CONVENCIÓN SOBRE EL COMERCIO INTERNACIONAL DE ESPECIES AMENAZADAS DE FAUNA Y FLORA SILVESTRES

Decimonovena reunión de la Conferencia de las Partes
Ciudad de Panamá (Panamá), 14 – 25 de noviembre de 2022

NUEVA GUÍA DE IDENTIFICACIÓN EN APOYO DE LAS PROPUESTAS 37, 38 Y 40

1. Panamá* presenta una guía de identificación visual recientemente elaborada para profundizar en el enfoque de inclusión a nivel de familia y ayudar en la aplicación de las propuestas 37 (Carcharhinidae spp. - tiburones Réquiem o carcharhinidos), 38 (Sphyrnidae spp. - tiburones martillo) y 40 (Rhinobatidae spp. - peces guitarra) en la CoP 19 de la CITES.

2. Esta guía presenta un análisis científico e independiente desarrollado por los mismos autores de las recientes y completas guías de identificación de los productos comercializados de los tiburones y rayas actualmente incluidos en la CITES. Las guías para las especies actualmente incluidas se pueden encontrar here.

3. Esta nueva guía resume las dificultadas de identificación de estas tres propuestas de la siguiente manera:

   'Los enfoques de identificación visual que se han desarrollado para apoyar las actuales inclusiones de tiburones y rayas en la CITES han sido eficaces y permiten distinguir entre la mayoría de las especies incluidas y las no incluidas. Con casi 100 especies consideradas en la CoP19, es importante evaluar cómo puede llevarse a cabo de forma efectiva la aplicación de la inclusión de estas propuestas.

   En el punto de desembarque, todas las especies incluidas en las propuestas 37, 38 y 40 son identificables a nivel de especie. Las guías de identificación para apoyar la aplicación de las listas propuestas suelen estar disponibles a nivel nacional y regional y en varios idiomas. Esto permite una gestión y un seguimiento específico de las especies, así como la expedición de permisos CITES antes de que los productos entren en el comercio internacional (si están respaldados por la documentación adecuada, como los dictámenes de extracción no perjudicial y de adquisición legal). A su vez, es probable que esto aumente la trazabilidad y la presentación de informes a nivel de especie.

   En el punto de comercio, la capacidad de identificar visualmente las primeras aletas dorsales y las aletas pectorales (en el caso de algunas especies) ha sido clave para garantizar la aplicación efectiva del listado de especies. Con las múltiples especies de carcharhinidos, tiburones martillo y peces guitarra que se proponen, la identificación visual a nivel de especie será cada vez más difícil y los funcionarios de aduanas tendrán que recurrir a enfoques genéticos para determinar las especies que entran en el comercio. Como se destaca en este documento, los problemas de similitud para la mayoría de estas especies se producirán dentro de cada una de las familias propuestas.

   Por último, el comercio de carne de tiburones y rayas ha aumentado considerablemente en la última década. Es probable que la mayoría de las especies propuestas para su inclusión entren en el comercio internacional de carne. La identificación de los productos derivados de la carne (o, a menudo, de los troncos procesados sin rasgos distintivos) es necesaria para aplicar las inclusiones. Sin embargo, la

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* *Las denominaciones geográficas empleadas en este documento no implican juicio alguno por parte de la Secretaría CITES o del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente sobre la condición jurídica de ninguno de los países, zonas o territorios citados, ni respecto de la delimitación de sus fronteras o límites. La responsabilidad sobre el contenido del documento incumbe exclusivamente a su autor.*

identificación visual a nivel de especie no es posible y se requieren técnicas genéticas. Este comercio es un reto importante que hay que abordar.

La información proporcionada en esta guía demuestra la dificultad de identificar las aletas a nivel de especie para las tres propuestas. En combinación con la situación actual de las especies, es probable que los listados de tiburones y rayas a nivel de familia sean más eficaces tanto desde el punto de vista de la conservación como de la aplicación y el cumplimiento. Este enfoque a nivel de familia también se ha adoptado para otras especies, como los caballitos de mar y las orquídeas, y ha fomentado el desarrollo de mecanismos de trazabilidad. Dado que la mayoría de las aletas de las nuevas especies propuestas no pueden distinguirse unas de otras sin herramientas genéticas, la inclusión en la lista de familias permitiría a los funcionarios de aduanas aplicar nuevas listas y apoyar la regulación del comercio internacional".

