

Proposal

Inclusion of the oceanic whitetip shark *Carcharhinus longimanus* in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(a) of the Convention and satisfying Criterion A in Annex 2a of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14): "it is known, or can be inferred or projected, that the regulation of trade in the species is necessary to avoid it becoming eligible for inclusion in Appendix I in the near future."

A delay in the entry into effect of the listing in Appendix II for 18 months is proposed to provide time to resolve technical and administrative issues.

Proponents

Brazil, Colombia and the USA.

The oceanic whitetip shark qualifies for inclusion in CITES Appendix II because it is a globally threatened, low-productivity species that is over-exploited for its fins through bycatch in global pelagic fisheries. CITES Appendix II listing will assist States, regional entities, and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in ensuring compliance with finning and other prohibitions affecting this species, while also providing the basis for science-based limits on exports that can complement other fishery management measures and be enforced by importing CITES member States.

IUCN Red List Status

Vulnerable globally; Critically Endangered in the NW and WC Atlantic¹.

Proposal Summary – Oceanic Whitetip Shark *Carcharhinus longimanus*

The oceanic whitetip shark is distributed worldwide, generally in far-of-shore epipelagic tropical and subtropical waters, up to ca. 30° latitude. It occurs in all the world's oceans, including the eastern Atlantic from Portugal to the Gulf of Guinea; the Indo-Pacific from the Red Sea and the coast of East Africa to Hawaii, Samoa, Tahiti and Tuamotu Islands; and the eastern Pacific from southern California to Peru.

The oceanic whitetip shark grows to 325–342 cm in length. It lives to a maximum age of 13 years and reaches sexual maturity as late as seven years of age. Females give

birth to an average of five to six pups every two years after a 9–12 month gestation. Estimates of the species' intrinsic rate of population increase (0.09–0.07 yr⁻¹) indicate a vulnerability to over-exploitation and associated long recovery time from population depletion, based on the low-productivity category (<0.14 yr⁻¹) established by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The oceanic whitetip shark was once extremely common throughout the world, but numbers have been declining, severely in some regions. Although there is a shortage of quantitative data with which to determine global trends in this widely distributed oceanic species, catch data indicate declines of 60–70% in the northwestern and central Atlantic Ocean between 1992 and 2000 and declines of 99% in the Gulf of Mexico over the last 40 years. Other analyses based on catch-per-unit effort (CPUE) and biomass point to as much as a 10-fold decline in the species' abundance in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. Although information is particularly lacking in the Indian Ocean, studies and observations from the Maldives and elsewhere provide evidence of significant population reductions.

Economic Importance

locally, the shortage of space on fishing vessels and relatively high value of the species

¹ The full IUCN Red List species assessment and supporting documentation for *Carcharhinus longimanus* and details of the IUCN Red List and Red List Criteria are available at: www.iucnredlist.org

