

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

WHEREAS *Sphyrna lewini* (scalloped hammerhead shark) was listed as Critically Endangered by 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 recorded 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 (EEZs) and international waters;

CONCERNED that current conservation and management measures (CMMs) 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 that remediation measures, while positive, have limited conservation value for *S. lewini* due to high at-vessel mortality (AVM) and post-hooking mortality (PHM), making bycatch avoidance the most effective conservation strategy;

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

AWARE that listing *S. lewini* under Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora's (CITES) would ~~[regulate international trade]~~ [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;]~~

~~[b. implement science-based seasonal closures in coastal nurseries and pelagic longline fisheries, and establish high seas no-take zones (or fully protected marine protected areas) in biological hotspots and migratory corridors; and]~~

[b. as appropriate, implement species-specific science-based seasonal closures, interaction limits, move-on provisions, fishing effort controls, gear restrictions and/or gear modifications in habitat areas identified as 'Important Shark and Ray Areas' for *S. lewini* and its look-a-like 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; and

~~[3. RECOMMENDS that CITES Parties consider the transfer of the scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*) and its look-a-like species the smooth hammerhead shark (*S. zygaena*) and the great hammerhead shark (*S. mokarran*) from Appendix II to Appendix I, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17), Annex 1: Criteria C.]~~