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## STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION FOR SEABIRDS AND SHARKS, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAO GUIDELINES TO REDUCE MARINE TURTLE MORTALITY IN FISHING OPERATIONS

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### PURPOSE

To provide the Scientific Committee with the opportunity to update and comment on the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action for seabirds and sharks, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations, by each CPC.

### BACKGROUND

#### *NPOA-Sharks*

In 1999, member countries of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) developed the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA–Sharks; FAO 1999). The IPOA–Sharks suggests that members develop a National Plan of Action if their vessels conduct targeted fishing for sharks or if they regularly catch sharks in fisheries targeting other species.

The IPOA-Sharks (FAO 1999) has the objective, “to ensure the conservation and management of sharks and their long-term sustainable use” and prescribes the following aims:

- Ensure that shark catches from directed and non-directed fisheries are sustainable.
- Assess threats to shark populations, determine and protect critical habitats and implement harvesting strategies consistent with the principles of biological sustainability and rational long-term economic use.
- Identify and provide special attention, in particular to vulnerable or threatened shark stocks.
- Improve and develop frameworks for establishing and coordinating effective consultation involving all stakeholders in research, management and educational initiatives within and between States.
- Minimize unutilized incidental catches of sharks.
- Contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem structure and function.
- Minimize waste and discards from shark catches in accordance with article 7.2.2.(g) of the *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* (for example, requiring the retention of sharks from which fins are removed).
- Encourage full use of dead sharks.
- Facilitate improved species-specific catch and landings data and monitoring of shark catches.
- Facilitate the identification and reporting of species-specific biological and trade data.

The IPOA Sharks requires each member nation that take shark in their fisheries to prepare a shark assessment report (SAR) with the aim of identifying conservation, management and any other issues associated with the shark catch. If necessary, these issues can then be addressed in a NPOA-Sharks. The SAR is to be updated regularly to report the status of shark stocks as assessments are made and to identify gaps in knowledge. The NPOA-Sharks requires collection and ongoing synthesis of compatible data at the appropriate resolution, including *inter alia* commercial data and data leading to improved species identification and, eventually, abundance indices.

The shark data collected by IOTC CPCs for trans-boundary, highly migratory and high seas shark stocks should be done through international collaboration and data sharing systems and all shark data should be made available to relevant subregional and regional fisheries organisations, and the FAO (IPOA–Sharks 1999).

At the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the SC in 2012, the SC **NOTED** the following:

- the current status of development and implementation of Nation Plans of Action for sharks and **RECOMMENDED** that all CPCs without an NPOA-Sharks expedite the development and implementation of their NPOA-Sharks, and to report progress to the WPEB in 2013, recalling that NPOA-Sharks are a framework that should facilitate estimation of shark catches, and development and implementation of appropriate management measures, which should also enhance the collection of bycatch data and compliance with IOTC Resolutions.

***NPOA-Seabirds***

In 1998, member countries of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) developed the International Plan of Action for reducing incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries (IPOA–Seabirds; FAO 1998). The IPOA–Seabirds suggests that members develop should conduct an assessment of their longline fisheries to determine if a problem exists with respect to incidental catch of seabirds. If a problem exists, States should adopt a National Plan of Action for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries.

The original purpose of the FAO NPOA-Seabirds was to address concerns about longline fishing. However, recent information has shown significant concerns about seabird bycatch in several other capture fisheries, especially gillnet fishing. The 2009 FAO Best Practice Technical Guidelines (FAO 2009a), developed to assist in the preparation of NPOA-Seabirds, explicitly includes advice on longline, trawl and gillnet fisheries.

At the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the SC in 2012, the SC **NOTED** the following:

- that species such as cormorants and migratory shearwaters (which are common in coastal waters of many IOTC coastal states), are known to be especially vulnerable to bycatch in gillnet fisheries. CPCs operating gillnet fisheries were strongly **ENCOURAGED** to go through an NPOA-Seabirds assessment exercise. BirdLife International has previously offered assistance to CPCs wishing to assess the impacts of gillnet fishing in their national fisheries.

***FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations***

At the 26<sup>th</sup> FAO–COFI Session in March 2005, the *Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations* (FAO 2009b), were adopted. Following adoption of ‘the guidelines’, it was recommended that they be implemented by all regional fisheries bodies and management organisations;

Subsequently, the IOTC adopted legally binding text within a Resolution, that all CPCs of the Commission implement ‘the guidelines’ (in Resolution 09/06 which was superseded by Resolution 12/04).

IOTC Resolution 12/04 *on the conservation of marine turtles* states:

- Para. 2. *Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (hereinafter referred to as “CPCs”) will implement, as appropriate, the FAO Guidelines.*
- Para. 5. *CPCs shall report to the Commission in the annual implementation report, in accordance with Article X of the IOTC Agreement, their progress of implementation of the FAO Guidelines and this Resolution.*
- Para. 16. *CPCs are encouraged to support developing countries in their implementation of the FAO Guidelines and this Resolution.*

**DISCUSSION**

The most recent updated table of progress in implementing NPOA-Sharks, NPOA-Seabirds and the FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations, is provided at [Appendix I](#).

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Scientific Committee **NOTE** and **CONSIDER** the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action for sharks and seabirds, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations, by each CPC.

**APPENDIX**

**Appendix I:** [2013: Status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action \(NPOA\) for sharks and seabirds and implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations.](#)

**LITERATURE CITED**

- FAO 1998. International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/ipoa-seabirds/en>
- FAO 1999. The international plan of action for the conservation and management of sharks. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/ipoa-sharks/en>
- FAO 2009a. FAO. Fishing operations. 2. Best practices to reduce incidental catch of seabirds in capture fisheries. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. No. 1, Suppl. 2. Rome, FAO. 2009. 49p. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1145e/i1145e00.pdf>

FAO 2009b. The guidelines to reduce sea turtle mortality in fishing operation. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0725e/i0725e00.htm>

## APPENDIX I

**2013: STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION (NPOA) FOR SHARKS AND SEABIRDS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAO GUIDELINES TO REDUCE MARINE TURTLE MORTALITY IN FISHING OPERATIONS**

CPC	Sharks	Date of Implementation	Seabirds	Date of implementation	Marine turtles	Date of implementation	Comments
<b>MEMBERS</b>							
Australia		14-Apr-2004		2006		2003	<p><b>Sharks:</b> 2<sup>nd</sup> NPOA-Sharks (Shark-plan 2) was released in July 2012, along with an operational strategy for implementation:  <a href="http://www.daff.gov.au/fisheries/environment/sharks/sharkplan2">http://www.daff.gov.au/fisheries/environment/sharks/sharkplan2</a></p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Has implemented a Threat Abatement Plan [TAP] for the Incidental Catch (or Bycatch) of Seabirds During Oceanic Longline Fishing Operations since 1998. The present TAP took effect from 2006 and largely fulfills the role of an NPOA in terms of longline fisheries. The 2006 TAP is currently under review. Also currently undertaking an assessment of seabird bycatch in trawl, gillnet and purse seine fisheries, and will develop an NPOA to bring together fisheries plans and actions to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds in longline, trawl and gillnet fisheries.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> Australia's current marine turtle bycatch management and mitigation measures fulfill Australia's obligations under the FAO-Sea turtles Guidelines.</p>
Belize							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
China –Taiwan,China		– May 2006		– May 2006			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Development has not begun.  <b>Seabirds:</b> Development has not begun.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Sharks:</b> No revision currently planned.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No revision currently planned.</p>
Comoros		–		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Development has not begun.  <b>Seabirds:</b> Development has not begun.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Eritrea							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
European Union		5 Feb 2009		16-Nov-2012			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Approved on 05-Feb-2009 and it is currently being implemented.  <b>Seabirds:</b> The EU adopted on Friday 16 November an Action Plan to address the problem of incidental catches of seabirds in fishing gears.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
France (territories)							<p><b>Sharks:</b> Approved on 05-Feb-2009 but not yet implemented.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Guinea							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
India							<p><b>Sharks:</b> Currently being drafted with the assistance of BOBP-IGO</p>

