
STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION FOR SEABIRDS AND SHARKS, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAO GUIDELINES TO REDUCE MARINE TURTLE MORTALITY IN FISHING OPERATIONS

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PURPOSE

To provide participants at the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch the opportunity to update and comment on the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action for seabirds and sharks, and implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations.

BACKGROUND

NPOA-Sharks

In 1999, member countries of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) developed the International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA–Sharks; FAO 1999). The IPOA–Sharks suggests that members develop a National Plan of Action if their vessels conduct targeted fishing for sharks or if they regularly catch sharks in fisheries targeting other species.

The IPOA–Sharks (FAO 1999) has the objective, “to ensure the conservation and management of sharks and their long-term sustainable use” and prescribes the following aims:

- Ensure that shark catches from directed and non-directed fisheries are sustainable.
- Assess threats to shark populations, determine and protect critical habitats and implement harvesting strategies consistent with the principles of biological sustainability and rational long-term economic use.
- Identify and provide special attention, in particular to vulnerable or threatened shark stocks.
- Improve and develop frameworks for establishing and coordinating effective consultation involving all stakeholders in research, management and educational initiatives within and between States.
- Minimize unutilized incidental catches of sharks.
- Contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem structure and function.
- Minimize waste and discards from shark catches in accordance with article 7.2.2.(g) of the *Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries* (for example, requiring the retention of sharks from which fins are removed).
- Encourage full use of dead sharks.
- Facilitate improved species-specific catch and landings data and monitoring of shark catches.
- Facilitate the identification and reporting of species-specific biological and trade data.

The IPOA Sharks requires each member nation that take shark in their fisheries to prepare a shark assessment report (SAR) with the aim of identifying conservation, management and any other issues associated with the shark catch. If necessary, these issues can then be addressed in a NPOA–Sharks. The SAR is to be updated regularly to report the status of shark stocks as assessments are made and to identify gaps in knowledge. The NPOA–Sharks requires collection and ongoing synthesis of compatible data at the appropriate resolution, including *inter alia* commercial data and data leading to improved species identification and, eventually, abundance indices.

The shark data collected by IOTC CPCs for trans-boundary, highly migratory and high seas shark stocks should be done through international collaboration and data sharing systems and all shark data should be made available to relevant subregional and regional fisheries organisations, and the FAO (IPOA–Sharks 1999).

NPOA-Seabirds

In 1998, member countries of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) developed the International Plan of Action for reducing incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries (IPOA–Seabirds; FAO 1998). The IPOA–Seabirds suggests that members develop should conduct an assessment of their

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longline fisheries to determine if a problem exists with respect to incidental catch of seabirds. If a problem exists, States should adopt a National Plan of Action for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries.

The original purpose of the FAO NPOA-Seabirds was to address concerns about longline fishing. However, recent information has shown significant concerns about seabird bycatch in several other capture fisheries, especially gillnet fishing. The 2009 FAO Best Practice Technical Guidelines (FAO 2009a), developed to assist in the preparation of NPOA-Seabirds, explicitly includes advice on longline, trawl and gillnet fisheries.

FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations

At the 26th FAO–COFI Session in March 2005, the *Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations* (FAO 2009b), were adopted. Following adoption of ‘the guidelines’, it was recommended that they be implemented by all regional fisheries bodies and management organisations;

Subsequently, the IOTC adopted legally binding text within a Resolution, that all CPCs of the Commission implement ‘the guidelines’ (in Resolution 09/06 which was superseded by Resolution 12/04).

IOTC Resolution 12/04 *on the conservation of marine turtles* states:

- Para. 2. *Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties (hereinafter referred to as “CPCs”) will implement, as appropriate, the FAO Guidelines.*
- Para. 5. *CPCs shall report to the Commission in the annual implementation report, in accordance with Article X of the IOTC Agreement, their progress of implementation of the FAO Guidelines and this Resolution.*
- Para. 16. *CPCs are encouraged to support developing countries in their implementation of the FAO Guidelines and this Resolution.*

DISCUSSION

The most recent updated table of progress in implementing NPOA-Sharks, NPOA-Seabirds and the FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations, is provided at [Appendix I](#).

