

8.117 Conservation of the Critically Endangered scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) and its look-alike species the smooth hammerhead shark (*S. zygaena*) and the great hammerhead (*S. mokarran*)

WHEREAS *Sphyrna lewini* (scalloped hammerhead shark) was listed as Critically Endangered in The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ in 2019 due to a global population decline of 76.9–97.3%, with an >80% reduction over three generations (72.3 years), and the Living Planet Index reported a 67% decline in abundance since 1970, largely driven by an 18-fold increase in fishing pressure;

AWARE that the primary threat to *S. lewini* is the international demand for shark fins, from high seas longline and purse seine fisheries operating within coastal nations' Exclusive Economic Zones and international waters;

CONCERNED that current conservation and management measures for threatened sharks focus on remediation, such as retention bans, finning bans and release guidelines, rather than proactive measures to avoid, minimise or compensate for bycatch;

ACKNOWLEDGING the value of remediation measures in conservation efforts for *S. lewini*, and further noting that due to high seas at vessel mortality (AVM) and post-hooking mortality (PHM) bycatch avoidance remains the most effective conservation strategy;

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGING that well-implemented conservation and management measures can lead to localised population recovery, as seen in the Northwest Atlantic and Mexico, but that global populations continue to decline because of limited technical and financial resources in many nations; and

AWARE ALSO that listing *S. lewini* under Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) would prohibit commercial international trade of fins, support domestic prohibitions, and aid Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) in enforcing a ban on commercialisation of hammerhead products. Such measures would lay the groundwork for additional actions to ensure the species' survival and eventual population recovery;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. URGES all hammerhead shark range States, fishing States, other entities and relevant RFMOs to:

a. as a first step, implement *S. lewini* retention bans in fisheries within their jurisdiction, and prohibit retaining onboard, transshipping, landing, storing, selling or offering products from the species for sale (even under mislabeled definitions);

b. implement species-specific science-based seasonal and/or area-based closures, including no-take zones or fully protected marine areas, as appropriate, interaction limits, move-on provisions, fishing effort controls, gear restrictions and/or gear modifications in habitat areas identified as 'Important Shark and Ray Areas' or other areas otherwise identified as important by relevant national or other processes for *S. lewini* and other hammerhead shark species; and

c. adopt strong monitoring and enforcement controls to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and ensure that illegal fishing of hammerhead sharks does not occur;

2. ENCOURAGES relevant coastal States to promote the generation of science on stock assessments, identification of coastal rookeries, and high seas biological connectivity, for establishment of science conservation-based policy;

3. RECOMMENDS that CITES Parties, in line with national processes as appropriate, consider the transfer of the scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) and further hammerhead shark species as appropriate from Appendix II to Appendix I, in accordance with CITES Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17); and

4. RECOMMENDS that CITES Parties explore increased protection measures for scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) and its look-alike species, the smooth hammerhead shark (*S. zygaena*) and the great hammerhead shark (*S. mokarran*).