



### **Shark “ID” training in Seychelles and Mauritius**

*Mauritius, 26 November 2014* – Fishers, observers and inspectors have learned how to “ID” sharks and rays thanks to the SmartFish “Sharks and Rays Initiative”.

The initiative aims to: raise awareness about preserving the islands’ biodiversity; enable compliance with new international measures (e.g. CITES); and address global pressure on shark and ray conservation. International fora and instruments are increasingly highlighting the need to obtain information on species caught or affected by fisheries, either as target, bycatch or incidental catch.

This initiative is also a direct follow-up of a recommendation made by Southwestern Indian Ocean fisheries directors at a meeting in Réunion (June 2012). At that meeting, many countries, Mauritius in particular, asked FAO to produce a professional onboard guide to improve identification of pelagic sharks and rays in the region.

In response, SmartFish (under the FAO component – Fisheries management) designed a guide to improve reporting on catches and make Indian Ocean pelagic fisheries more sustainable.

### **The two components of the initiative**

The first component is a professional “On Board Guide for the Identification of Pelagic Sharks and Rays (Western Indian Ocean)” – a handy tool for a wide range of users from both the public and private sectors. The guide is intended to help fishery workers collecting catch data in the field to ID the sharks and rays they encounter.

The second component is to facilitate access to and use of this guide. In this regard, two workshops, led by a shark expert from Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, were held to train professionals on how to use the guide and what to look for when trying to ID pelagic sharks and rays.

The workshops took place in Mauritius (28–30 October 2014, in collaboration with the Albion Fisheries Research Centre) and in Seychelles (4–6 November 2014, in collaboration with the Seychelles Fishing Authority).

At the end of this course, participants were expected to be able to:

- use the identification keys to ID pelagic sharks and rays;
- collect samples and biological data on the species;
- be aware of CITES and IOTC measures.

A similar workshop is planned for Madagascar and the Comoros in 2015.

### **One participant's feedback**



*"The workshop was useful for me since I represented the local fishermen. I learned more about the shark's species to assist our association. I want to be able to be consistent and know what I work on to transmit the knowledge to the fisheries. A few years ago, following negotiations, they [shark fishers] got together to form an association that can work together and represent their concern. They are more represented on the NPOA sharks discussions and finally we supported a training of the artisanal shark's fishermen in Seychelles. Since they got together, they have been working well."* Lindy Bastienne, national coordinator of Mangroves for the Future Seychelles

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### **FAO and sharks**

FAO has long worked to improve shark management and conservation. The 1999 International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks stipulates that shark-fishing countries should produce national programmes for shark conservation and management. Today, 18 of the world's 26 main shark-fishing nations have a national plan of action (NPOA) on sharks and 5 more are developing theirs. Seychelles is reviewing its NPOA, and Mauritius is developing one.

***Participants learning how to ID species using the guide.***



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***Participants learning how to measure a shark.***



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## **Related links**

SFA

[www.sfa.sc](http://www.sfa.sc)

Albion Fisheries Research Centre

<http://fisheries.gov.mu/English/Pages/Albion-Fisheries-Research-Centre.aspx>

*Deep Sea Cartilaginous Fishes of the Indian Ocean Vol. 1 and 2*

*Identification Guide to the Deep-Sea Cartilaginous Fishes of the Indian Ocean*  
(FAO Fish Finder)

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/019/i3477e/i3477e.pdf>

<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/956b9ba7-4c93-4722-a928-28b283febd96/>

<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/42d8a473-21d8-48cd-83d7-9b7be0b1797f/>

*Shark and Ray Identification in Indian Ocean Pelagic Fisheries - IOTC*

<http://www.iotc.org/science/species-identification-cards>

*Field guide to the identification of Mobulid Rays (Indo West Pacific)*

<http://www.mantatrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Field-Guide-to-the-Identification-of-Mobulid-Rays-Indo-West-Pacific.pdf>

Tree of Life Project

<http://sharksrays.org/>

*Guide des requins, des raies et des chimères des pêches françaises*

[http://agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/100421-guideraies\\_requins.pdf](http://agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/100421-guideraies_requins.pdf)

*Identifying Shark Fins* - PEW Foundation

<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2012/02/16/identifying-shark-fins-oceanic-whitetip-porbeagle-and-hammerheads>

*Good Practices to reduce the mortality of sharks and rays caught incidentally by the tropical tuna purse seiners - (Orthongel/OCUP Programme)*

[http://ebfmtuna-2012.sciencesconf.org/conference/ebfmtuna-2012/pages/D6.2\\_Practices\\_to\\_reduce\\_shark\\_mortality\\_purse\\_seiners.pdf](http://ebfmtuna-2012.sciencesconf.org/conference/ebfmtuna-2012/pages/D6.2_Practices_to_reduce_shark_mortality_purse_seiners.pdf)

Mangroves for the Future

<https://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/countries/members/seychelles/>

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