At its 17th Session the SC:

SC17.22 ([para. 58](#)) *The SC **RECOMMENDED** that the Commission note the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action (NPOAs) for sharks and seabirds, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations, by each CPC as provided at [Appendix VI](#), recalling that the IPOA-Seabirds and IPOA-Sharks were adopted by the FAO in 1999 and 2000, respectively, and required the development of NPOAs. Despite the time that has elapsed since then, very few CPCs have developed NPOAs, or even carried out assessments to ascertain if the development of a Plan is warranted. Currently only 12 of the 35 IOTC CPCs have an NPOA-Sharks (8 more in development), while only 6 CPCs have an NPOA-Seabirds (2 more in development). A single CPC has determined that an NPOA-Sharks is not needed, and 5 have similarly determined that an NPOA-Seabirds is not needed. Currently only 6 of the 35 IOTC CPCs have implemented the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations (2 more in progress), and one CPC (France (OT)) will implement a full NPOA in 2015.*

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the WPEB:

- 1) **NOTE** and **CONSIDER** paper IOTC–2015–WPEB11–09 which details the current status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action for sharks and seabirds, and the implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations, by each CPC.

APPENDICES

Appendix I [2015: Status of development and implementation of National Plans of Action \(NPOA\) for sharks and seabirds and implementation of the FAO guidelines to reduce marine turtle mortality in fishing operations.](#)

LITERATURE CITED

FAO 1998. International Plan of Action for Reducing Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/ipoa-seabirds/en>

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- FAO 2009a. FAO. Fishing operations. 2. Best practices to reduce incidental catch of seabirds in capture fisheries. FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries. No. 1, Suppl. 2. Rome, FAO. 2009. 49p. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i1145e/i1145e00.pdf>
- FAO 2009b. The guidelines to reduce sea turtle mortality in fishing operation. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/i0725e/i0725e00.htm>

APPENDIX I

2015: STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL PLANS OF ACTION FOR SEABIRDS AND SHARKS, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAO GUIDELINES TO REDUCE MARINE TURTLE MORTALITY IN FISHING OPERATIONS

(Current as of 10 September 2015)

CPC	Sharks	Date of Implementation	Seabirds	Date of implementation	Marine turtles	Date of implementation	Comments
MEMBERS							
Australia		1 st : April 2004 2 nd : July 2012		1 st : 1998 2 nd : 2006 3 rd : 2014		2003	<p>Sharks: 2nd NPOA-Sharks (Shark-plan 2) was released in July 2012, along with an operational strategy for implementation: http://www.daff.gov.au/fisheries/environment/sharks/sharkplan2</p> <p>Seabirds: Has implemented a Threat Abatement Plan [TAP] for the Incidental Catch (or Bycatch) of Seabirds During Oceanic Longline Fishing Operations since 1998. The present TAP took effect from 2014 and largely fulfills the role of an NPOA in terms of longline fisheries. http://www.antarctica.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/21509/Threat-Abatement-Plan-2014.pdf</p> <p>Australia is developing an NPOA to address the potential risk posed to seabirds by other fishing methods, including longline fishing in state and territory waters, which are not covered by the current threat abatement plan.</p> <p>Marine turtles: Australia's current marine turtle bycatch management and mitigation measures fulfill Australia's obligations under the FAO-Sea turtles Guidelines.</p>
Belize							<p>Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
China		–		–			<p>Sharks: Development has not begun.</p> <p>Seabirds: Development has not begun.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
–Taiwan,China		1 st : May 2006 2 nd : May 2012		1 st : May 2006 2 nd : Jul 2014			<p>Sharks: No revision currently planned.</p> <p>Seabirds: No revision currently planned.</p> <p>Marine turtles: Domestic laws introduced in 2013. Available on request.</p>
Comoros		–		–			<p>Sharks: Development has not begun.</p> <p>Seabirds: Development has not begun.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Eritrea							<p>Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
European Union		5 Feb 2009		16-Nov-2012		2007	<p>Sharks: Approved on 05-Feb-2009 and it is currently being implemented.</p> <p>Seabirds: The EU adopted on Friday 16 November an Action Plan to address the problem of incidental catches of seabirds in fishing gears.</p>

