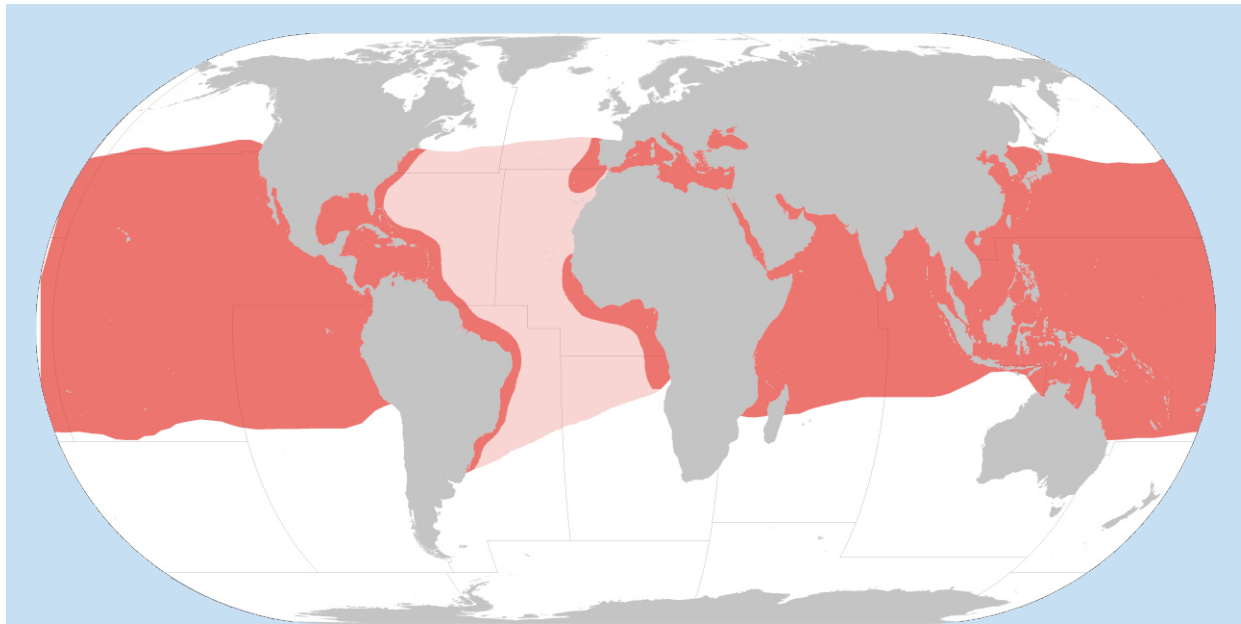




Silky shark *Carcharhinus falciformis*

Does Not Meet CITES Listing Criteria

Scientific assessment in accordance with CITES biological listing criteria



Silky shark distribution. Dark shading confirmed, light shading is not confirmed. There has been no change in distribution of silky shark.

Silky shark, *Carcharhinus falciformis* is an oceanic and coastal species with circumtropical distribution, found along continental shelves and slopes from the surface to 500 m of depth. Silky shark are often associated with seamounts, and juveniles with floating objects.

No global population estimates of silky shark are available, however the population is unlikely to be small. The Panel considered the productivity for the species as low, and examined a number of abundance indices available from different parts of the species range, many of which were of varying reliability.

In the Atlantic, the data series considered most reliable

estimated a population decline of 46 percent for the Northern Atlantic between 1992–2005. For the Indian Ocean, no reliable estimates of population decline are available and only anecdotal evidence of declines exist. In the Western and Central Pacific population declines were estimated at 33 percent between 1995 and 2009.

The most recent analysis for the Eastern Pacific, which contains data for 1994–2015 under the assumption of separate stocks in the northern and southern EPO, displayed a 37 percent decline in silky shark catch rates in floating objects sets for the northern EPO stock and 65 percent for the southern Eastern Pacific Ocean stock. The Panel noted that decline for the southern EPO stock is

77 percent, if the final two data points are excluded. This purse seine fishery data was the only reliable series that demonstrated a decline that matched the CITES criteria, but only for the southern EPO stock, when the final two years of data were not considered. Other studies that showed a decline that met the criterion involved comparing catch rates from different gears in different periods, and so were not considered reliable.

In conclusion, the Panel considers that a global CITES Appendix II listing would be inconsistent with the proportionate risk to the species as a whole, because most of the silky shark population does not meet the CITES Appendix II listing criteria.



Management

The FAO IPOA-Sharks underscores the responsibilities of fishing and coastal states for sustaining shark populations, ensuring full utilisation of retained shark species and improving shark data collection and monitoring.

At a regional level all Tuna RFMOs have adopted prohibitions on finning and encourage the release of live sharks where possible. Retention of silky sharks is also prohibited in ICCAT and WCPFC. Some tuna RFMOs

require that catches of sharks are recorded and reported annually at a species level, complemented by observer programmes and discard reporting.

There are also several national measures and some Countries implementing regional management measures (above) through, e.g., national plans of action and or finning controls, including requiring fins to be attached and prohibiting retention of silky sharks. Some states use a

combination of species specific protection, catch reporting and MPAs to monitor and protect sharks in their EEZs.

However, where there are prohibitions on retention of silky sharks, they are still caught and information suggests high mortality rates, that may be on the order of 80 percent in purse seine fisheries. Mortality rates in long line fisheries are lower, but still substantial.

Trade

Silky sharks are largely caught during target fishing for tunas in both purse seine and longline fisheries. Retention, where permitted,

is for local consumption and international trade. Silky shark fins and meat are commonly traded however fins are only considered of

moderate value ("Wu Yang" category of fins shown to contain several other species).

LIKELY EFFECTIVENESS FOR CONSERVATION

A CITES Appendix II listing, if implemented effectively, could also act as a complementary measure for regulations implemented by fisheries management authorities; in particular, where RFMOs have adopted measures prohibiting retention of silky sharks.

It is difficult to draw clear conclusions regarding the effectiveness of existing and potential future management and trade measures. However, if properly implemented, a CITES Appendix II listing would be expected to result in better monitoring and reporting of

catches entering international trade, that could enable enhanced assessments of stock status. Harvests from international waters would fall under the 'Introduction From the Sea' (IFS) provisions of the CITES Convention. These would require documentation to the species level for specimens entering the jurisdiction of a State from international waters, along with a non-detriment finding (NDF) indicating that the harvest was sustainable and consistent with relevant measures under international law.

It should be noted that States' abilities to make NDFs for highly migratory species is limited in the absence of region-wide assessments as evidenced by difficulties encountered in making NDFs for shark species that have already been listed. Under these conditions the following outcomes can occur: previous trade ceases, trade continues without proper CITES documentation (i.e. illegal trade) and/or trade continues with inadequate CITES NDFs.