



OCEANA AND MARVIVA WORK TOGETHER TO RESTORE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS AND ELIMINATE ILLEGAL AND OVER-FISHING

PRESS RELEASE

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OCEANA DECLARES CITES A “TRAGEDY OF THE OCEANS”

Environmental Group Says Commercial Traders Like Japan Paid for Demise of Commercially Exploited Marine Species

Oceana, the world’s largest international ocean conservation organization, declared the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) a “tragedy of the oceans” today after it failed to protect all the marine species proposed for listing in Appendix I and II during the 15th Conference of the Parties over the past two weeks. Specifically, it failed to ban the international trade of Atlantic bluefin tuna and implement international trade regulations for eight shark species and 31 species of red and pink coral, all of which are essential to the oceans, livelihoods and local economies.

“It appears that money can buy you anything, just ask Japan,” said David Allison, senior campaign director at Oceana. *“Under the crushing weight of the vast sums of money gained by unmanaged trade and exploitation of endangered marine species by Japan, China, other major trading countries and the fishing industry, the very foundation of CITES is threatened with collapse.”*

Overfishing and the demand of international trade are driving these species of bluefin tuna, sharks and corals to the brink of extinction. Atlantic bluefin tuna, primarily exported to Japan for use in sushi and sashimi, is one of the oceans’ most valuable and vulnerable species. According to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the North Atlantic bluefin tuna spawning biomass has been decimated to less than 15 percent of its unfished biomass, with the sharpest decline occurring in the last decade. Oceana and MarViva were calling CITES the last chance for protection of Atlantic bluefin tuna.

“Now the very future of bluefin is uncertain,” said María José Cornax, marine scientist at Oceana. *“An international trade ban on bluefin tuna would be the strongest single action to end the global market greed for this species. CITES Parties pushed bluefin tuna towards collapse in a shameful process led once again by industry interest.”*

Many shark populations around the world have declined by up to 99 percent in recent decades. Oceanic whitetip, dusky, sandbar, spiny dogfish, porbeagle and scalloped, smooth and great hammerhead sharks are threatened by the international consumer demand for their fins, skins, meat and liver oil. The international shark fin trade alone is a multi-billion dollar business that is pushing many shark species to the brink of extinction as the demand for shark fin soup in Asia continues to rise.

“This meeting was a flop,” said Rebecca Greenberg, marine scientist at Oceana. *“I question if CITES has the political will to protect economically valuable marine species like sharks. Scientific support for listing these shark species just couldn’t compete with dirty politics.”*

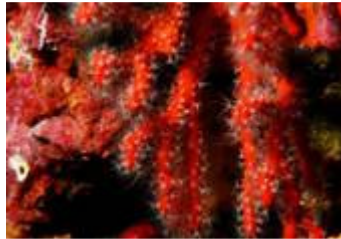
According to Oceana, one of the only successes of CITES, the inclusion of porbeagle sharks in Appendix II, was reconsidered and defeated at the plenary session. Porbeagle sharks, close

relation to the infamous great white, are under threat by the international demand for their meat, which is primarily imported into Europe. Inclusion in Appendix II would have ensured that international trade was kept to sustainable levels.

Red and pink coral, which were proposed for trade protections in CITES for the second time in a row, also failed to get the final two-thirds vote necessary to require trade management under Appendix II due to growing international demand for jewelry and souvenirs. In the last 50 years, the catch of red and pink coral has dropped by more than 80 percent due to population declines following heavy exploitation.



© OCEANA/ LX. Porbleagle
(*Lamna nasus*)



© OCEANA/ Juan Cuetos.
Red coral (*Corallium rubrum*)



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Ellenbogen. Bluefin tuna
(*Thunnus thynnus*)

To learn more about Bluefin Tuna, Sharks and Corals at CITES, and for downloadable images, please visit www.oceana.org/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

MarViva Foundation is an international non-profit, non-governmental organisation that works towards the conservation and sustainable management of coastal and marine resources. MarViva collaborates with local communities, private companies and various social sectors. 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 and <http://www.areasmarinaprotegidas.com/>.