						<p>Marine turtles: European Union Council Regulation (EC) No 520/2007 of 7 May 2007 lay down technical measures for the conservation of marine turtles including articles and provisions to reduce marine turtle bycatch. The regulation urges Member States to do their utmost to reduce the impact of fishing on sea turtles, in particular by applying the measures provided for in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of the resolution.</p>
France (territories)		5 Feb 2009		2009, 2011	Pending: 2015	<p>Sharks: Approved on 05-Feb-2009.</p> <p>Seabirds: Implemented in 2009 and 2011. 2009 for Barrau's petrel and 2011 for Amsterdam albatross.</p> <p>Marine turtles: To be implemented in 2015 for the five species of marine turtles that are present in the southwest Indian Ocean.</p>
Guinea						<p>Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
India						<p>Sharks: In preparation. In June 2015, India published a document entitled "Guidance on National Plan of Action for Sharks in India" which is intended as a guidance to the NPOA-Sharks, and seeks to (1) present an overview of the current status of India's shark fishery, (2) assess the current management measures and their effectiveness, (3) identify the knowledge gaps that need to be addressed in NPOA-Sharks and (4) suggest a theme-based action plan for NPOA-Sharks.</p> <p>Seabirds: India has determined that seabird interactions are not a problem for their fleets. However, a formal evaluation has not yet taken place which the WPEB and SC require.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Indonesia		–		–		<p>Sharks: NPOA guidelines developed and released for public comment among stakeholders in 2010 (funded by ACIAR Australia—DGCF). Training commenced in 2011, including data collection for sharks based on forms of statistical data to national standards (by DGCF (supported by ACIAR Australia). Implementation expected late 2011/early 2012.</p> <p>Seabirds: Development has not begun.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Iran, Islamic Republic of		–		–	–	<p>Sharks: Have communicated to all fishing cooperatives the IOTC resolutions on sharks. Have in place a ban on the retention of live sharks.</p> <p>Seabirds: I.R. Iran determined that seabird interactions are not a problem for their fleet as they consist of gillnet vessels only. i.e. no longline vessels.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Japan		03-Dec-2009		03-Dec-2009		<p>Sharks: NPOA–Shark assessment implementation report submitted to COFI in July 2012</p> <p>Seabirds: NPOA–Seabird implementation report submitted to COFI in July 2012.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Kenya			n.a.	–		<p>Sharks: A National Plan of Action for sharks is being developed and shall put in place a framework to ensure the conservation and management of sharks and their long-term sustainable use in Kenya. A shark assessment Report shall be developed by the end of the 2015 calendar year.</p>

