Japan's information on Sharks species that we believe require additional action to enhance their conservation and management

In accordance with the recommendations made at the 25th meeting of the Animal Committee, Japan would like to submit the list of shark species that we believe require additional action to enhance their conservation and management as follows;

1. List of Shark species

- Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*)
- Basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*)
- Great white shark (*Carcharondon carcharias*)

2. Additional concrete actions

The Whale Shark and the Basking Shark were listed in Appendix II at CoP12 in 2002, and the Great White Shark was listed in Appendix II at CoP13. However, little examination has been made on the contribution of the listings in Appendix II to the conservation and management status of these species.

In this respect, the Secretariat, in cooperation with Parties, should review the status of utilization after the listing, and the relation between the trend of stock status (i.e. whether or not stocks has been recovered) and the trend of international trade of the specimens of these species .

That information will be informative for consideration on the reasonability of listing proposals of shark species which may be made in the future.

Japan's Report on Trade in Shark Species and Implementation of the National Action Plan for Conservation and Management of Sharks

(Fisheries Agency, the Government of Japan)

Trade in Shark Species in Japan

In recent years, export of shark meat from Japan has been on the increase and reached 5,947 tons in 2010 (Fig. 1). Major countries and regions of destination for export of the Japanese shark meat in 2010 are South America (1,355 tons), Peru (903 tons), Canary Islands (899 tons), Korea (771tons) and Taiwan (314 tons). In recent years, export of dried shark fin from Japan has been on the decrease and reached 164 tons in 2010 (Fig. 2). Major countries and regions of destination for export of the Japanese dried shark fin in 2010 are Hong Kong (112 tons), Singapore (21 tons), South Africa (14 tons), Canary Islands (7 tons) and Uruguay (4 tons). On the other hand, in recent years, import of shark meat to Japan has been on the decrease and reached 568 tons in 2010 (Fig. 3). Major countries and regions from which Japan has imported shark meat are Spain (345 tons), Taiwan (54 tons), Indonesia (48 tons), China (42 tons) and Singapore (32 tons).

Development of Japan's NPOA-Sharks

The International Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks) was adopted at the 23rd meeting of the Committee on Fisheries of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO COFI) held in February 1999. In response to the adoption of the IPOA, Japan developed its National Plan of Action (NPOA-Sharks), after deliberation by an examination committee and discussion within the government, and it has presented the Plan to the 24th FAO COFI in March 2001. Japan further revised NPOA in 2009 to reflect the discussion held in Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) meetings covering tuna species, on conservation and management measures for shark species (see attachment).

Implementation of Japan's NPOA-Sharks

(1) State of Fisheries and Species Subject to NPOA-Sharks

In accordance with the paragraph 2 of the NPOA, Japan has been extensively collecting information regarding shark stocks and has been monitoring the state of the stocks based mainly on auction records at wholesale markets at landing sites and logbooks of fishing vessels.

In Japan, shark species have been traditionally caught and utilized in various ways through the ages. In the food-insecure period shortly after the World War II, trawl fishing vessels actively caught dogfish in coastal areas, in order to secure high-quality nutrient source for Japanese people. However, trawl fishing primarily targeting dogfish disappeared due to the decline of demands in the 1960s, when food shortages have been eased. Against such a backdrop, the catch of sharks in Japan has been declining year by year after peaking in the end of the 1940s. The catch of sharks in recent years remained stable at the level of 20,000-30,000 tons, and most of

them are pelagic sharks caught by longline fisheries. The proportion of longline fisheries in the total catch of sharks remains between 70-90%. In 2008, total catch of sharks was about 37,400 tons, and 84% of those sharks are caught by tuna longline fisheries.

The catch of pelagic sharks by longline fisheries once declined from the level of 20,000 tons in the 1980s to the level of 15,000-20,000 tons in the 1990s. However, it showed recovery in the 2000s, and remained over30,000 tons since 2005 (Fig.4). Fishing efforts by Japan's longline fisheries mainly targeting pelagic sharks have been on the decrease in recent years. This trend is especially remarkable in the Pacific (Fig.5).