							<p><b>Seabirds:</b> India has determined that seabird interactions are not a problem for their fleets.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Indonesia</b>		–		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> NPOA guidelines developed and released for public comment among stakeholders in 2010 (funded by ACIAR Australia—DGCF). Training to occur in 2011, including data collection for sharks based on forms of statistical data to national standards (by DGCF (supported by ACIAR Australia). Implementation expected late 2011/early 2012.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Development has not begun.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Iran, Islamic Republic of</b>		–		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Have communicated to all fishing cooperatives the IOTC resolutions on sharks. Have in place a ban on the retention of live sharks.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> I.R. Iran determined that seabird interactions are not a problem for their fleet as they consist of gillnet vessels only.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Japan</b>		03-Dec-2009		03-Dec-2009			<p><b>Sharks:</b> NPOA–Shark assessment implementation report submitted to COFI in July 2012</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> NPOA–Seabird implementation report submitted to COFI in July 2012.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Kenya</b>			n.a.	–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Due to paucity of the most basic information on shark stocks in Kenyan waters, it was decided the NPOA-Sharks be developed in the planning year 2014/ 2015. This will enable the country to carry out some baseline surveys on the shark fishery in the 2013/ 2014 planning year.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Kenya does not have any flagged longline vessels on its registry. There is no evidence of any gear seabird interaction with the current fishing fleet. Kenya does not therefore consider developing NPOA seabirds as necessary for the time being.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Korea, Republic of</b>		–		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Approved on 18/08/2011 and is currently being implemented.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Early stages of development.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Madagascar</b>		–		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Development has not begun.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Development has not begun.</p> <p>Note: A fisheries monitoring system is in place in order to ensure compliance by vessels with the IOTC’s shark and seabird conservation and management measures.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Malaysia</b>		2006	n.a.	–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> A review of the NPOA-Shark (2006) is in the final stages, with stakeholder consultation due to be completed in September 2013. A revised NPOA-Sharks is expected to be published by the end of 2013.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Malaysia has carried out a review and determined that an NPOA-Seabirds is not necessary as no longline vessels flagged to Malaysia fish south of 20 degrees south.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Maldives, Republic of</b>		–	n.a.	–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> An earlier draft of the NOPA is available: Gaps/issues that arose following the total shark ban have been identified through support from the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) Project. Presently Maldives is seeking further support from BOBLME Project to finalize the plan and</p>

