUCN 2009)	Trends
Eastern Central and Southeast Pacific subpopulation	Endangered	Sharp decline since 1980 (Gulf of California)
Eastern Central Atlantic subpopulation	Vulnerable	No data
Northwest and Western Central Atlantic subpopulation	Endangered	Declining (98% in 32 years (North Carolina))
Southwest Atlantic subpopulation	Vulnerable	Declining (60-90% in 8 years (Brazil))
Western Indian Ocean subpopulation	Endangered	Declining (64% in 25 years SA)

FINS OF ALL THESE SPECIES ARE HIGHLY VALUED IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

The fins of hammerhead, dusky and sandbar sharks are all highly valued in the fin markets of East Asia, where they are used to make shark fin soup. The three hammerhead species in this proposal collectively form a significant proportion of the Hong Kong fin trade (approximately 5.9%) according to a survey carried out in 2006. The high value of the fins and low value of the meat have also led to widespread finning of *Sphyrna* spp. -- a wasteful and often illegal practice in which the fins are severed and the shark – often still living – is thrown back into the ocean.

FINS OF THESE SPECIES ARE SIMILAR IN APPEARANCE.

The fins of the five species in this proposal are similar in appearance, prevalent in trade, and difficult for non-experts, such as customs officials, to identify to the species level. These fins are large and triangular. They have a high needle (cartilage) count and are therefore considered more valuable than other fins in trade. For this reason, fin traders are often able to distinguish the fins of these five species from others not covered by this proposal, and customs officials can be trained to do the same. Genetic identification tools are also available. The 18-month grace period before the listing comes into effect should allow sufficient time for any difficulties to be resolved and for identification and enforcement systems to be implemented.

THESE SPECIES MEET THE CRITERIA FOR LISTING UNDER CITES APPENDIX II.

The recorded declines in *S. lewini* populations are evidence that current exploitation far exceeds a level that could be continued in perpetuity. Thus, this species meets the criteria in Resolution Conf. 9.24, Annex 2a, Criterion A, for listing in Appendix II because, “it is known, or can be inferred or projected, that the regulation of trade in the species is necessary to avoid it becoming eligible for inclusion in Appendix I in the near future.” The four other species in this proposal meet the criteria in Resolution Conf. 9.24, Annex 2b, Criterion A, for listing in Appendix II because, “the specimens of the species in the form in which they are traded resemble specimens of a species included in Appendix II under the provisions of Article II, paragraph 2(a), or in Appendix I, such that enforcement officers who encounter specimens of CITES-listed species, are unlikely to be able to distinguish between them.”

The FAO Ad Hoc Expert Panel assessing the shark proposals concluded that the available evidence supports the proposal to include *S. lewini* in CITES Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(a), along with, as look-alike species in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(b)., great hammerhead shark (*S. mokarran*) and smooth

hammerhead shark (*S. zygaena*), However, the Panel concluded that that there is insufficient “lookalike” evidence to support listing the sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*) and dusky shark (*C. obscurus*)

AN APPENDIX II LISTING HAS OTHER ADVANTAGES.

An Appendix II listing of these five species should promote regional cooperation in the conservation of the species, and will facilitate the gathering of trade data. The implementation of CITES control measures for the regulation and monitoring of international trade is consistent with the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks.

The scalloped hammerhead shark satisfies the biological and trade criteria for inclusion in CITES Appendix II and the great hammerhead shark, smooth hammerhead shark, sandbar shark and dusky shark qualify for listing as look-alike species, in accordance with Annex 2b, criterion A of Resolution conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14). Listing on Appendix II will help to ensure that international trade in scalloped hammerhead sharks is not detrimental to the survival of the species. SSN strongly urges Parties to support this proposal.

-Revised 13 January 2010

Photo credits: Wikimedia Creative Commons/Barry Peters; Commercial Shark Fishery Observer Program/FLMNH; Flickr Creative Commons/Conveyor belt sushi