



## **Regional Technical Workshop**

### **Sharks and Rays of the West Indian Ocean region of the Nairobi Convention Member States:**

#### **Status Review and Development of a Roadmap for Conservation and Management**

#### **Summary Report to Nairobi Convention National Focal Points Meeting**

12 April 2017

#### **Introduction**

The Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) Biodiversity Program, in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention (NC), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and TRAFFIC, hosted, during 5-7 April 2017, a technical workshop to review and validate a regional status report of sharks and rays in the Nairobi Convention region of the Western Indian Ocean and develop a roadmap for advancing shark and ray conservation and management in the region. The 28 participants in the workshop included national experts (government and non-government) from all Nairobi Convention member countries, as well as representatives of the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the host institutions. Participants presented on various aspects of shark and ray conservation and management in their countries; discussed major issues and gaps in knowledge, governance, capacities; and prioritized actions for closing these gaps in the form of a regional roadmap for shark and ray conservation and management.

#### **Major Findings and Conclusions**

- ❖ The Southwest Indian Ocean is a global hotspot for shark and ray biodiversity, including for threatened endemic species.
- ❖ Shark and ray biodiversity and population status in the Nairobi Convention region are generally poorly known – over 200 species are known, and new species, particularly from deep waters, are being described; fewer than 30 species (< 16%) of the 187 species assessed for the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* are classified as Least Concern.
- ❖ Consensus shark and ray species lists do not exist for most countries of the region. The draft national and regional species lists included in the draft Regional Status Report require further review through taxonomists expert in the region.
- ❖ Increasing knowledge of the transboundary nature of shark and ray populations underscores the need for regional collaboration in conservation and management, including identification and protection of critical habitats for shared stocks
- ❖ Shark and ray fisheries at all scales are extensive throughout the region and, in some instances, expanding into deep waters, yet data on these fisheries are dispersed and in many instances insufficient for adaptive management.
- ❖ There is a paucity of useful information on shark and ray trade involving countries in the region and a need for a far better understanding of trade and trade dynamics at national and regional scales.



- ❖ Conservation and management measures for species and fisheries management are few – at regional level and for most countries.
- ❖ Major advances made in several countries offer examples for others in the region, e.g.
  - Seychelles has adopted a second National Plan of Action (NPOA) under the FAO International Plan for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks)
  - South Africa has, in addition to an NPOA, adopted a national Shark Biodiversity Management Plan;
  - Mauritius has adopted an NPOA.
- ❖ There is a great deal of variability between countries of the Nairobi Convention region in the nature of shark and ray fisheries, governance, and capacities; however, there are also commonalities, particularly regarding insufficiencies of knowledge, financial and technical resources, and management gaps.
- ❖ International mandates for shark and ray management are increasing in the region through CITES, CMS, and IOTC, thus necessitating that governments act to fulfill these commitments.
- ❖ Implementation of the FAO IPOA-Sharks should be expanded throughout the region.
- ❖ Increasing interest and investments in shark and ray conservation in the Nairobi Convention region and expanding regional collaboration offer potential for major advances in the conservation and management of these fishes.
- ❖ A Regional Roadmap for conservation and management of sharks and rays in the Nairobi Convention region should be finalized for submission to the next Conference of the Parties of the Nairobi Convention.

### **Next Steps**

- ❖ Regional Technical Workshop Report and Revised Roadmap to be completed by end April 2017;
- ❖ Technical comments on Regional Status Report to be received by end April 2017;
- ❖ Regional Status Report, Draft Regional Roadmap, and Recommendations for Shark and Ray Listings under the Nairobi Convention Protocol to be circulated for review to Nairobi Convention focal points May 2017 for national review;
- ❖ Revised Final Draft Regional Status Report, Final Draft Regional Roadmap, and Recommendations for Shark and Ray Listings on the Nairobi Convention Protocol circulated to Nairobi Convention Focal Points for review at pre-CoP9 Focal Points meeting, September 2017;
- ❖ IOC Biodiversity Program to provide seed funding to initiate regional data-mining on sharks and rays;
- ❖ CoP9 February 2018:
  - Launch of Regional Status Report
  - Adoption of Regional Roadmap
- ❖ Post CoP9, implementation of process agreed by Nairobi Convention to review and finalize list of sharks and rays to be listed under the Nairobi Convention Protocol for eventual adoption at CoP10.



## **DRAFT Regional Roadmap for Shark and Ray Conservation in the Nairobi Convention Region**

### **Introduction**

The Regional Technical Workshop on Sharks and Rays of the Western Indian Ocean region of the Nairobi Convention Member States produced a draft Regional Roadmap to guide the prioritization and sequencing of actions that could be undertaken through the Nairobi Convention and other auspices, such as the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks (CMS Sharks MOU), to advance conservation of sharks and rays in the Nairobi Convention region, a global hotspot of shark and ray biodiversity.

