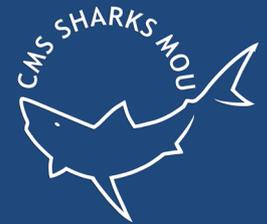


MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (Sharks MOU)



Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) © Commonwealth of Australia

A significant number of threatened shark species are migratory. Some of them travel large distances across and around ocean basins. Such species require conservation and management measures on a global scale across their entire range.

Migratory sharks are highly vulnerable to overexploitation as they grow slowly, mature late and produce very few offspring. As a result of the rapid and largely unregulated increase in target fisheries and

bycatch, many populations have been depleted with a high risk of extinction for some species.

The global Sharks MOU aims to achieve and maintain a favourable conservation status for migratory sharks based on the best available scientific information and taking into account the socio-economic value of these species for the people in various countries.

SPECIES COVERED UNDER THE SHARKS MOU:

- » Great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
- » Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*)
- » Basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*)
- » Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*)
- » Spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*)
- » Longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*)
- » Shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)



Basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) © Dan Burton / Robert Harding

Geographical coverage: marine habitats worldwide

Effective since March 2010

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN:

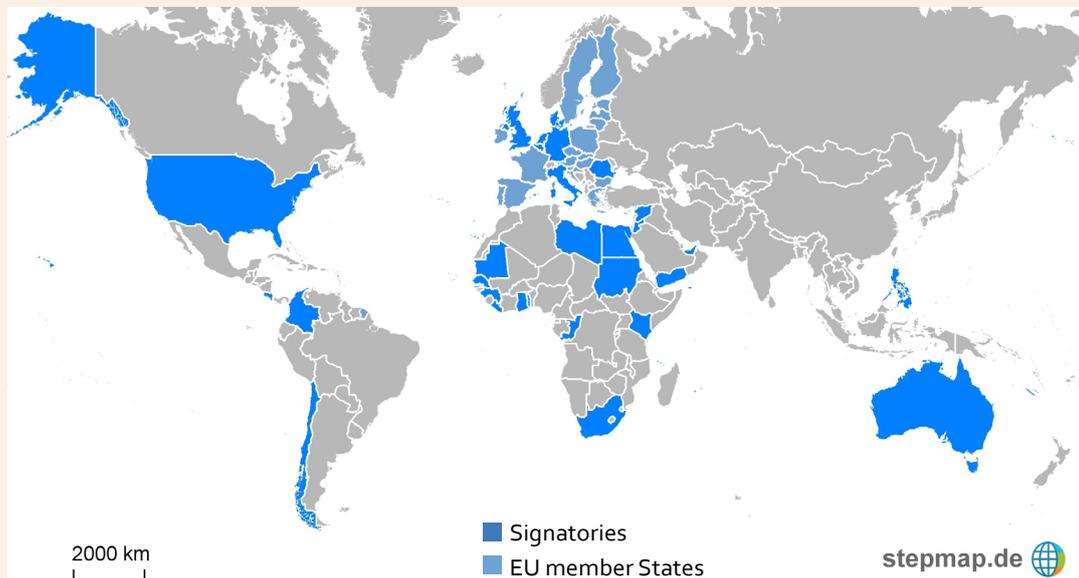
- » Improve scientific knowledge
- » Ensure fisheries are sustainable
- » Protect critical habitats, migration corridors and critical life stages of sharks
- » Increase public awareness and participation in conservation
- » Enhance national, regional and international cooperation



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

SIGNATORIES TO THE SHARKS MOU

As of February 2014, the MOU has 36 Signatories: 35 national governments and the European Union.



Signatories recognize the critical role that migratory sharks play in marine ecosystems and local economies, and are concerned about the significant mortality of sharks (...) from a range of impacts and threats.

Signatories are convinced that the vulnerability of migratory sharks to such threats warrants further development of conservation measures [...] and enhanced implementation and enforcement of existing conservation measures.

The MOU is open for signature by all **Range States** and regional economic integration organizations of the listed shark species. Range States are defined as any State that exercises jurisdiction over any part of the range of migratory sharks, or a State, flag vessels of which are engaged outside its national jurisdictional limits in taking migratory sharks.

Signatories have the opportunity to help shape the policy direction of the Memorandum and adapt it to the needs of their shark population. Since the CMS Sharks MOU was concluded as a non-legally binding agreement, a formal ratification process on the national level is not necessary.



Shark fins © Andrea Pauly, UNEP/CMS



© Andrea Pauly, UNEP/CMS

A Conservation Plan has been adopted by the Signatories whose implementation forms the basis of the ongoing work under the MOU. It requires the cooperation among governments, fishing industries, NGOs, local communities and scientists. An Advisory Committee has been established to provide expert advice and suggestions on new initiatives for the implementation of the plan.

A major challenge facing Signatories will be the unregulated shark fin trade and its implications for the sustainable management of shark fisheries in order to maintain people's livelihoods as well as healthy ecosystems.

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