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**CITES Pacific Shark Workshop Report on Non-detriment Findings for  
CITES Appendix II Sharks and Rays**

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**Colin Simpfendorfer<sup>1</sup> and Cassandra Rigby<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Centre for Sustainable Tropical Fisheries and Aquaculture, James Cook University, Australia

# CITES Pacific Shark Workshop Report on Non-detriment Findings for CITES Appendix II Sharks and Rays

Colin Simpfendorfer and Cassandra Rigby  
Centre for Sustainable Tropical Fisheries and Aquaculture, James Cook University

## 1. Background and Aims of Workshop

Sharks are a significant by-product of Pacific fisheries, especially for tuna and billfish. Five shark and two manta ray species were listed on CITES Appendix II on 14 September 2014: Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharinus longimanus*), Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*), Scalloped Hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*), Great Hammerhead (*S. mokarran*), Smooth Hammerhead (*S. zygaena*), Giant Manta Ray (*Manta birostris*) and Reef Manta Ray (*M. alfredi*)

The CITES listing requires countries to develop Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) if exports are to occur. Two workshops have previously been held to assist CITES Parties in the Oceania region understand their obligations and requirements associated with the implementations of the listings. These workshops were held in Wollongong on 9-11 December, 2013 and in Nadi on 11-12 February, 2014. The outcomes of the second meeting in Nadi, 2014 led to the implementation of this Pacific CITES project. This project is funded by CITES through the EU-CITES capacity building project and led by James Cook University.

This Pacific CITES project aims to build capacity for CITES Parties in Oceania to make NDFs. Pacific Island countries probably share stocks of these CITES shark species which needs to be considered in NDF development, with a regional NDF framework approach sensible.

This workshop aimed to:

- Agree on the format of regional NDF template for use by CITES Parties in Oceania to develop national NDFs.
- Develop a regionally coordinated approach to sustainable management of CITES listed shark species that occur across multiple countries (shared stocks)
- Discuss the framework for ongoing regional data collection and monitoring of CITES species
- Discuss a strategy to address monitoring, compliance, surveillance and traceability issues and needs, and development of enforcement capability.

To achieve these outcomes, the workshop was designed to be relatively informal to encourage participation by all delegates in round-table discussions. It was held in Nadi, Fiji as this was a central location for the six Pacific CITES member countries (Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). Each country was invited to nominate two persons to attend, ideally one each from the designated CITES Management Authority (MA) and CITES Scientific Authority (SA) that would be most closely involved with the development of NDFs within their country. Representatives attended from Fiji (2), Palau (1), Papua New Guinea (1), Samoa (2) and Solomon Islands (2). A delegate from each of the relevant Regional Management Agencies was also invited to attend, that is, Secretariat Pacific Community (SPC), Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP). In addition, NGOs active in shark conservation and CITES efforts in the Pacific were invited: the PEW Charitable Trusts (PEW), TRAFFIC, World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The Australian Department of Environment (DoE), along with a CITES representative, were also invited. A delegate from each of

FFA, PEW, SPREP and WWF attended. SPREP and PEW generously assisted by providing additional funding for the workshop.

The workshop focussed on the three species of hammerheads and two species of manta rays. A non-detriment finding is unlikely to be possible for Oceanic Whitetip Sharks due to the WCPFC retention ban. An NDF is not relevant to the tropical Pacific Island countries as the Porbeagle is a temperate species and reported from New Zealand, but rarely recorded in the more tropical waters of the Pacific Islands.

## **2. Summary of Workshop Outcomes**

The workshop was held in Nadi, Fiji on 11-13 April 2016 and developed a regional NDF template that could be used by individual Parties, provided a regional approach to shared stocks of CITES listed sharks, and discussed on-going regional data collection and monitoring, compliance, surveillance and traceability.

A range of key points, challenges, recommendations and resource needs were identified.