4. Este nuevo análisis amplía y confirma la necesidad del enfoque de las listas por familias, tal y como se detalla en la propuesta 37 (tiburones carcharhinidos), secciones 8 y anexo 1.

5. Las guías de identificación visual de las especies incluidas en la CITES en su forma principal de comercio han permitido una aplicación sencilla de las listas de tiburones para los funcionarios de aduanas en países con todo nivel de capacidad durante la última década, algo que Panamá considera excepcionalmente importante para garantizar una capacidad de aplicación equitativa para todas las partes de la CITES. Para estas propuestas, como se detalla en la guía, eso requiere listados a nivel de familia.

6. Panamá también señala que el Informe del Séptimo Panel Consultivo de Expertos de la FAO para la evaluación de las propuestas de enmienda a los Apéndices I y II de la CITES relativas a las especies acuáticas explotadas comercialmente (Roma, 18-22 de julio de 2022), encontró que tres especies de tiburón réquiem cumplían con la interpretación de la FAO de los criterios de inclusión en la CITES. El informe del grupo de expertos también incluía información sobre la identificación visual de las aletas, incluyendo materiales de identificación procedentes de la industria, e incluía la siguiente declaración

"Teniendo en cuenta las diferencias significativas en cuanto a la apariencia morfológica, el tamaño, la productividad y la importancia para el comercio, el □ajor enfoque sería deliberar sobre cada especie parecida en detalle, lo que, considerando el número presentado, está más allá de la capacidad del panel de expertos". – Informe de Pesca y Acuicultura de la FAO nº 1389.

7. Panamá agradece el análisis del panel de la FAO, pero cree que la información generada por la industria no debe utilizarse como guía principal para tomar decisiones sobre las propuestas de inclusión. Como tal, Panamá considera que el análisis científico independiente presentado aquí representa la guía de identificación definitiva que debe ser considerada al evaluar estas propuestas.

8. La evaluación provisional de la Secretaría de la CITES de las propuestas de inclusión presentadas para la CoP19 (nº 2022/066) también ofrece las siguientes conclusiones provisionales sobre la propuesta 37 (*tiburones réquiem*):

"*Sobre la base de la información en la declaración de apoyo, la Secretaría considera que hay pruebas de comercio internacional de* C. amblyrhynchos, C. obscurus, C. porosus, Glyphis gangeticus, C. plumbeus, C. leiodon, Negaprion acutidens, C. acronotus, C. dussumieri *y* Lamiopsis temminckii*. La Secretaría considera que para* C. amblyrhynchos, C. obscurus, C. porosus, G. gangeticus, C. hemiodon, C. obsoletus, *e* Isogomphodon oxyrhynchus *hay pruebas de tendencias de disminución de la población que pueden hacer que sean elegibles para su inclusión en el Apéndice I en un futuro próximo (criterio A del Anexo 2a), sin embargo, la Secretaría considera que no hay información suficiente para las otras especies si se requiere la regulación del comercio para garantizar la conservación a largo plazo de sus poblaciones silvestres (criterio B del Anexo 2a).*

Existe información limitada para determinar si las especies de Carcharhinidae son parecidas para las aletas, pero es probable que todas las especies sean parecidas para el comercio de carne".

9. Esta guía proporciona el enfoque deliberado, especie por especie, solicitado por el Grupo de Expertos de la FAO, pero que se consideró que estaba más allá de su capacidad, junto con la información adicional solicitada por la Secretaría. El análisis aclara la necesidad del enfoque de inclusión por familias que se encuentra en las tres propuestas, y un medio para implementar las propuestas 37, 38 y 40 de una manera que sea práctica para las Partes de CITES en todos los niveles de capacidad.

10. La guía completa se adjunta aquí para su consideración mientras las Partes toman decisiones sobre las propuestas 37, 38 y 40 de la CoP19. Panamá se compromete a trabajar para convertir este análisis en una guía completa de identificación a nivel de familia para ayudar a la implementación si estas propuestas son adoptadas:


IDENTIFYING
SHARKS FROM
THEIR FINS
RIMA W. JABADO
ALEXANDRA Z.A. MORATA
ELASMOPROJECT

TABLE OF CONTENT

READING MATERIAL

Abercrombie DL, Jabado RW. 2022. CITES Sharks and Rays - Implementing and Enforcing Listings: Volume III - Dried Product ID. Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, United States. 89 pp.