						<p>Seabirds: Kenya does not have any flagged longline vessels on its registry. There is no evidence of any gear seabird interaction with the current fishing fleet. Kenya does not therefore consider developing NPOA seabirds as necessary for the time being.</p> <p>Marine turtles: The Kenyan fisheries law prohibits retention and landing of turtles caught incidentally in fishing operations. Public awareness efforts are conducted for artisanal gillnet and artisanal longline fishing fleets on the mitigations measures that enhance marine turtle conservation.</p>
Korea, Republic of		08-Aug-11		–	–	<p>Sharks: Currently being implemented.</p> <p>Seabirds: Drafted in January 2014 and on standby for approval by the minister.</p> <p>Marine turtles: All Rep. of Korea vessels fully implement Res 12/04.</p>
Madagascar		–		–		<p>Sharks: Development has not begun.</p> <p>Seabirds: Development has not begun.</p> <p>Note: A fisheries monitoring system is in place in order to ensure compliance by vessels with the IOTC's shark and seabird conservation and management measures.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Malaysia		2008	n.a.	–	2008	<p>Sharks: A review of the NPOA-Shark (2008) is in the final stages, with stakeholder consultation due to be completed in September 2013. A revised NPOA-Sharks is expected to be published by the end of 2013.</p> <p>Seabirds: Malaysia has carried out a review and determined that an NPOA-Seabirds is not necessary as no longline vessels flagged to Malaysia fish south of 20 degrees south.</p> <p>Marine turtles: A NPOA For Conservation and Management of Sea Turtles had been published in 2008.</p>
Maldives, Republic of		Apr 2015	n.a.	–		<p>Sharks: Maldives has developed the NPOA-Sharks with the assistance of Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BoBLME) Project. A stakeholder consultation for the NPOA-Sharks was held in April of 2014. The NPOA-Sharks is in the finalization process and is expected to be published in November of 2014. The longline logbooks ensure the collection of shark bycatch data to genus level. Maldives would be reporting on shark bycatch to the appropriate technical Working Party meetings of IOTC.</p> <p>Seabirds: Article 12 of IPOA states that if a 'problem exists' CPCs adopt an NPOA. IOTC Resolution 05/09 suggests CPCs to report on seabirds to the IOTC Scientific Committee if the issue is appropriate'. Maldives considers that seabirds are not an issue in the Maldives fisheries, both in the pole-and-line fishery and in the longline fishery. The new longline fishing regulations has provision on mitigation measures on seabird bycatch.</p> <p>Marine turtles: Longline regulation has provisions to reduce marine turtle bycatch. The regulation urges longline vessels to have dehookers for removal of hook and a line cutter on board, to release the caught marine turtles as prescribed in Resolution 12/04.</p>
Mauritius						<p>Sharks: Mauritius does not issue national or foreign fishing licence to vessels targeting sharks in its Exclusive Economic Zone. However, sharks are usually landed as bycatch. Mauritius will work in consultation with the IOTC Secretariat to prepare a simplified NPOA-sharks for Mauritius.</p>

						<p>Seabirds: Mauritius does not have national vessels operating beyond 25°S. However, fishing companies have been requested to implement all mitigation measures as provided in the IOTC Resolutions.</p> <p>Marine turtles: Mauritius does not have national boats operating outside its EEZ. Moreover, marine turtles are protected by the national law. Fishing companies have been requested to carry line cutters and de-hookers in order to facilitate the appropriate handling and prompt release of marine turtles caught or entangled.</p>
Mozambique		-	-			<p>Sharks: Drafting of new legislation is in progress which considers the issues of shark conservation in licensing requirements. The SWIOFish project within the framework of the implementation of the Linefish Management Plan is going to finance the NPOA shark from 2015. Moreover, Mozambique has developed in 2014, the Terms and Conditions of Licensing for tuna fishing to be attached to fishing license. These contain all the measures for the conservation and management of tuna fisheries and include the aspects related to conservation of sharks, seabirds and marine turtles.</p> <p>Seabirds: Mozambique is regularly briefing the Masters of their fishing vessels on the mandatory requirement to report any seabird interaction with longliner fleet.</p> <p>Marine turtles: see above.</p>
Oman, Sultanate of						<p>Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat.</p> <p>Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.</p>
Pakistan						<p>Sharks: Sharks are landed with the fins attached and each and every part of the body of sharks are utilised. A workshop on “Conservation and Management of Sharks was conducted on 15th September 2014. As per recommendations of the workshop, there is still a need for collection and synthesis of more compatible data to prepare Shark Assessment Report (SAR) / draft NPOA. PLAN: (i) October, 2014 to March 2015: Collection and synthesis of additional data. (ii) April, 2015 to June 2015: Preparation of SAR and draft NPOA. Circulation of draft NPOA to concerned stakeholders for comments. (iii) July, 2015 to September 2015: Holding workshop, presentations of draft NPOA / comments, recommendations and adoption of NPOA.</p> <p>Seabirds: Pakistan considers that seabird interactions are not a problem for Pakistani fishing fleet as our tuna fishing operations do not include longline vessels.</p> <p>Marine turtles: Pakistan has already framed Regulations regarding the prohibition of catching and retaining marine turtles. As regards to the reduction of marine turtle bycatch by gillnetters; presently Marine Fisheries Department (MFD) in collaboration with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Pakistan, is undertaking an assessment. Stakeholder Coordination Committee Meeting was conducted on 10th September 2014. The “Turtle Assessment Report (TAR)” will be finalized by February 2015 and necessary guidelines / action plan will be finalized by June 2015. As per clause-5 (c) of Pakistan Fish Inspection & Quality Control Act, 1997, “Aquatic turtles,</p>