### **2.1 Key points**

- The hammerhead shark and manta ray stocks are shared among the Pacific countries. Countries recognised they will need to cooperate to understand sustainability of the stocks to produce individual country NDFs.
- There is a framework for regional cooperation to produce NDFs. The development of a regional NDF in the long-term would be useful because of the shared stocks and limited capacity, however in the short-term individual countries need to consider NDF production.
- Countries agreed on the format and content of a Regional NDF Template and that the pre-populated Template will be very beneficial in starting the shark NDF process in the Pacific.
- Countries likely to produce shark NDFs were PNG and Solomon Islands. Fiji and Samoa will consider the need to produce shark NDFs. Palau is unlikely to develop a shark NDF as it has a shark sanctuary. The production of an NDF does not necessarily mean exports will occur (i.e. NDF could be negative).
- The catch data collated by this CITES-funded project is a good start to the NDF process. A shark NDF can be done with limited data, however caution is needed with a focus on future data collection and synthesis of historic data.
- The Regional NDF Template directs the type of data that needs to be collected and should be the focus of ongoing regional data collection efforts for the shark NDFs.
- Capacity development in coastal fisheries data is likely to be of greater importance than pelagic fisheries data for most countries since the latter is well developed through WCPFC.
- Monitoring can be augmented by externally driven projects such as the Rapid Assessment Toolkit (WWF) and the Global FinPrint (Stonybrook University).
- To improve traceability, all CITES listed shark and ray species need to be reported to species level on the logsheets and observer forms for all types of fishing in the Pacific region.
- Fiji has a CITES Scientific Council that provides a good in-country model for implementing CITES procedures that ensures good communication between all agencies involved in the NDF process and provides an efficient whole of government response.
- The need for good communication among agencies, including the SA, MA, Customs, and WCPFC/SPC representatives is essential to ensure NDFs are completed when necessary and that enforcement occurs.

## **2.2 Challenges**

- In terms of a future regional NDF, if a conditional NDF is made with some form of limit on catches, countries may need to divide this in a fisheries management style allocation process.
- The CITES governance system in some countries make it complex to implement the NDF process, with improvements in communication required.
- For small Pacific nations with limited capacity to deal with CITES issues, the production of NDFs is limited, they require assistance on a range of tasks, including producing NDFs, data collection, monitoring and enforcement.

## **2.3 Recommendations**

- Regional pre-populated NDF Template Worksheets and summaries of published information be developed for Scalloped, Great and Smooth Hammerheads, and Giant and Reef Manta Rays.
- The CITES shark website provide detailed distribution maps of each of the CITES listed shark and ray species so that countries know whether they occur in their waters.
- The importance of agreement on the intent of the NDF process between in-country CITES Scientific Authority and Management Authority and other agencies is recognised.
- A continuous improvement approach should be applied to NDFs. The recommendations associated with the NDF can be used to drive improvements in data collection, assessment and management.
- The development of stock structure research in the Pacific would be of significant benefit to the regional NDF process.
- Efforts to improve the level of trade data reporting and access would be helpful, especially the use of species-specific product codes.
- Coastal fisheries catch of CITES listed shark species may be small and it may be beneficial to do a short study to determine the levels of coastal catch before deciding on the merits and form of longer term data collection.
- The National Plans of Action, SPREP Regional Marine Species Action Plan and Coral Triangle Initiative Regional Plan of Action provide good opportunities to include recommendations for work on sharks to inform shark NDFs. Standard language across the range of Action Plans would ensure consistency of purpose.

## **2.4 Resource needs**

- The most critical next step in moving the shark NDF process forward is one-on-one in-country assistance. It would be regionally beneficial if this assistance is one person or a small group of people, as this will provide a more regionally consistent set of NDFs that could eventually transform into a single regional NDF.
- There is the need for an entity to drive and coordinate the shark NDF process among the Pacific countries. Without this, progress is likely to be very slow due to capacity and resource restraints. One of the Pacific regional agencies may be the best placed to do this in the longer term
- Capacity building in identification of shark fins for customs, quarantine and fisheries officers would be beneficial to enforcement efforts.
- Capacity building with legislation will better enable countries link their fisheries legislation to CITES requirements.

- A number of organisations committed to providing countries with assistance in completing their NDFs, if required. These included SPREP, FFA, PEW and WWF.

For more information, please visit [CITES shark and rays](#) and contact:

Professor Colin Simpfendorfer  
Director  
Centre for Sustainable Tropical Fisheries and Aquaculture  
& College of Science and Engineering  
James Cook University  
E: [colin.simpfendorfer@jcu.edu.au](mailto:colin.simpfendorfer@jcu.edu.au)  
Ph: +61 7 4781 5287

Dr Cassandra Rigby  
Centre for Sustainable Tropical Fisheries and Aquaculture  
& College of Science and Engineering  
James Cook University  
E: [cassie.rigby@jcu.edu.au](mailto:cassie.rigby@jcu.edu.au)