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OCEANA BITTERSWEET ABOUT CITES' FAILURE TO PROTECT SEVEN OUT OF EIGHT SHARK SPECIES

Porbeagle Only Shark Species Granted Protection Against International Trade at CITES

Oceana, the international ocean conservation organization, applauded the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species' (CITES) decision to protect porbeagle sharks threatened by the international trade of their meat during the 15th Conference of the Parties. However, Oceana called today a disaster for the seven other shark species (oceanic whitetip, dusky, sandbar, spiny dogfish and scalloped, smooth and great hammerheads) that were not included in Appendix II of CITES.

"Porbeagle sharks finally received the trade protections they so desperately needed," said Rebecca Greenberg, marine wildlife scientist at Oceana. *"Without trade restrictions, these shark species will be pushed towards extinction. The oceans, livelihoods and local economies depend on these species."*

Many shark populations have declined by up to 99 percent in recent decades. These shark species are threatened by the international consumer demand for shark products including fins, skins, meat and liver oil. The international shark fin trade is a multi-billion dollar business that is pushing many shark species to the brink of extinction. The fins, including those of hammerhead and oceanic whitetip sharks, are mainly sent to China for use in shark fin soup. Trade in shark meat, particularly to European markets, is also a major threat to spiny dogfish and porbeagle sharks.

Regarding the failed proposals, Greenberg said, *"It appears that science no longer matters. CITES is not fulfilling its obligation to protect species threatened by international trade. When will we realize that short-term profits will not last?"*

Today's decisions to reject the other proposals will allow the unregulated international trade of the fins and meat from several of the world's most vulnerable shark species to continue to decimate shark populations worldwide. According to Oceana, protection in CITES would have helped protect these populations.

Oceana is hopeful that some of these bad decisions on shark species could be reversed during the plenary session during the final two days.

© OCEANA/ LX. Hammerhead shark
in fresh market. Azores, Portugal

About Sharks and CITES:

From March 13 to 25, representatives from 175 countries are meeting in Doha, Qatar, for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species' (CITES) 15th Conference of the Parties. During these two weeks, countries will decide on the inclusion of eight shark species (oceanic whitetip, dusky, sandbar, spurdog, porbeagle and scalloped, smooth and great hammerheads) in CITES Appendix II. An Appendix II listing would require the use of export permits to ensure that the species were caught by a legal and sustainably managed fishery.

Last week, Oceana released a new report [*The International Trade of Shark Fins: Endangering Shark Populations Worldwide*](#) that describes the impact of the global shark fin trade on the world's oceans. According to the report, up to 10 million kg of shark fins (equivalent to the weight of more than 2,000 adult African Elephants) are exported annually to Hong Kong by nearly 87 countries.

Sharks can be found in almost every ocean and play a vital role in maintaining the health of the oceans. Many shark populations have declined to levels where they are unable to perform their roles as top predators in the ecosystem, causing drastic and possibly irreversible damage to the oceans. According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, more than half of the highly migratory shark species are now considered overexploited or depleted.

Recent data suggests that the North Atlantic population of oceanic whitetips declined by an estimated 70 percent in the 1990s and scalloped hammerheads by 83 percent in the Northwest Atlantic since the 1980s.

To learn more about marine species and CITES, and for downloadable images, please visit www.oceana.org/CITES.

Fact Sheet: Sharks and CITES

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Oceana campaigns to protect and restore the world's oceans. Our team of marine scientists, economists, lawyers and other collaborators are achieving specific changes in the legislation to reduce pollution and prevent the irreversible collapse of fish stocks, protect marine mammals and other forms of marine life. With an international perspective and dedicated to conservation, Oceana has offices in Europe, North America, South America and Central America. Over 300,000 collaborators and cyber activists in 150 countries have already joined Oceana. For more information, visit www.oceana.org