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Jabado RW. 2019. Wedgefishes and Giant Guitarfishes: a guide to species identification. Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, United States. 30 pp.

Jabado RW, Abercrombie L. 2022. CITES Sharks and Rays - Implementing and Enforcing Listings: Volume I - Full Carcass ID. Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, United States. 79 pp.

WHAT IS CITES?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species. Appendices I, II, and III to the Convention are lists of species afforded different levels or types of protection from over-exploitation.

APPENDIX I

... lists species that are the most endangered among CITES-listed animals and plants. They are threatened with extinction and CITES prohibits international trade in specimens of these species except when the purpose of the import is not commercial, for instance for scientific research. In these exceptional cases, trade may take place provided it is authorized by the granting of both an import permit and an export permit (or re-export certificate).

APPENDIX II

... lists species that are not necessarily now threatened with extinction but that may become so unless trade is closely controlled. It also includes "look-alike species", i.e. species whose specimens in trade look like those of species listed for conservation reasons. International trade may be authorized by the granting of an export permit or re-export certificate. No import permit is necessary for these species under CITES (although a permit is needed in some countries that have taken stricter measures than CITES requires). Permits or certificates should only be granted if the relevant authorities are satisfied that certain conditions are met, above all that trade will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.

APPENDIX III

... is a list of species included at the request of a Party that already regulates trade in the species and that needs the cooperation of other countries to prevent unsustainable or illegal exploitation. International trade in specimens of species listed in this Appendix is allowed only on presentation of the appropriate permits or certificates.

CONFERENCE OF PARTIES 19

The Parties to CITES are collectively referred to as the Conference of the Parties (CoP). Every two to three years, the CoP meets to review the implementation of the Convention. This provides the occasion for the Parties to (1) review progress in the conservation of species included in the Appendices; (2) consider (and where appropriate adopt) proposals to amend the lists of species in Appendices I and II; (3) consider discussion documents and reports from the Parties, the permanent committees, the Secretariat and working groups; (4) recommend measures to improve the effectiveness of the Convention; and (5) make provisions (including the adoption of a budget) necessary to allow the Secretariat to function effectively.

The nineteenth meeting of the CoP (CoP19) is scheduled in Panama City, Panama, from 14 – 25 November 2022. Four proposals dealing with Appendix II listings of sharks and rays have been put forward to the CoP. These proposals all include lead species proposed on the basis of Article II paragraph 2(a) of the Convention and satisfying Criterion A and B in Annex 2a of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17). These also include "look-alike" species to be listed in Appendix II in accordance with Article II paragraph 2(b) of the Convention and satisfying Criterion A in Annex 2b of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17).

CoP19 Proposal 37

The inclusion of all species of the family Carcharhinidae in Appendix II

CoP19 Proposal 38

The inclusion of all species of the family Sphyrnidae in Appendix II

CoP19 Proposal 39

The inclusion of *Potamotrygon wallacei, P. leopoldi, P. henlei, P. albimaculata, P. jabuti, P. marquesi* and *P. signata* in Appendix II

CoP19 Proposal 40

The inclusion of all species of the family Rhinobatidae in Appendix II

This document provides information on three of these proposals, namely the family Carcharhinidae, Sphyrnidae, and Rhinobatidae. Proposal 39 on species from family Potamotrygonidae (South American freshwater stingrays) is not covered since these species do not enter the fin trade. For those proposals covered, information presented focuses on the primary fins traded (i.e., first dorsal fin, pectoral fins, and caudal fin). Visual identification of these fins has been key in ensuring the implementation of previous shark and ray listings. In fact, capacity building of customs officials through training on visual identification of these fins has enabled the effective enforcement of trade controls. It is therefore important to ensure that any future listings can be effectively implemented by customs officials. Overall, a review of key morphological characteristics used to identify fins to the species level suggests that many fins are indistinguishable between species and that a family level listing is likely more appropriate for ease of implementation.

INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE

This guide focuses solely on presenting the differences in the primary fins of shark and guitarfish species (first dorsal fin, pectoral fins, and caudal fin). Listings in CITES Appendix II imply that all trade in products derived from these species should be regulated. However, it is currently not possible to differentiate between the second dorsal, pelvic fins, anal fins, and meat of shark and guitarfish species. If these fins or meat are found to enter the trade, genetic techniques will need to be used to determine what species they belong to.

