



**TO ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS, COOPERATING NON-MEMBERS,
PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES AND OBSERVERS**

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**Nominations for the Intersessional Working Group to Progress the Development of a
Draft Comprehensive Shark CMM**

Dear All,

At WCPFC14 in Manila, Philippines last month, the Commission decided to form an intersessional working group (IWG) to develop a draft comprehensive conservation and management measure (CMM) for sharks for discussion at WCPFC15. It was also agreed that the IWG-Sharks will be chaired by Mr Shingo Ota of Japan and will initiate its work in February with the Chair codifying WCPFC's existing shark measures, taking into account comprehensiveness, and distributing a draft to IWG-Shark participants.

The first step in forming the IWG-Shark is for the Secretariat to invite interested parties to nominate representatives to participate in the activities of the group. As specified in the attached terms of reference, participation in the IWG-Sharks will be open to all CCMs as well as to representatives of WCPFC-accredited observer organizations. It should be noted that the IWG-Sharks will primarily work in a virtual manner.

Parties interested in participating in the IWG-Sharks are invited to notify my office (arlene.takesy@wcpfc.int) of the name, affiliation and contact details of their nominated representative(s) no later than **Wednesday 31 January 2018**. The Secretariat will compile this information and transmit it to the IWG-Sharks Chair for use in distribution of further information about the activities of the group.

I look forward to the formulation of the IWG-Sharks and to the development of a comprehensive shark CMM, and I encourage CCMs and observer organizations to consider participating in this work.

Yours sincerely,

Feleti Penitala Teo, **OBE**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Attachment: Terms of Reference for the IWG-Sharks

Terms of Reference for an Intersessional Working Group to Progress the Development of a Draft Comprehensive Shark and Ray CMM (IWG-Sharks)

1. Participation in the IWG-Sharks will be open to all CCMs as well as to representatives of WCPFC-accredited observer organizations.
2. In line with previous WCPFC guidance, the term 'shark' here and below refers to all shark and ray taxa.
3. The goal of the virtual intersessional work is to develop a draft comprehensive shark CMM, taking into account comments from the Scientific Committee and the Technical and Compliance Committee, for discussion and potential adoption at WCPFC15.
4. The new CMM should seek to i) codify the WCPFC's existing shark CMMs; ii) take account of relevant national and international policies and measures; iii) provide a framework for adopting new components as needs and datasets evolve; and iv) address issues of enforceability.
5. Elements that could be considered for the new CMM include:
 - a. Policies on full utilization/prohibition on finning;
 - b. No retention policies;
 - c. Safe release and handling practices;
 - d. Gear mitigation, size limits or closures;
 - e. Management plans/catch limits;
 - f. Key species and their assessment schedules;
 - g. Species-specific limit reference points; and
 - h. Any data reporting requirements beyond those contained in "Scientific Data to be Provided to the Commission."
6. Scientific issues to be considered may include¹:
 - a. Ensuring there is a mechanism to generate the data necessary for scientific review of a fin to carcass ratio, if such a ratio is to be used as a tool for promoting full utilization;
 - b. Articulating policy goals or targets for shark mitigation to enable a scientific evaluation to determine whether adopted measures are sufficiently effective;
 - c. Providing guidance on the required content of shark management plans and evaluative criteria for their scientific review;
 - d. Supporting the development of shark management tools such as limit reference points and/or ecosystem-based fisheries management principles;
 - e. Remedying data gaps limiting shark assessment by strengthening logbook reporting and observer coverage requirements, and supporting the development of new analytical solutions.

¹ Compiled from the SC13 Summary Report, Attachment G and previous discussions of shark-related issues by the WCPFC Scientific Committee.

7. Technical and compliance issues to be considered may include²:
 - a. Explicit and easily understood standards for implementing full utilization, either in the form of prescribing certain handling practices, or requiring additional specific and potentially higher standards of inspection readiness and compliance reporting for those CCMs whose handling practices are more difficult to verify.
 - b. Mechanisms that would improve the coverage and availability of data and data fields that support analysis of effectiveness and verification of shark no-retention policies (e.g. improvements in monitoring programmes, such as data fields, electronic systems and coverage rates, as well as species identification tools and training for both observers and industry).
 - c. A requirement to adopt guidelines for safe release for all types of protected and/or unwanted sharks within an appropriate timeframe, based on the best available science and safe release experience of CCMs' national programmes, as well as crew safety concerns, noting that the guidelines will necessarily evolve over time.
 - d. Specification of whether the choice to ban either wire leaders or shark lines (under CMM 2014-05) should be at the vessel or fleet level, and the mechanism for communicating that choice to the Commission, to allow for accurate analysis of mitigation effectiveness.
 - e. Consideration of whether additional gear or operational mitigation measures should be required or encouraged to reduce catch rates for protected or unwanted sharks taking into account operational concerns and impacts on other taxa.
 - f. Clarification of which fisheries need to submit shark management plans, a list of the required contents, the required frequency of update, and a set of criteria to be used in evaluating the plans.
 - g. Consolidate reporting requirements of the current shark CMMs, if possible, by for example removing references to reporting in Annual Report Parts 1 and 2 and aligning shark data reporting with other existing data reporting requirements without reducing information content.
 - h. Take into account shark conservation and management schemes already implemented by CCMs for fisheries under their national jurisdiction.

8. The IWG-Shark's work should result in the development of a draft measure for consideration at SC14, followed by TCC14 consideration, with finalization of the draft for consideration and potential adoption at WCPFC15.

² Taken from the TCC13 recommendations contained at TCC13 Summary Report para. 316.