

## Conserving Sharks in the EU and Beyond

### Background:

The media briefing will give an overview and explanation of the Shark Alliance and their participation at the IUCN World Conservation Congress. Experts from the Shark Alliance Policy will provide a short briefing on the current state of sharks and shark conservation efforts, particularly with respect to Europe. Sharks and related rays are particularly vulnerable to overfishing because they generally grow slowly, mature late, and produce few young; Europe has the world's highest percentage of shark and ray species assessed by the IUCN as regionally *Threatened* with extinction (one third). Despite these grave statistics, most EU shark and ray fishing remains unregulated and scientific advice for catch limits is rarely heeded.

The Shark Alliance is backing two relevant motions at the IUCN Congress: one on ensuring an effective EU plan of action on sharks (CGR4 MOT033) and another on conserving migratory and oceanic sharks (CGR4 MOT034).

In addition, on Thursday morning, 9<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30, the Alliance will be holding a workshop in partnership with Pretoma and EBCD on "Building Common Ground for EU Sharks". The workshop will challenge a diverse array of panelists (from NGOs, government and industry) to reach consensus on EU management actions for sharks.

### Key Issues:

- **European Community Plan of Action (CPOA)** – The European Commission is expected to release its long-awaited CPOA in December. The response from EU Fisheries Ministers over the next six months will be key to its implementation and effectiveness;
- **Landmark Shark Conservation Action** - The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) holds its annual meeting in Morocco and will address new advice for sharks from its scientific committee. If ICCAT sets an international catch limit for sharks, it will be the first of its kind in the world;
- **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)** – In December, CMS Parties will gather in Rome for two meetings key for sharks. For the Conference of the Parties (CoP), the EU has proposed adding spiny dogfish and porbeagle sharks to the CMS Appendices in order to encourage countries to work together to conserve them. The second workshop to agree a landmark, global agreement aimed at conservation of migratory sharks will begin immediately after the CoP;
- **2009 EU Fishing Limits** – Also in December, European Fisheries Ministers will negotiate and decide 2009 fishing quotas for *Critically Endangered* spiny dogfish and porbeagle sharks, as well as a complex of skates and rays. New limits for *Critically Endangered* common skates, angel sharks and white skates may be established.

### When and Where:

- Wednesday October 8<sup>th</sup> at 14.30 – 15.00, the Media Room

### Spokespeople:

- Sonja Fordham: Policy Director, Shark Alliance & Deputy Chair, IUCN Shark Specialist Group
- Sarah Fowler: Chair, IUCN Shark Specialist Group

### Media Team:

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### About the Shark Alliance

The Shark Alliance is a coalition of 57 conservation, scientific and recreational organisations dedicated to restoring and conserving sharks.