Information collated for this guide is based on an examination of dried fins, fresh carcasses at landing sites, or images of animals in the wild. While there are some variations in colorations between wet (i.e., animals freshly landed) and dried fins (i.e., already at point of trade), most features described in this guide remain distinguishable. Fin descriptions provided apply to adult animals. It is important to note that some fin colorations may change ontogenetically (i.e., depending on whether the animals being traded are juveniles or adults) or regionally (i.e., some colorations may vary depending on ocean basins). Venn diagrams are used to illustrate key features that allow to distinguish between species based on the shape and color of fins. Details are provided in turn for each family and then each species (except for the pectoral fins of the family Rhinobatidae since they do not enter the fin trade).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species™ status for each species was extracted from www.iucnredlist.org (September 2022). Species are assigned to one of eight categories: EX - Extinct, EW - Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), NT - Near Threatened, LC - Least Concern, DD - Data Deficient. Those assessed as CR, EN, or VU are considered threatened.

CARCHARHINIDAE

— Rapid population declines of 70% or more

— 46% of all shark fins in Hong Kong SAR and China

— 66% threatened (14% Critically Endangered, 20% Endangered, 32% Vulnerable)

SPHYRNIDAE

— 89% threatened (56% Critically Endangered, 22% Endangered, 11% Vulnerable)

— Only one species Data Deficient

— Small fins can be confused with fins of juveniles from currently listed species

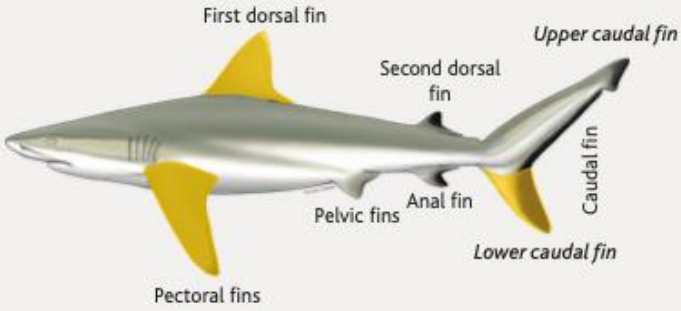
RHINOBATIDAE

— 58% threatened (11% Critically Endangered, 11% Endangered, 37% Vulnerable)

— 'Small fins' becoming prevalent in trade

— Some species not assessed but likely threatened

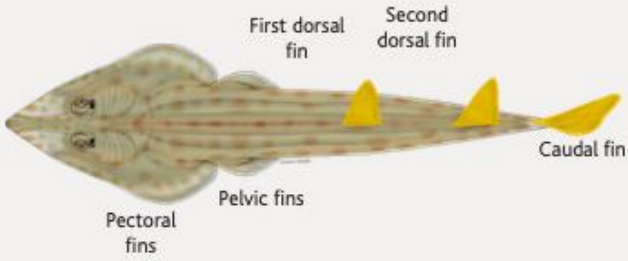
PRIMARY FINS TRADED



FAMILIES CARCHARHINIDAE AND SPHYRNIDAE

REQUIEM AND HAMMERHEAD SHARKS

All fins derived from requiem and hammerhead sharks enter the international trade. However, the primary fins traded, often in sets, are the first dorsal fin, two pectoral fins, and lower caudal fin. The remaining fins (second dorsal fin, pelvic fins, and anal fin) are less valuable and are often mixed together when transported or sold.