The primary three species of sharks landed at the ports in Japan are the Blue Shark (*Prionace glauca*), Shortfin Mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*) and Salmon Shark (*Lamna ditropis*). In Japan, there are currently no fisheries targeting three species of large-size sharks included in the CITES Appendix II; Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*), Whale Shark (*Rhincondon typus*) and Great White Shark (*Carcharodon carcaharias*).

(2) Management Measures

As clearly described in the paragraph 3 of the NPOA, in accordance with the Fisheries Law and Fisheries Resources Conservation Law, most of the fisheries in Japan are put under the control by the Government and prefectural governments, and the entry into fisheries is limited by the license systems. Especially, the fisheries which directly target sharks or cause substantial by-catch of sharks are put under the control by the licenses authorized either by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries or the governors. It is not likely that fishing pressures on shark resources would increase in the future owing to such strict license systems, because Japan has no intention to expand the scale of fisheries where sharks are either directly or incidentally caught.

In addition, in accordance with the paragraph 3 of the NPOA, all tuna-fishing longline vessels under the control by the Government are required to retain onboard until landing whole bodies of sharks caught, except for heads, guts and skins, pursuant to the resolutions adopted by RFMOs covering tuna species in respective regions.

(3) Promotion ofWise and Effective Utilization of Sharks

In accordance with the paragraph 4 of the NPOA, Japan has been promoting effective utilization of sharks caught by fishing vessels. In Japan, shark species caught are exhaustively used; meats and fins are processed into food, skins into materials for leather products and vertebrae into medicines or supplements. Furthermore, a variety of studies on the utilization of formerly discarded shark species are conducted and a variety of new products including jerky are contributing to the regional development, especially to the development of local industries and small-scale fisheries in remote areas including small islands.

(4) Educational and Outreach Activities

In accordance with the paragraph 5 of the NPOA, Japan has been implementing educational and awareness-raising activities aimed at conservation and management of sharks. So far, the Fisheries Agency, the Fisheries Research Agency and the Global Guardian Trust cooperatively produced and distributed among fishermen, a variety of educational materials, including brochures, sheets, posters, cartoon books and videos with the aim to raise awareness of identification of shark species as well as their conservation and management measures. They also organized a series of seminars for fishermen on the management measures for shark species at major fishing ports and instructed them to collect and provide the catch data on sharks.

(5) Promotion on International Cooperation

In accordance with the paragraph 5 of the NPOA, Japan has been providing reliable data on shark stock assessments and advocating appropriate management measures for shark stocks in RFMOs and FAO. Especially, Japan has been at the forefront of efforts to introduce conservation measures as follows including the prohibition of retention onboard of shark species that are threatened to decline of stocks;

- At the 21st Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) in 2009, Japan supported the EU proposal to prohibit retaining onboard Bigeye Thresher Sharks in the Atlantic Ocean, which was adopted;
- At the 14th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) in 2010, Japan supported the EU proposal to prohibit retaining onboard three types of Thresher Sharks in the Indian Ocean. As other Parties insisted on opposing such action, the proposal went to a vote and was adopted;
- At the 17th Special Meeting of the ICCAT in 2010, Japan proposed to prohibit retaining onboard Oceanic Whitetip Sharks, which was adopted. Furthermore, it supported the EU proposal to prohibit retaining Porbeagle Sharks, which was not adopted due to opposition from other Parties;
- At the 15th Session of the IOTC in 2011, Japan supported the EU proposal to prohibit of the retention of Hammerhead Shark species which was not adopted due to opposition from other Parties. Japan also supported expansion of shark species subject to data collection, which was not adopted as well;
- At the 82nd Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) in 2011, Japan, cooperated with EU, submitted the proposal to prohibit retaining onboard Oceanic Whitetip Sharks, which was adopted;
- At the 22nd Regular Meeting of the ICCAT in 2011, Japan supported the proposal to prohibit retaining onboard Silky Shark species, which was adopted;
- At the 17th Special Meeting of the ICCAT in 2010, the 81St and 82nd Meetings of the IATTC in 2010 and 2011, and the 14th Session of the IOTC in 2011, Japan proposed the introduction of a catch documentation scheme for data collection of fish including sharks and prevention of distribution of IUU products, none of which were adopted due to opposition from other Parties. At the 82nd Meeting of the IATTC, Japan submitted a similar proposal again.

