

CGR4.MOT035

Global policy against shark finning

AWARE that shark finning (removal and retention of the fins and the discard at sea of the carcass) causes the death of millions of sharks each year, threatens many shark populations and potentially the very survival of species considered Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered, threatening not only traditional sustainable fisheries but also recreational fisheries of socio-economic importance;

RECALLING Rec 3.116 (*Shark Finning*) adopted by the 3rd Session of the World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004), urges States with fisheries that capture sharks, whether in directed fishing activities or as accidental by-catch in other fisheries, to require that sharks be landed only with their fins naturally attached to their bodies, or alternately, that the weight of the fins retained on board vessels must never exceed 5% of the weight of the carcasses (without heads or guts), and to take measures to ensure compliance with the 5% ratio through certification, monitoring by an observer, and other appropriate measures when the landing of fins separate from carcasses is allowed;

RECOGNIZING that in practice there is debate over the correct ratio that should be used between the weight of the fins and the carcass in order to effectively prevent finning, in addition to the fact that this system can be impractical, particularly when limited human resources exist that are charged with monitoring the landings of several hundred-ton capacity industrial vessels, and this hinders the collection of species-specific catch data;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that the most straightforward way to implement a finning ban is to require that sharks be landed with their fins naturally attached to their bodies, which can be done in a way that does not compromise storage, and which would avoid debates about the correct ratio between the weight of the fins and the carcass, save the inspectors' time when they verify compliance with the regulations, and provide optimal conditions for the collection of accurate catch data by species;

AWARE that during its 72nd Session, the United Nations General Assembly called on the Member States to take immediate and concerted actions to improve the implementation of and compliance with shark fisheries regulatory measures enacted by the regional fisheries management organizations and the different nations, in particular those measures that prohibit or restrict fisheries conducted solely for the purpose of harvesting shark fins, and if necessary, to consider the adoption of other measures, as appropriate, such as requiring that all sharks be landed with each fin naturally attached to the carcass (paragraph 12, Resolution A/62/L.24); and

ALSO AWARE that many states have strengthened or are in the process of developing the Plan of Actions-Sharks and strengthening legislation to prevent shark finning, and that new fisheries management measures often require pilot studies and a phase in period in order to be implemented effectively;

ALARMED because recent global information on the trade and landing of shark fins indicates that finning is widely practiced, and to a great extent without management or regulation, and that due to the biological characteristics of sharks, it also results in unsustainable levels of mortality and this requires immediate action;

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008:

1. CALLS on the States with fisheries that capture sharks, whether in directed fishery activities or as accidental by-catch in other fisheries, to require that at the point of first landing sharks be landed only if their respective fins are naturally attached to their bodies, **allowing though for partial fin detachment to permit efficient storage and species identification;**

2. CALLS on the States that are members of regional fisheries management organizations to take the necessary diplomatic actions to improve and effectively implement existing shark related measures including the prohibition, within the scope of the corresponding jurisdiction, of onboard transportation of fins separate from shark carcasses unless a certification is issued at the point of first landing that the fins were naturally attached to the bodies, and

3. RECOMMENDS that the States evaluate the effectiveness of their control and capacity systems to ensure compliance with the measures, drawing on the experience and resources of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the regional fisheries management organizations, other states, and the IUCN Shark Specialist Group.

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