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OCEANA WELCOMES EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUPPORT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL BLUEFIN TUNA TRADE BAN AND REGULATIONS FOR SHARKS AND CORALS

The European Parliament urges the Commission and Member States to support a bluefin tuna trade ban

Today the European Parliament adopted a Resolution recommending a strong EU conservation position at the upcoming CITES Conference of the Parties (COP), to be held in Qatar in March. The Resolution calls on EU Member States and the Commission to support an international bluefin tuna trade ban, and strong commercial measures for endangered sharks and corals. Oceana, the international marine conservation organization, and MarViva have long stressed the need for these measures.

“Our oceans are in great trouble, with many marine species on the brink of extinction due to international trade. The EU Commission and Member States must now show leadership in global biodiversity protection by strongly supporting the CITES listing proposals for bluefin tuna, sharks and corals,” remarked Xavier Pastor, Executive Director for Oceana in Europe.

While the European Commission’s recommendations on the EU position at the next CITES COP are still awaited, the European Parliament is calling on the EU Commission and Member States to support several of the CITES proposals for amendments, including those for bluefin tuna, sharks and corals.



© OCEANA/ Keith Ellenbogen.
Atún rojo (*Thunnus thynnus*)



© OCEANA/ Juan Cuetos.
Coral rojo (*Corallium rubrum*)

The unregulated international trade of marine products is producing devastating effects on the ecological balance of the oceans and undermining the chances for other species’ survival. Listing commercial aquatic species on CITES can reverse these trends.

Bluefin tuna, an emblematic species, has clearly been driven toward extinction by overfishing and international trade. In the last few years, nearly all of the declared Mediterranean bluefin fishery production has been exported, with depletion closely related to international trade and market demand.

Sharks, whose position at the top of many oceanic food webs ensures the balance in the ecosystem, are increasingly exploited for their, meat, liver oil and especially fins, which are used in the Asian dish of shark fin soup. These products enter international trade in high quantities and have caused biological declines in porbeagles, spiny dogfish, scalloped hammerheads, oceanic whitetips, smooth hammerheads, dusky sharks and sandbar sharks.

Corals play a key role as the foundation of seafloor ecosystems and as a home to millions of marine species, but they are intensively exploited to supply international demand for jewellery and other products. As one example, overexploitation of *Corallium rubrum* in the Mediterranean Sea has caused a nearly 70 percent decline in the past few decades.

Pastor finished his remarks: *"High international demand for marine products is driving down populations of bluefin tuna, sharks and corals, and their by-products, which are increasingly traded on the global market. International trade of these vulnerable species, already dramatically threatened by over-fishing and climate change, must be strictly regulated by CITES to stop additional unsustainable pressures on their survival."*

Note to the Editor

- **See the Parliament Press Release**
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/064-68644-039-02-07-911-20100209IPR68643-08-02-2010-2010-false/default_es.htm
- The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (**CoP15**) will be held in Doha, Qatar, from 13 to 25 March 2010. <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/meetings/cop15/index.shtml>

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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.

MarViva is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that collaborates with local communities, private companies and various social sectors to protect coastal and marine resources. The organisation has offices in Costa Rica, Colombia, Panama and Spain. Marviva has coproduced The End of the Line. For more information, visit www.marviva.net