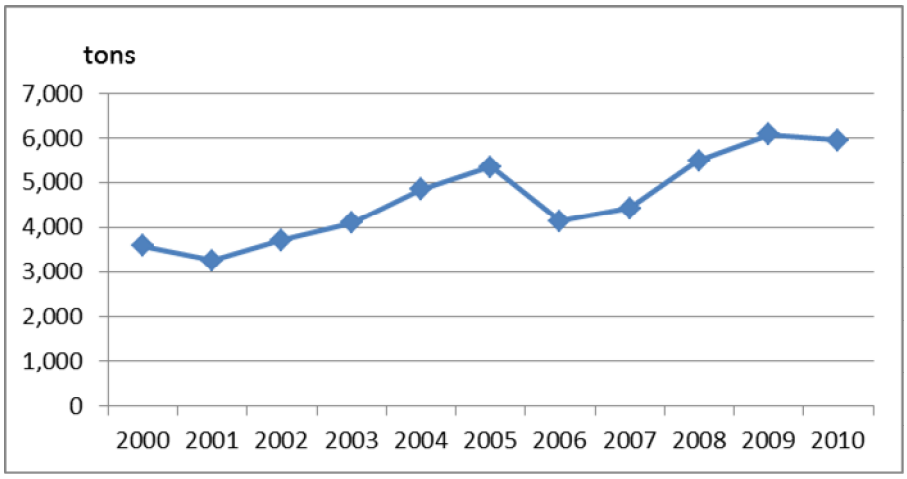

Fig.1. Export of Shark Meat from Japan

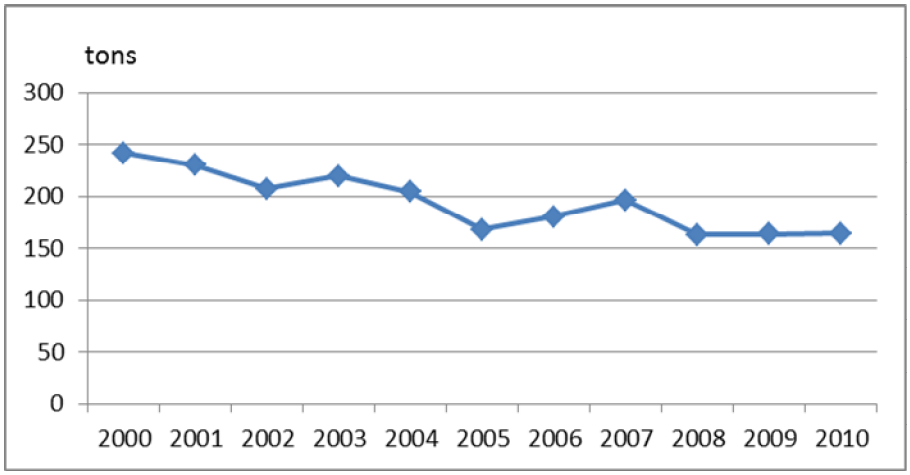

Fig.2. Export of Dried Shark Fin from Japan

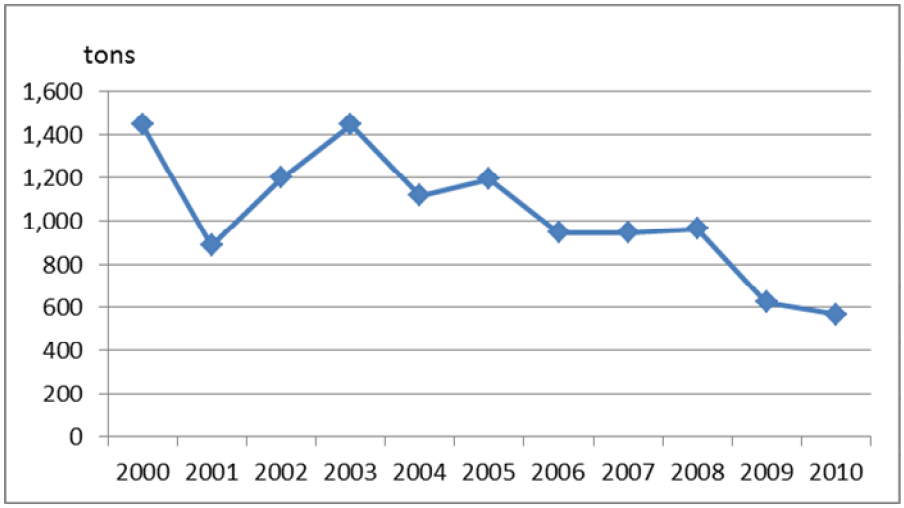

Fig.3. Import of Shark Meat to Japan

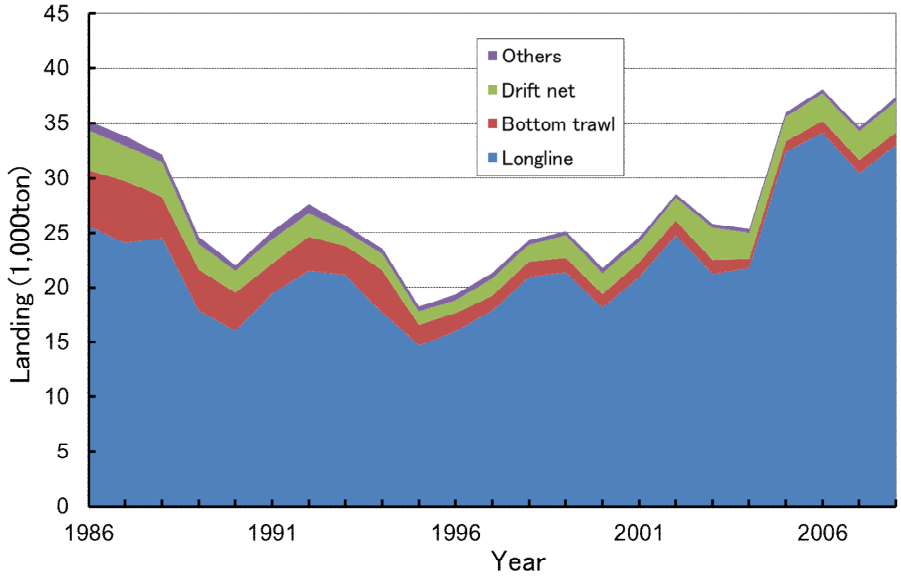

Fig. 4 Catch of sharks in Japan by fishing method (1986-2008)

