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OCEANA URGES CITES PROTECTION FOR TWO ENDANGERED SHARK SPECIES

EU scientists will discuss a proposal to list the porbeagle and spurdog sharks on CITES Appendix II, a move which would ensure the future of these species

In a new report, Oceana illustrates how existing biodiversity conventions like CITES can be used to protect endangered sharks

Oceana is expressing its support for a proposal by Germany to list two shark species, the porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*) and spurdog (*Squalus acanthias*), on the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This recommendation is one of many in a new report published by the international marine conservation organization entitled [*Keeping the Balance: How environmental conventions can be used to protect sharks and their habitats.*](#)

"While traditional fisheries management like catch limits and closed areas are sometimes used to regulate shark fisheries," points out Xavier Pastor, Executive Director for Oceana in Europe, "these are not widely applied to threatened species and habitats and many shark fisheries are still completely unmanaged. There are many shark and ray species that warrant protection by the relevant biodiversity conventions, and the measures outlined in the conventions must be transposed into national laws."

CITES is one convention that can have a definite and positive impact on shark conservation. This convention aims to regulate international trade of endangered species within sustainable levels, and the two sharks slated for protection would surely benefit from a listing on its annexes.

This Friday, the EU Scientific Review Group, a team of scientists from Member States' scientific authorities, will provide an opinion on the listing of these two endangered sharks on Appendix II. An Appendix II listing would limit trade to sustainable levels through the requirement of export permits, only authorized if the trade will not be detrimental to the survival of the species. While Oceana generally supports the listing of all endangered sharks (such as the spurdog and porbeagle) on CITES Appendix I, which would prohibit all international trade, the organization believes an Appendix II listing is a first and important step to protecting these species.

Numerous other conventions have been created under international and European environmental law, with the goal of conserving biodiversity and the environment. As shown in Oceana's new report, these agreements should be used to protect sharks by having them added to their annexes, which provide varying levels of protection offered and the management actions recommended. Sharks are vulnerable animals that have been severely depleted by overfishing and a high demand for their products, in particular for their meat and fins.

Nearly one-third of European sharks and rays are threatened with extinction, according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The biomass of the spurdog, a small coastal shark that is highly valued in Europe for its meat, has decreased over 95 percent in the Northeast Atlantic^[1]. As for the porbeagle, a highly migratory shark related to the great white, its Northwest Atlantic stock has declined over eighty percent^[2].

Oceana's report summarises the conventions relevant to sharks in Europe and makes recommendations for which species should be protected by each one. "*Only a small percentage of sharks and rays are offered protection by these conventions, even though some are being fished to the brink of extinction. Even for those species that have been added to certain annexes, often contracting parties have yet to provide the protection recommended or required by the conventions,*" commented Rebecca Greenberg, shark campaigner with Oceana in Europe.

The decision made by the EU Scientific Review Group in relation to the spurdog and porbeagle sharks will come into play later this month, when the EU CITES Management Committee meets to decide whether to support this proposal and take it to the larger CITES Conference of the Parties in Doha, early 2010.

Report: [Keeping the Balance: How environmental conventions can be used to protect sharks and their habitats](#)

Spurdog and porbeagle photographs available

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Oceana campaigns to protect and restore the world's oceans. Our teams of marine scientists, economists, lawyers and advocates win specific and concrete policy changes to reduce pollution and to prevent the irreversible collapse of fish populations, marine mammals and other sea life. Global in scope and dedicated to conservation, Oceana has campaigners based in North America, Europe and South and Central America. More than 300,000 members and e-activists in over 150 countries have already joined Oceana. For more information, please visit www.oceana.org.

^[1] Fordham, S., Fowler, S.L., Coelho, R., Goldman, K.J. & Francis, M. 2006. *Squalus acanthias*. In: IUCN 2009. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on 07 August 2009.

^[2] Stevens, J., Fowler, S.L., Soldo, A., McCord, M., Baum, J., Acuña, E., Domingo, A. & Francis, M. 2006. *Lamna nasus*. In: IUCN 2009. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2009.1. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Downloaded on 07 August 2009.