



Shark & Ray Conservation Promoting CMS Progress

© GREG SKOMAL

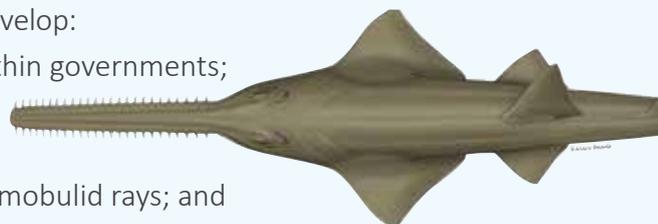
Overview

The Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) holds great potential to improve the outlook for threatened sharks and rays, yet concrete actions to protect listed species from overfishing have been lacking. The 12th Conference of the Parties (CoP12) brings important opportunities for revitalizing commitments to actively conserve sharks and rays, most urgently: the shortfin mako. Our organizations are eager to help facilitate fulfillment of CMS obligations for listed shark and ray species through prioritization, education, advocacy, and capacity building.

Background

Twenty-nine species of sharks and rays have been listed on the CMS Appendices since 1999. Overfishing, through targeted and incidental catches, is the primary threat to these inherently vulnerable animals. We remain concerned that resulting actions by Parties have been insufficient to rebuild depleted populations and ensure sustainability of fisheries. In particular, efforts are still needed to develop:

- Cooperation between fisheries and environmental agencies within governments;
- National and regional catch limits for exceptionally valuable and vulnerable shortfin mako sharks;
- Strict national protections for highly threatened sawfishes and mobulid rays; and
- Species-specific bilateral and regional conservation agreements.



Shark & Ray Species Listed on CMS Appendix I & II:

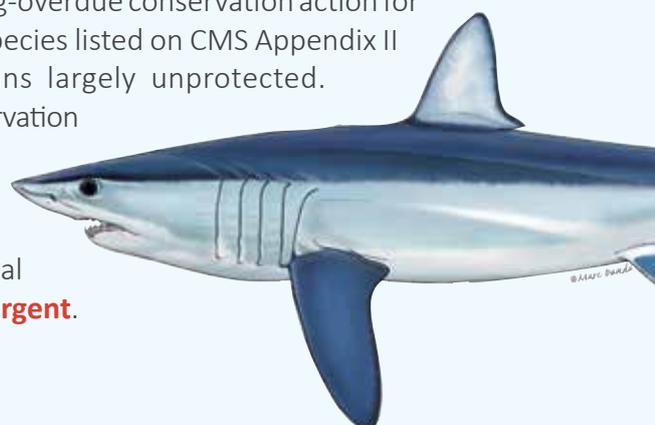
- White shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
- Basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*)
- All eleven manta & devil rays (*Mobula spp.*)
- All five sawfishes (Family *Pristidae*)

Shark & Ray Species Listed on CMS Appendix II:

- Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*)
- Both makos (*Isurus spp.*)
- Spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*)
- Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*)
- All three thresher sharks (*Alopias spp.*)
- Great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*)
- Scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*)
- Silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)

Spotlight on Makos

CMS CoP12 presents a rare opportunity to boost the chances of long-overdue conservation action for Atlantic populations of shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), a species listed on CMS Appendix II in 2008 that has since become more threatened, yet remains largely unprotected. Scientists affiliated with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) are recommending multiple measures to reduce mako mortality that will be considered by fishery managers at the annual ICCAT meeting in November. The need for CMS Parties that are also ICCAT members to take regional conservation action, in line with 2008 CMS commitments, is now **urgent**.



URGENT: Protect Atlantic Shortfin Makos from Overfishing

Shortfin makos are among the most vulnerable and valuable sharks taken in high seas fisheries. Unlimited landings by top mako fishing countries have taken their toll on Atlantic populations. As part of recent assessments, scientists in ICCAT's Shark Working Group have:

- documented depletion and serious, ongoing overfishing in the North Atlantic,
- warned that rebuilding this population by 2040 requires that catches be cut to zero, and
- advised that "the most effective immediate measure is a complete prohibition of retention."

A ban on shortfin mako retention could be effective in dramatically reducing mortality, as post-release survival can reach 70%. Scientists also recommend additional measures to minimize incidental mortality and improve data. The South Atlantic assessment was highly uncertain, warranting a particularly precautionary approach. ICCAT scientists have recommended catch limits aimed at reducing mako landings, while conservationists are calling for a prohibition, given the vulnerability of the species and lessons from the North.

The following CMS Parties are also Members of ICCAT

Albania	Egypt	Guinea	Morocco	Senegal
Algeria	Equatorial Guinea	Guinea-Bissau	Nigeria	South Africa
Angola	European Union	Honduras	Norway	Syrian Arab Republic
Brazil	France (St. Pierre & Miquelon)	Liberia	Panama	Tunisia
Capo Verde	Gabon	Libya	Philippines	UK (Overseas Territories)
Côte d'Ivoire	Ghana	Mauritania	Sao Tomé & Príncipe	Uruguay

Request for Immediate Action

Our organizations urge the above Parties to CMS and ICCAT to ensure that their fisheries officials propose and promote at the November 14-22 ICCAT meeting Atlantic fishing limits consistent with new ICCAT scientific advice and the 2008 CMS listing for shortfin mako sharks, specifically:

- an Atlantic-wide, complete prohibition on shortfin mako retention, and
- additional measures to minimize incidental mortality and improve data.

Measuring Overall CMS Progress for Sharks & Rays

Shark Advocates International, thanks to funding from the Global Partnership for Sharks and Rays, is conducting a review of the implementation of the CMS shark and ray listings for release in May 2018. We appreciate Parties' assistance in gathering information on resulting national and regional initiatives to conserve these species, as well as related challenges.

CONTACTS: Julia Lawson

jlawson@gmail.com

Sandrine Polti

sandrine.polti@gmail.com

Sonja Fordham

sonja@sharkadvocates.org

Our organizations are committed to helping CMS contribute to a brighter future for sharks and rays.

- Shark Advocates International is a project of The Ocean Foundation working to safeguard sharks and rays through sound, science-based conservation policy.
- Supporting work in more than 35 countries, Humane Society International is one of the only international organizations working to protect all animals.
- The Shark Trust is a UK charity working to advance the worldwide conservation of sharks through science, education, influence and action.
- Project AWARE Foundation is a growing movement of scuba divers protecting the ocean planet – one dive at a time.
- Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities.



sharkadvocates.org



hsi.org



sharktrust.org



projectaware.org



defenders.org