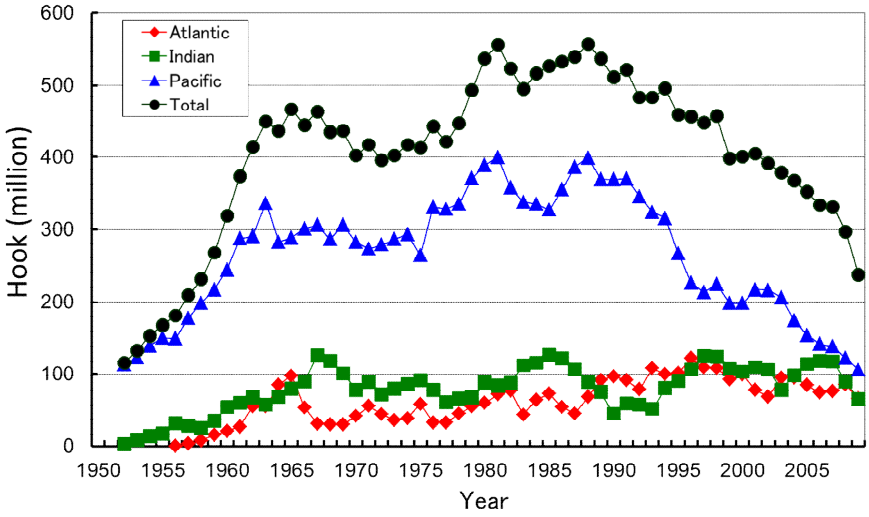

Fig. 5 Annual changes in fishing efforts in Japan's longline fisheries

Attachment

Japan's National Plan of Action
for
Conservation and Management of Sharks

Revised Version

March 2009

Fisheries Agency
Government of Japan

Japan's National Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks (Revised Version)