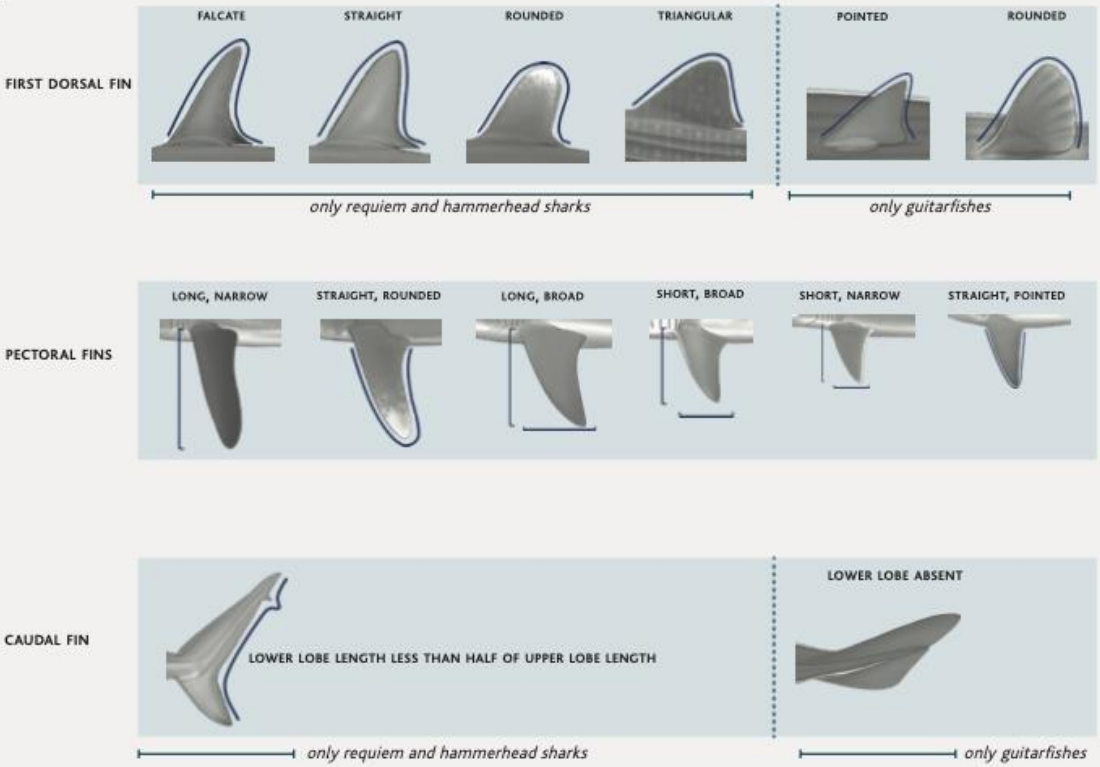
FAMILY RHINOBATIDAE

GUITARFISHES

The first and second dorsal fins are usually traded as a set with the whole caudal fin. The pectoral and pelvic fins are either consumed locally or discarded, and rarely enter the international fin trade. However, they are traded internationally as meat.

Fins shaded in yellow are considered the primary fins in international trade

FIN SHAPES


FIRST DORSAL FIN
FALCATE
STRAIGHT
ROUNDED
TRIANGULAR
POINTED
ROUNDED
only requiem and hammerhead sharks
only guitarfishes
PECTORAL FINS
LONG, NARROW
STRAIGHT, ROUNDED
LONG, BROAD
SHORT, BROAD
SHORT, NARROW
STRAIGHT, POINTED
CAUDAL FIN
LOWER LOBE LENGTH LESS THAN HALF OF UPPER LOBE LENGTH
LOWER LOBE ABSENT
only requiem and hammerhead sharks
only guitarfishes

