

#### 4.112 An effective European Union Plan of Action for Sharks

NOTING that the European Commission is developing a European Union (EU) *Plan of Action for Sharks* pursuant to the FAO *International Plan of Action (IPOA) for the Conservation and Management of Sharks* for consideration by the European Council of Ministers in early 2009;

RECALLING that the IPOA recommends that shark plans should, *inter alia*, aim to:

- (a) ensure that shark catches from directed and nondirected fisheries are sustainable;
- (b) protect critical habitats and implement harvesting strategies consistent with the principles of biological sustainability and rational long-term economic use;
- (c) identify and provide special attention, in particular to vulnerable or threatened shark stocks;
- (d) minimize waste and discards from shark catches; and
- (e) contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem structure and function;

AWARE that Recommendation 3.116 *Shark finning* adopted by the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004), and several UN General Assembly and CITES Resolutions call on shark-fishing nations generally to implement the IPOA;

ALARMED that roughly one-third of European shark and ray populations assessed by IUCN have been classified as Threatened with extinction from over-fishing - the highest percentage of Threatened Elasmobranch species of any assessed region to date;

DEEPLY TROUBLED that Northeast Atlantic Angel Sharks *Squatina squatina* and the Common Skate *Dipturus batis* have been fished to extinction in parts of the North Sea and yet are still not subject to EU fishing limits;

CONCERNED that scientific advice for shark-fishing limits from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) has yet to be heeded in EU regulations, even for Critically Endangered populations of Spiny Dogfish *Squalus acanthias* and Porbeagle Sharks *Lamna nasus*;

RECOGNIZING that EU fishing for Threatened Shortfin Mako *Isurus oxyrinchus* and thresher sharks *Alopias* spp. is currently unregulated;

MINDFUL of the negative ecological and socio-economic effects that can result from shark over-exploitation;

TROUBLED that the EU finning ban allows shark fins and carcasses to be landed in separate ports and includes the highest fin-to-carcass ratio in the world, thereby seriously undermining the ban's effectiveness;

CONSIDERING that the European Commission's *Shark Plan Outline* is unclear as to protection of endangered species, establishment of new limits on shark catch, and means of strengthening the EU finning ban; and

RECOGNIZING that the EU includes major shark-fishing nations, strongly influences international shark policy, contributes significantly to global trade in shark parts, and supports vessels that fish all over the world;

#### **The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:**

1. URGES the European Commission to include the following measures in its final *Plan of Action for Sharks*:
  - (a) shark and ray catch limits based upon scientific advice from ICES and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs);
  - (b) precautionary fishing limits on targeted shark fisheries, for which advice is not available;

- (c) prohibitions on fishing, retention and landing of North East Atlantic Angel Sharks, Common Skate and other species classified by IUCN as Endangered or Critically Endangered; and
  - (d) an enforceable ban on shark finning in line with relevant IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations; and
2. CALLS ON Fisheries Ministers of all EU Member States to promptly endorse and ensure implementation of the above elements and of the final *European Union Plan of Action for Sharks*.

State and agency members of the United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.