						tortoises, snakes, mammals including dugongs, dolphins, porpoises and whales etc” are totally forbidden for export and domestic consumption.
Philippines		Sept. 2009		–		Sharks: Under periodic review. Seabirds: Development has not begun. No seabird interactions recorded. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
Seychelles, Republic of		Apr-2007		–		Sharks: NPOA-sharks to currently being reviewed and a new NPOA is being developed for 2016-19. Seabirds: Development has not begun. The industrial longline fleet of Seychelles has been instructed to conform with the requirements of Res. 12/06. Marine turtles: No plan developed as the moment.
Sierra Leone						Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat. Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
Somalia						Sharks: Somalia is currently revising its fisheries legislation (current one being from 1985) and will consider the development of NPOAs as part of this revision process. Seabirds: See above. Marine turtles: See above.
Sri Lanka			n.a. (provisional)			Sharks: An NPOA-sharks has been finalized and is currently being implemented. Seabirds: Sri Lanka has determined that seabird interactions are not a problem for their fleets. However a formal review has not yet taken place which the WPEB and SC have approved. Marine turtles: Marine turtles are legally protected in Sri Lanka. In the longline fishery only circle hooks are used (J-hooks are banned). Gillnets longer than 2.5 km are now prohibited in domestic legislation on the high-seas. Reporting of bycatch is facilitated via logbooks reserving a separated box.
Sudan						Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat. Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
Tanzania, United Republic of		–		–		Sharks: Initial discussions have commenced. Seabirds: Initial discussions have commenced. Note: Terms and conditions related to protected sharks and seabirds contained within fishing licenses. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
Thailand		23-Nov-2005		–		Sharks: Second NPOA-sharks currently being drafted. Seabirds: Development has not begun. Marine turtles: Not yet implemented.
United Kingdom	n.a.	–	n.a.	–	–	British Indian Ocean Territory (Chagos Archipelago) waters are a Marine Protected Area closed to fishing except recreational fishing in the 3nm territorial waters around Diego Garcia. Separate NPOAs have not been developed within this context. Sharks/Seabirds: For sharks, UK is the 24 th signatory to the Convention on Migratory Species ‘Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks’ which extends the agreement to UK Overseas Territories including British Indian Ocean Territories; Section 7 (10) (e) of the <i>Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance</i> refers to recreational fishing and

						requires sharks to be released alive. No seabirds are caught in the recreational fishery. Marine turtles: No marine turtles are captured in the recreational fishery. A monitoring programme is taking place to assess the marine turtle population in UK (OT).
Vanuatu		Aug 2014				Sharks: Commenced in August 2014. Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
Yemen						Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat. Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
COOPERATING NON-CONTRACTING PARTIES						
Bangladesh						Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat. Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
Djibouti						Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat. Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
Liberia						Sharks: No information received by the Secretariat. Seabirds: No information received by the Secretariat. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
Senegal		25-Sept-2006		-		Sharks: The Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission supported the development of a NPOA-sharks for Senegal in 2005. Other activities conducted include the organization of consultations with industry, the investigation of shark biology and social -economics of shark fisheries). The NPOA is currently being revised. Consideration is being made to the inclusion of minimum mesh size, minimum shark size, and a ban on shark finning. Seabirds: The need for a NPOA-seabirds has not yet been assessed. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.
South Africa, Republic of		-		2008		Sharks: The gazetting of the draft NPOA-sharks for public comment has been approved by the Minister of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (6 July 2012). Seabirds: Published in August 2008 and fully implemented. The NPOA-seabirds has been earmarked for review. Marine turtles: No information received by the Secretariat.

Colour key	
Completed	
Drafting being finalised	
Drafting commenced	
Not begun	