1. Introduction (Basic Principles and Objectives)

(1) Japan, as a responsible fishing nation, confirms the recognition of the international community that fisheries are an important industry playing “the significant role in providing food security for the world, both through food supplies and through economic and social well-being” (Kyoto Declaration on Sustainable Contribution of Fisheries to Food Security and its Action Plan). In addition, Japan duly respects the international agreement that “the States should commit themselves to the conservation and sustainable use of marine living resources” (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and Chapter 17 of Agenda 21) and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that calls for promotion of contribution of fisheries to food security.

(2) Japan recognizes that sharks are important fishery resources. Since sharks are being caught by various types of fisheries in many countries, it shares the view that shark catches should be properly managed and hence adverse impact on shark resources should be minimized. At the same time, Japan is concerned that sharks have been subjected in recent years to illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing and improper activities of cutting only fins and disposing other usable parts of the body.

(3) With a view to cope with such situation, Japan adopted in 2001 an effective and practicable National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA-Sharks) after having analyzed objectively and scientifically the impact of Japanese fisheries on shark resources, and taking into account the FAO's “International Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks)" adopted in 1999. Since that time, through implementation of its NPOA-Sharks, Japan has been securing scientific knowledge and information on shark resources and ensured rational conservation and sustainable utilization of shark resources based on proper knowledge and information.

(4) Japan has expanded and strengthened management measures for sharks and, for these purposes, amended relevant domestic legislations in due course. This time, Japan will revise its NPOA-Sharks with due amendments and corrections in order to reflect those changes and ensure its stepped-up management system.

2. State of Fisheries and Species subjected to NPOA-Sharks

(1) Regarding the state of the fisheries and species subjected to NPOA-Sharks,

analyses have been carried out based on updated information, every year. Details of the analyses are described in the "implementation report on NPOA-Sharks", which Japan has submitted to FAO every two years.

(2) An expert group consisting of Japanese scientists and experts was established in 1999 and has met regularly to assess the state of shark resources concerned. Furthermore, in order to enrich information necessary for such assessment, collection of information and scientific data as well as research activities including the followings will be continued.

(i) Catch data provided by commercial fishing vessels;
(ii) Research data from research vessels belonging to the national and prefectural governments and other institutes;
(iii) Scientific data collected by scientific researchers on board fishing vessels;
(iv) Data on landings at the landing ports in Japan; and
(v) Catch statistical data collected by the national and prefectural governments

3. Management Measures

(1) Many types of fisheries in Japan are placed under the jurisdiction of the national or prefectural governments pursuant to the Fisheries Law and Fisheries Resources Conservation Law, and entry into those fisheries is limited under license systems of respective governments. Especially, regarding fisheries which directly targets sharks or has substantial by-catch of sharks, most are the fisheries licensed by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries or prefectural governors. It is not likely that fishing pressures on shark resources would increase in the future because of such rigid license system and further because Japan has no intention of expanding the scale of fisheries where sharks are either directly or incidentally caught.

(2) Japan is member to all the regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) for the areas where sharks are assumed to be targeted or caught incidentally in longline fishing. Japan is obliging its fishers to comply with all the management measures of those RFMOs as conditions for granting the fishing licenses. The Government of Japan will have fishers comply with any new measures when they are duly introduced in the future.