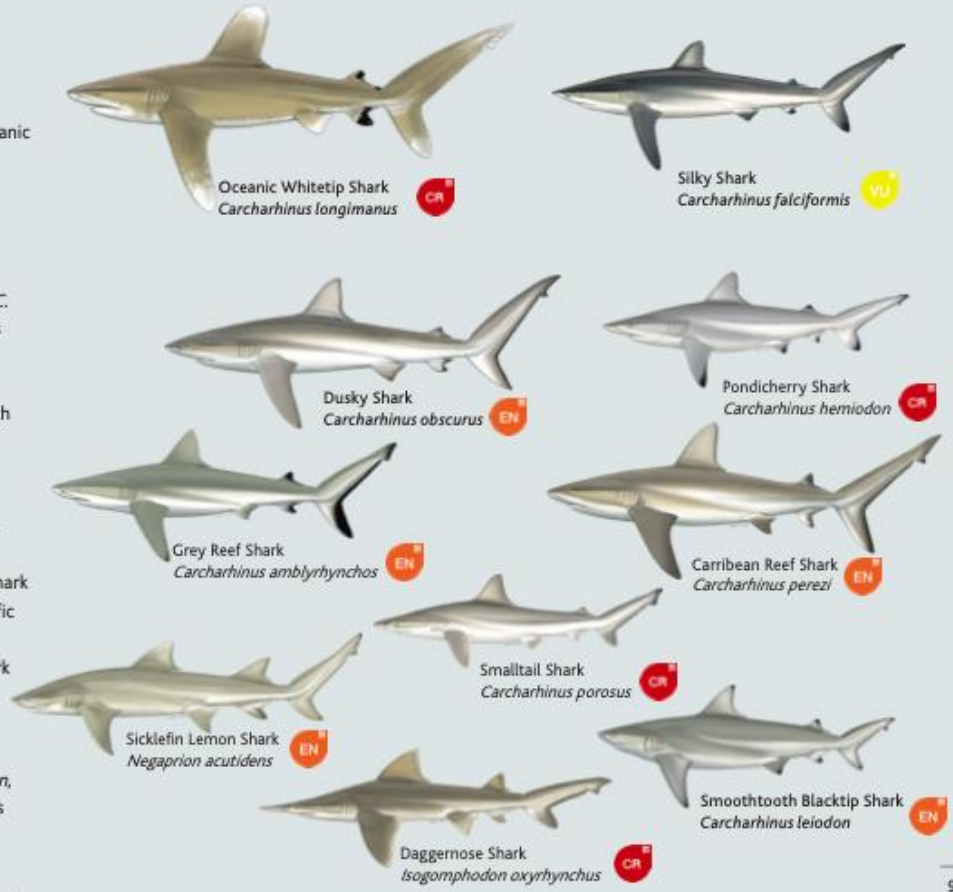
CARCHARHINIDAE

REQUIEM SHARKS

Two species are currently listed in Appendix II: Silky Shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) and Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*C. longimanus*).

The remaining 54 species in the family are proposed for inclusion: Grey Reef Shark (*Carcharhinus amblyrhynchos*), Dusky Shark (*C. obscurus*), Smalltail Shark (*C. porosus*), Ganges Shark (*Glyphis gangeticus*), Sandbar Shark (*C. plumbeus*), Borneo Shark (*C. borneensis*), Pondicherry Shark (*C. hemiodon*), Smoothtooth Blacktip Shark (*C. leiodon*), Sharptooth Lemon Shark (*Negaprion acutidens*), Caribbean Reef Shark (*C. perezi*), Daggernose Shark (*Isogomphodon oxyrhynchus*), Night Shark (*C. signatus*), Whitenose Shark (*Nasolamia velox*), Blacknose Shark (*C. acronotus*), Whitecheek Shark (*C. dussumieri*), Lost Shark (*C. obsoletus*), Pacific Smalltail Shark (*C. cerdale*), Borneo Broadfin Shark (*Lamiopsis tephrodes*) and Broadfin Shark (*Lamiopsis temminckii*) along with all other species in the family: Genus *Carcharhinus*, Genus *Isogomphodon*, Genus *Loxodon*, Genus *Nasolamia*, Genus *Lamiopsis*, Genus *Negaprion*, Genus *Prionace*, Genus *Rhizoprionodon*, Genus *Scoliodon*, Genus *Triaenodon*.