Participants were asked to undertake a gap analysis, comment on a proposed vision/goal and a set of objectives for the roadmap and to prioritize a list of actions, identifying the five most important at regional and national levels. The results of deliberations from three working groups were reviewed in plenary, and the workshop agreed on next steps to complete the roadmap, including to revise it into a logical framework to facilitate further consideration and eventual implementation.

The workshop results presented here include only a consolidation of the five sets of priorities and not the entire draft roadmap. These will be completed over the upcoming weeks for review by workshop participants and broader review by Nairobi Convention member governments and other stakeholders over the coming months.

### **DRAFT Goal/Vision**

*The effective conservation and management of sharks and rays in the Western Indian Ocean to ensure their optimal, long-term sustainable use and maintenance of ecological function for the benefit of coastal States in the region*

### **DRAFT Objectives:**

- *To improve knowledge of shark and ray species and fisheries, including the role of sharks and rays in the ecosystem, to inform conservation and management*
- *To ensure that targeted and non-target fisheries for sharks and rays are sustainable and properly managed*
- *To improve the conservation status of sharks and rays in the region through recovery of endangered species and restoration of depleted species so as to enhance their contributions to ecosystem integrity, community livelihoods, and national economies.*
- *To increase public awareness of threats to sharks and rays and their habitats and enhance public participation and conservation activities*



**PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR REGIONAL ROADMAP – CONSERVATION OF SHARKS AND RAYS IN THE NAIROBI CONVENTION REGION OF THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN**

**PRIORITY ACTIONS – NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS**

Expand field surveys and other research efforts to clarify the status of sharks and rays in the WIO, including on stock structure, population status and trends, connectivity, and other essential parameters to inform conservation and management efforts

Expand knowledge on critical habitats for sharks and rays throughout the WIO to inform marine spatial planning, Marine Protected Areas and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) designations, conservation, and fisheries management

Improve understanding of conservation status of sharks and rays at the regional level (e.g., regional IUCN Red List assessment)

Expand and improve monitoring programs across all target and non-target shark and ray fisheries to include species-specific reporting in line with best practices

Improve policies and legislation for shark and ray conservation and management, including for protection of endangered species and critical habitats, sustainable fisheries management, and implementation of international commitments, e.g., CITES, CMS, IOTC

Adopt “shark” finning bans with Fins Naturally Attached requirement (including under IOTC)

Establish measures to reduce fisheries (target and non-target) mortality of sharks and rays in line with the Precautionary Approach of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, including through expansion of no-take zones, e.g., for endangered species

Improve and harmonize bycatch mitigation measures, including through training and other support for effective implementation

Improve observer coverage on industrial fishing vessels that catch sharks and rays, whether as target or incidental catch, with an ultimate target of 100%

Improve Monitoring/Control/Surveillance (MCS) of all aspects of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and collaboration with INTERPOL

Support fisheries surveillance centers to track and monitor illegal trade in shark and ray products, e.g., fins

Increase commitments to shark and ray conservation at all levels (decision-makers, resource managers, sectorial actors, general public) through targeted outreach efforts that emphasize:

- Biodiversity (public fascination)
- Importance of sharks and rays to healthy and resilient ecosystems
- Socio-economic values, including cultural, extractive, and non-extractive
- True (verses perceived) dangers to humans



**PRIORITY ACTIONS – NATIONAL LEVEL**

Improve coordination between government agencies sharing authorities for sharks and rays and with non-government actors at all levels, e.g., through national Shark Working Groups, to advance conservation and management adapted to local contexts

Standardise methods for collection of data on shark and ray captures and trade, where feasible, with a particular emphasis on species-specific recording and reporting

Improve and expand monitoring and data collection for sharks and rays, including at species level, for artisanal fisheries, and for trade

Expand community-based management and conservation efforts for sharks and rays

Develop/enhance capacities for shark and ray conservation and management

**PRIORITY ACTIONS – REGIONAL LEVEL**

Increase the availability of financial and technical resources to enhance national capacities for shark and ray research, conservation, and management

Support dedicated regional capacity(ies) to provide ongoing technical support to shark and ray conservation and management, e.g.

- Technical advice (species identification, research methods, best-practice, e.g. bycatch mitigation)
- Capacity-building (mentoring, technical exchanges)
- Data Synthesis (e.g., transboundary movements and connectivity, critical habitats, species and species status)

Provide assistance and advice to national policy and legislative reform for sharks and rays, including to meet international commitments

Develop a regional project and training to expand and improve monitoring of artisanal shark and ray catches at national level

Promote appropriate protections and recovery planning for threatened shark and ray species, particularly for migratory species

Establish and Fund a Shark and Ray Task Force under the Nairobi Convention, e.g., to coordinate actions and promote technical and other exchanges for the conservation of sharks and rays in the WIO