

FAO/CITES Workshop on the effects of a regulation of international trade on the status, fisheries and trade of elasmobranchs in comparison with other regulations”.

Genazzano (Rome), Italy, 19-23 July 2010

Summary description

Concerns about the status of sharks and their continuous and unregulated exploitation has led to a number of international initiatives to improve shark conservation, among them the FAO IPOA Sharks as well as the regulation of international trade through CITES of a number of elasmobranchs currently listed on CITES Appendices (*Cetorhinus maximus*, *Carcharodon carcharias*, *Rhincodon typus* and *Pristis microdon*). Progress in the implementation of the IPOA has been slow and the status of a number of shark species remains a concern. Other shark species were proposed for listing on CITES Appendix II at the CITES CoP15 in March 2010 (*Sphyrna lewini*, *Carcharhinus longimanus*, *Lamna nasus* and *Squalus acanthias*). These proposals were unsuccessful but it is anticipated that such proposals will continue in the future.

While the poor status of many elasmobranchs is not under dispute and some countries hold the view that regulation of trade through CITES is necessary to ensure their sustainable use, other countries have expressed doubts that regulation of international trade through CITES is a suitable instrument to manage and conserve commercially exploited aquatic species including elasmobranchs. This workshop will: review the available information on status and trends of shark species listed and being considered for listing on CITES Appendices; current efforts by RFMOs and coastal States to ensure their recovery, where necessary, and sustainable use taking also into consideration the status of implementation of the FAO IPOA Sharks; and the actual or potential contribution and impacts of a CITES listing for achievement of those goals.

The proposed workshop will gather expertise from different geographic areas and sectors including scientific assessment, fisheries, trade, monitoring and control, and politics. The workshop is expected to summarize the experiences with the current CITES listing of marine elasmobranchs and give an overview of other currently implemented and potential conservation measures for these and similar species by RFMOs and coastal States. The workshop is also intended to outline the weaknesses and strengths of the different instruments and regulations and discuss their effectiveness with regard to implementation and stock recovery, as well as their impact on fisheries and markets. Finally, the workshop should come up with specific recommendations for different scenarios designed to assist countries in their decision-making regarding the most appropriate measures for the conservation of elasmobranchs.