| Not all lead species proposed are illustrated |

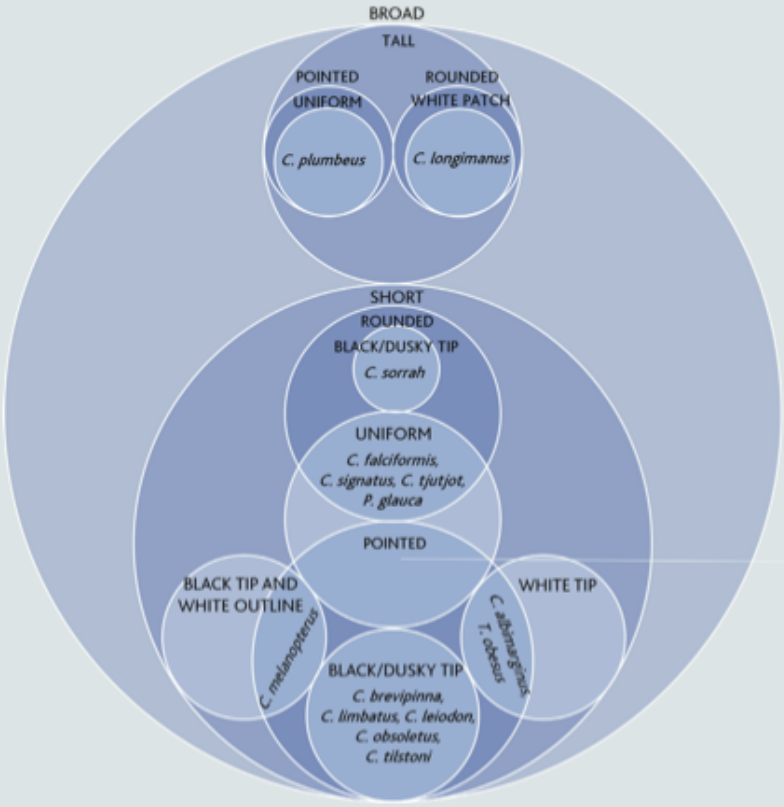


CARCHARHINIDAE

REQUIEM SHARKS

DORSAL FINS

It is not possible to distinguish between first dorsal fins derived from most requiem sharks. The large majority of dorsal fins originating from requiem sharks are uniform in color, short, and broad. Some exceptions to this include the Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*C. longimanus*), which is already listed in Appendix II and easily identifiable by its white blotched markings on the apex of the fin, or the Blacktip Reef Shark (*C. melanopterus*), with a large distinct black blotch at apex of the fin. Many of the other requiem shark species often have a black or dusky tip on their dorsal fins and fins may vary in height. While fins may be categorized into species groupings by coloration (e.g., the blacktip complex), it still is generally not visually possible to determine the species the fins might originate from. Genetic techniques are required if species level identification is required.

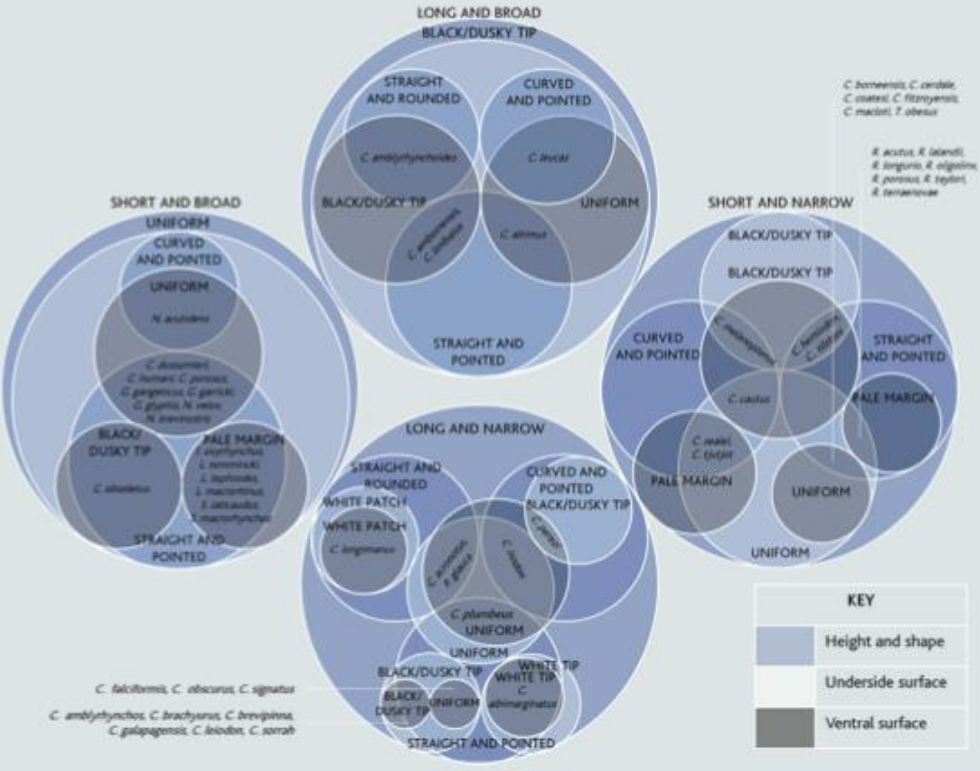


CARCHARHINIDAE

REQUIEM SHARKS

PECTORAL FINS

It is not possible to distinguish between pectoral fins derived from most requiem sharks. The large majority of pectoral fins can be categorized into larger groupings (short and broad or long and narrow), however, it is important to also look at the shape of the anterior margins and the coloration on the dorsal and ventral (underside) sides. These can vary depending on the size of the animals the fins originate from (i.e., adult or juveniles). Some exceptions to this include the Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*C. longimanus*), which is already listed in Appendix II. While fins may be categorized into species groupings by coloration (e.g., the blacktip complex), it still is generally not visually possible to determine the species the fins might originate from. Genetic techniques are required. Note – Great Hammerhead pectoral fin size might appear large due to the maximum total length of the animals and the proportion of the fins compared to the body.



