



## General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean



### Transversal workshop on monitoring recreational fisheries in the GFCM area

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## Guidelines for the management of shark and ray recreational fisheries in the Mediterranean



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## United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas



- The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean
- The Barcelona Convention's Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean
  - Annex II List of endangered or threatened species
  - Annex III species whose exploitation is regulated.





## United Nations Environment Programme Mediterranean Action Plan Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas



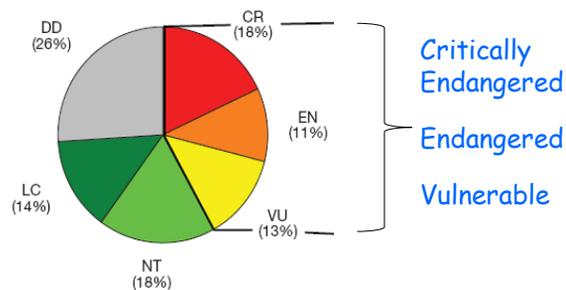
- The aim of RAC/SPA is to assist and support Mediterranean countries in the implementation of the SPA Protocol and its related Action Plans
  - Mediterranean Action Plan for the Conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes (Shark Action Plan)



## Chondrichthyan fishes: Sharks, rays and chimaeras



- Life history characteristics (slow growth, late maturity, small number of offspring) make chondrichthyans very vulnerable to overfishing
- 42% of Mediterranean species have been assessed as Threatened by IUCN



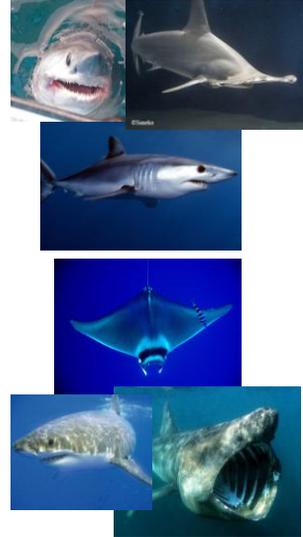


## Threatened groups



### Pelagic species:

- Unsustainable longline, net, and hook & line fisheries have caused severe population declines;
- Some species are now too rare to support target commercial fisheries, but are still taken as bycatch and some are targeted by anglers;
- Few Mediterranean countries have protected pelagic species listed in Annex II

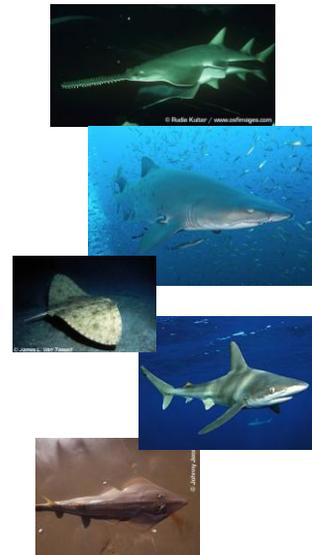


## Threatened groups



### Coastal species:

- Vulnerable life histories;
- Inshore habitat highly accessible to man;
- Increasingly scarce;
- Some have disappeared from large areas of the Mediterranean;
- Some still targeted or taken as bycatch in commercial and sports fisheries



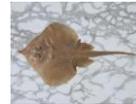


## Threatened groups



### Demersal shelf/slope species:

- Severe declines in many populations;
- Some species absent from areas where formerly present or abundant
- Highly vulnerable to demersal trawl fisheries, which drove population declines;
- Some species are also taken by sports anglers



## Sharks and rays



- Commercial fisheries have a major impact on populations;
- Recreational fisheries also contribute to mortality; this is particularly damaging if rare species or large mature females are taken to obtain records;
- Recreational anglers can make an extremely valuable contribution to shark and ray conservation, research and management by:
  - Reporting catches
  - Taking part in catch, tag & release programmes.





## Action Plan for the Conservation of Cartilaginous Fishes in the Mediterranean Sea



- 2003: "Shark Action Plan" elaborated by RAC/SPA, as recommended by Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention
- Success requires cooperation between many stakeholders, including recreational anglers, at national, regional and international level
- 2009: Action Plan revised and updated
- List of Annex II & Annex III species extended significantly
- New calendar of actions adopted



## Objectives of Shark Action Plan



- Conservation of Mediterranean populations, by supporting and promoting national and regional programmes for sustainable commercial fisheries for target and bycatch species;
- Protection of endangered populations;
- Protection and restoration of critical habitats, such as mating, spawning and nursery grounds;
- Improvement of scientific knowledge by research and scientific monitoring;
- Recovery of depleted stocks;
- Public awareness and capacity-building (particularly for recreational anglers).





## Recreational fisheries



- High socio-economic importance
- Unregulated regionally (EU and Mediterranean)
- Many examples elsewhere of sports fisheries contributing high value to shark and ray research and conservation programmes
- Great potential for this to be developed in the Mediterranean through the elaboration and dissemination of guideline
- Revised Shark Action Plan seeks to reduce recreational catch mortality, increase catch reporting, and improve opportunities for anglers to become involved in research programmes, such as tag and release.



## Actions for recreational fishers/ies



1. **Develop guidelines** for the management of shark and ray recreational fishing. These will promote catch and release, describe protocols for handling catches in order to minimise stress and improve survival, and encourage reporting of such catches.
2. **Promote catch and release** recreational fishing, engagement in research programmes (e.g. tag and release), and catch reporting.
3. **Implement monitoring** of recreational catches, as well as of commercial landings.





## Contents of guidelines



**Rationale:** explaining clearly the potential harmful impacts of recreational fisheries on sharks and rays and the need to adopt catch and release fishing methods and the guidelines.

**Draft code of conduct** for capture and handling of sharks and rays. The protocols recommended will reduce injury, stress, post-release mortality and risk of sub-lethal impacts.

**Tagging guidelines** describing best practice to minimise risk to animals and maximise the value of data obtained.

**Reporting guidelines** with a protocol for reporting the shark and ray catch data needed.



## Outcomes



- Increased awareness by anglers of the conservation status of sharks and rays and their role in research and management;
- Increased awareness of best practice in recreational fishing for sharks and rays
- A reduction in the harmful impacts of recreational shark fisheries in the Mediterranean;
- An increase in availability of valuable data for biological research, fisheries management and conservation;
- Improved conservation status of threatened and exploited species.





Thanks for your attention