(3) In view of the present situation where wasteful use (or non-use) of sharks by bringing back only their fins has been disputed globally, and in order to enhance a thorough and effective use of sharks by bringing them back to port, landing of whole bodies of sharks in possession has become mandatory for distant-water tuna fisheries, near-shore tuna fisheries, and coastal tuna longline fishing. In case incidentally-caught sharks are not in possession, information on those incidental catch are required for reporting, through which further strengthening of shark resources monitoring is expected.

(4) It is considered that effective utilization and proper management of shark resources can be realized by ensuring a thorough compliance with the above measures. Also taking into account the increasing international interest in shark resources management, and in view of the need to pay adequate attention to the future trend of shark resources, the following scheme will be continued.

(a) Assessment of shark resources shall be carried out on a regular basis at the expert group mentioned in 2. (2) above.

(b) Based on the assessment by the expert group, discussions shall be made on the need of other management measures at a committee composed of scientists, administrators and fishers. Steps shall be taken, where necessary, to reflect results of the discussions in the NPOA-Sharks. The following topics should be especially taken into account in the discussions:

(i) biological characteristics and sustainability of the target species
(ii) characteristics of the fisheries in target
(iii) safety of fishers and appropriateness of obligations relating to conservation and management measures
(iv) social and economic impact of conservation and management measures

4. Promotion of Wise and Effective Utilization of Sharks

(1) In the regions where sharks are landed in a certain amount on a constant basis, there exists high-level utilization of sharks. In other words, the shark meat is used as a common cooking ingredient, and some parts such as heart are valued as delicacies. Furthermore, skins are used as materials for high-grade leather products and cooking utensils, and bones are used for pharmaceuticals. Thus, it can be said that the degree of the use of sharks in Japan is higher when compared with other countries.

(2) However, even in Japan, in the regions where sharks are not the main target of fisheries and are landed only as by-catch species on an irregular basis, high-level use as stated above is difficult due to the absence of producers and processing facilities. Therefore, the economic value of sharks is low. Since such a situation keeps low interest in shark resources among fishers and the society at large, efforts shall be made to continue research and studies regarding development of new ways of use so as to enhance the added-value of sharks and to promote higher-level use of shark resources.

(3) In some fisheries such as distant-water tuna longline fishing operating in remote areas from the domestic market over a long span of time, usually only fins were brought back because of the limited storage capacity. However, following the revision of the ministerial ordinance in 2008, it has been required to land all the parts of sharks in possession in order to promote effective utilization of all the usable parts of sharks*. *In order for rectifying the storage problem, headed,

gutted and/or skinless form is allowed.

5. Educational and Outreach Activities

(1) Enhancing social awareness on FAO IPOA-Sharks and Japan's NPOA-Sharks among not only fishers but also the general public is a very important factor in promoting sustainable utilization and conservation of shark resources in Japan. In addition, it is crucial to collect accurate data in order to properly assess shark resources. To this end, Japan will continue efforts to enhance the awareness regarding the importance of proper fisheries management in accordance with its NPOA-Sharks by implementing and strengthening educational and propaganda activities for those related to fisheries.

(2) Several activities have been promoted in Japan, such as preparation and distribution of pamphlets and posters for species identification. Those activities, especially following activities will be further strengthened.

(i) distribution of Shark Species Identification Sheet (ID-Seat), and organizing seminars for fishers regarding stock management;
(ii) educational activities to the general public regarding how sharks have been related to the Japanese culture;
(iii) distribution of promotion items such as cartoons, videos, posters, etc;
(iv) provision of relevant and updated information to fishers and fisheries organizations, and;
(v) educational and outreach activities to young successors

6. Promotion of International Cooperation

(1) In accordance with the provision of FAO's IPOA-Sharks, state of implementation of its own NPOA-Sharks will be continuously reported to FAO. Further, regarding conservation and management of sharks, Japan will continue its positive contributions to strengthening cooperation at both FAO and RFMOs concerned to ensure introduction of further effective management measures.

(2) Regarding IUU fisheries that undermines international cooperation and efforts of countries concerned regarding conservation and management of fisheries resources including sharks, Japan will specifically enhance its cooperation with countries concerned as well as FAO and relevant RFMOs for elimination of those fisheries.