							<p>associated regulation and is expected to be published in Government Gazette in 2014.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Article 12 of IPOA states that if a ‘problem exists’ CPCs adopt an NPOA. IOTC Resolution 05/09 suggests CPCs to report on seabirds to the IOTC Scientific Committee if the issue is appropriate’. Maldives considers that seabirds are not an issue in Maldives fisheries, both in the pole-and-line fishery and in the longline fishery. The new longline fishing regulations has provision on mitigation measures on seabird bycatch. Maldives will be reporting on seabirds to the appropriate technical Working Party meetings of IOTC.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> Longline regulation has provisions to reduce marine turtle bycatch. The regulation urges longline vessels to have dehookers for removal of hook and a line cutter on board, to release the caught marine turtles as prescribed in Resolution 12/04.</p>
<b>Mauritius</b>							<p><b>Sharks:</b> Mauritius does not issue national or foreign fishing licence to vessels targeting sharks in its Exclusive Economic Zone. However, sharks are usually landed as bycatch. Mauritius will work in consultation with the IOTC Secretariat to prepare a simplified NPOA-sharks for Mauritius.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Mauritius does not have national vessels operating beyond 25°S. However, fishing companies have been requested to implement all mitigation measures as provided in the IOTC Resolutions.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> Mauritius does not have national boats operating outside its EEZ. Moreover, marine turtles are protected by the national law. Fishing companies have been requested to carry line cutters and de-hookers in order to facilitate the appropriate handling and prompt release of marine turtles caught or entangled.</p>
<b>Mozambique</b>		–		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> drafting of new legislation is in progress which is considers the issues of shark conservation in the requirements to consider during the licensing process.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Mozambique is regularly briefing the Masters of their fishing vessels on the mandatory requirement to report any seabird interaction with longliner fleet. Recently, it was agreed at the national level to introduce in the national legislation all the requirements regarding seabird conservation and management measures in the terms and conditions for licensing.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> Marine turtle interactions with fisheries in Mozambique have been reported in the Sofala Bank trawlers since the onset of the fishery and there are efforts to update the information on marine turtle interactions with fisheries via specific studies.</p>
<b>Oman, Sultinate of</b>							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Pakistan</b>							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>Philippines</b>		Sept. 2009		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Under periodic review. Shark catches for 2010 provided to the Secretariat.</p> <p><b>Seabirds:</b> Development has not begun. No seabird interactions recorded.</p> <p><b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>

Seychelles, Republic of		Apr-2007		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> NPOA-sharks to be reviewed in 2012.  <b>Seabirds:</b> Development has not begun.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Sierra Leone							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Sri Lanka							<p><b>Sharks:</b> An NPOA-sharks is currently being finalized and is expected to be completed prior to the SC meeting in 2013.  <b>Seabirds:</b> Sri Lanka has determined that seabird interactions are not a problem for their fleets.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Sudan							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Tanzania, United Republic of		–		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Initial discussions have commenced.  <b>Seabirds:</b> Initial discussions have commenced.  Note: Terms and conditions related to protected sharks and seabirds contained within fishing licenses.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Thailand		23-Nov-2005		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> Second NPOA-sharks currently being drafted.  <b>Seabirds:</b> Development has not begun.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
United Kingdom	n.a.	–	n.a.	–			<p>British Indian Ocean Territory (Chagos Archipelago) waters are a Marine Protected Area closed to fishing except recreational fishing in the 3nm territorial waters around Diego Garcia. Separate NPOAs have not been developed within this context.  <b>Sharks/Seabirds:</b> For sharks, UK is the 24<sup>th</sup> signatory to the Convention on Migratory Species ‘Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks’ which extends the agreement to UK Overseas Territories including British Indian Ocean Territories; Section 7 (10) (e) of the <i>Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance</i> refers to recreational fishing and requires sharks to be released alive. No seabirds are caught in the recreational fishery.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> Marine turtles are captured in the recreational fishery. A monitoring programme is taking place to assess the marine turtle population in UK (OT).</p>
Vanuatu							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Yemen							<p><b>Sharks:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Seabirds:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.  <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
<b>COOPERATING NON-CONTRACTING PARTIES</b>							
Senegal		25-Sept-2006		–			<p><b>Sharks:</b> The Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission supported the development of a NPOA-sharks for Senegal in 2005. Other activities conducted include the organization of consultations with industry, the investigation of shark biology and social -economics of shark fisheries). The NPOA is currently being revised. Consideration is being made to the inclusion of minimum mesh size, minimum</p>

							shark size, and a ban on shark finning. <b>Seabirds:</b> The need for a NPOA-seabirds has not yet been assessed. <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.
<b>South Africa, Republic of</b>		–		2008			<b>Sharks:</b> The gazetting of the draft NPOA-sharks for public comment has been approved by the Minister of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (6 July 2012). <b>Seabirds:</b> Published in August 2008 and fully implemented. The NPOA-seabirds has been earmarked for review. <b>Marine turtles:</b> No information received by the Secretariat.

Colour key	
Completed	
Drafting being finalised	
Drafting commenced	
Not begun	