

Silky Shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)

Proposal to list silky shark on CITES Appendix II – supported by WWF

Full proposal for CITES CoP17:

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/prop/060216/E-CoP17-Prop-42.pdf>

IUCN/TRAFFIC Analysis: <http://citesanalyses.iucn.org>

Initially Proposed by the Maldives

Co-sponsors: Bahamas, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, the Comoros, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, EU, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Palau, Panama, Samoa, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Ukraine

Species Overview: Silky sharks are (or were) one of the three most common oceanic sharks, found worldwide in tropical seas, particularly in depths of less than 200m on continental shelf edges, deepwater reefs and seamounts, and in the open ocean. They are a migratory species and grow to 330 cm in length.

Reproductive Biology: Females become sexually mature at >12 years old, and can live to 36 years. Litters average 6 pups (number of pups increases with maternal size) after a 9 to 12 month gestation, with one resting year (or possibly more) between litters. Generation time is between 11-14 years

Threats and Impacts: Mostly taken in huge numbers as targeted and secondary catch by oceanic longline and purse seine fisheries, but also artisanal fisheries. In the early 2000s, the species comprised around 3.5% of the international shark fin trade – by 2013, the proportion of silky shark fins in the market had increased to levels as high as 7.47%.

Due to its life history characteristics, slow growth, late maturity, and production of few young, silky shark is vulnerable to overexploitation by fishing and has experienced significant and ongoing population declines throughout its range. Worldwide, silky sharks have declined by over 70% in almost every area they are found and for which data, and stock assessments are available.

IUCN Red List Status: Near Threatened globally (but this assessment was prepared in 2007, is out of date, and due for revision). Regional Red List Assessments are: Vulnerable in the eastern central and southeast Pacific; Vulnerable in the northwest Atlantic and western central Atlantic; Near Threatened in the southwest Atlantic; Near Threatened in the Indian Ocean and western central Pacific and Data Deficient in Europe and the Mediterranean (where the species is only rarely recorded).

CITES Qualifying Criterion: The species qualifies for inclusion in Appendix II under Annex 2a, Criterion A (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) because marked population declines meet CITES' guidelines for the application of decline to commercially exploited aquatic species. The proposal describes declines in silky shark populations of between 70% and 90% in all regions, arising from over-exploitation in fisheries that are driven by international trade demand. Based upon current rates of exploitation, this species is likely to become threatened with extinction and soon qualify for Appendix I unless international trade regulation provides an incentive to introduce or improve monitoring and management measures.