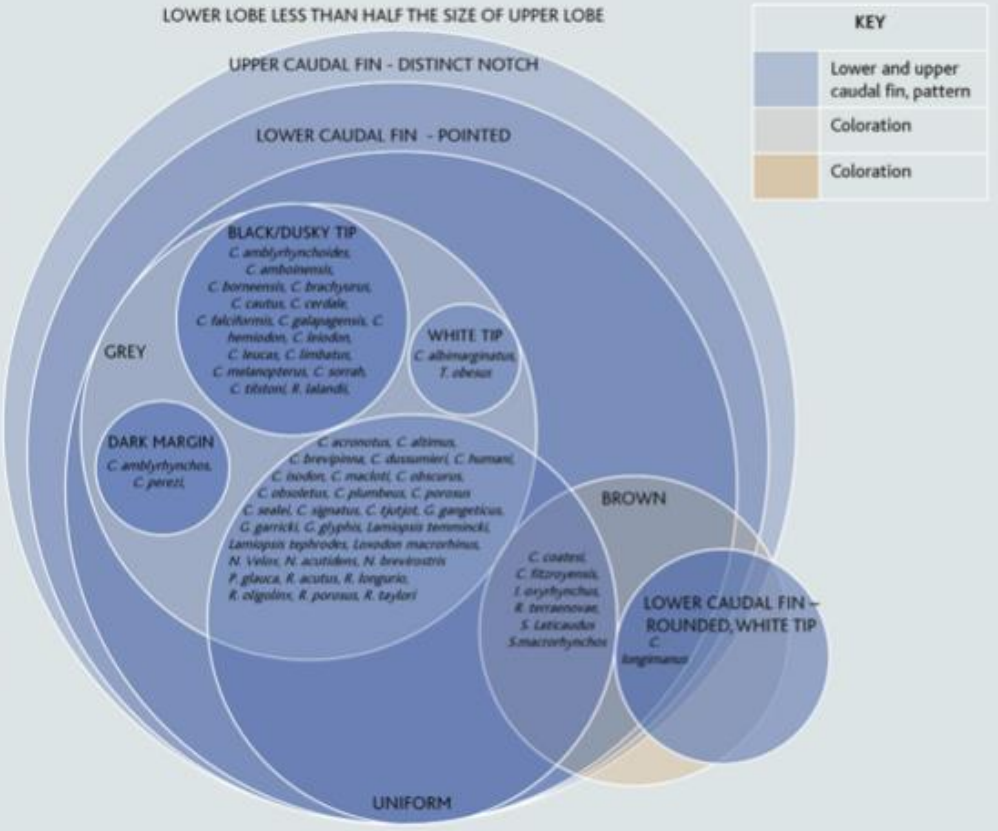
CARCHARHINIDAE

REQUIEM SHARKS

CAUDAL FIN

It is not possible to distinguish between whole caudal fins or lower caudal lobes derived from requiem sharks. One exception is the Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*C. longimanus*), which is already listed in Appendix II.

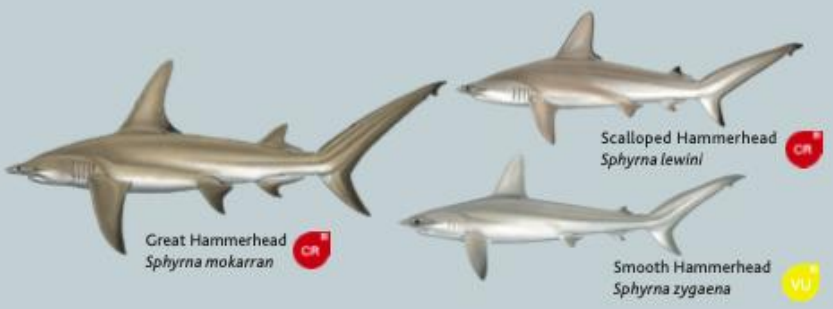
Although all requiem sharks have the length of their lower lobe less than half the length of their upper lobe and an upper lobe with a distinct notch, species may have uniform colored caudal fins, or have various markings on the lower lobe or the anterior margins of the caudal fin. While it may be possible to group species by the coloration of their caudal fins, overall, it is not possible to determine the exact species these fins might originate from. Genetic techniques are required.



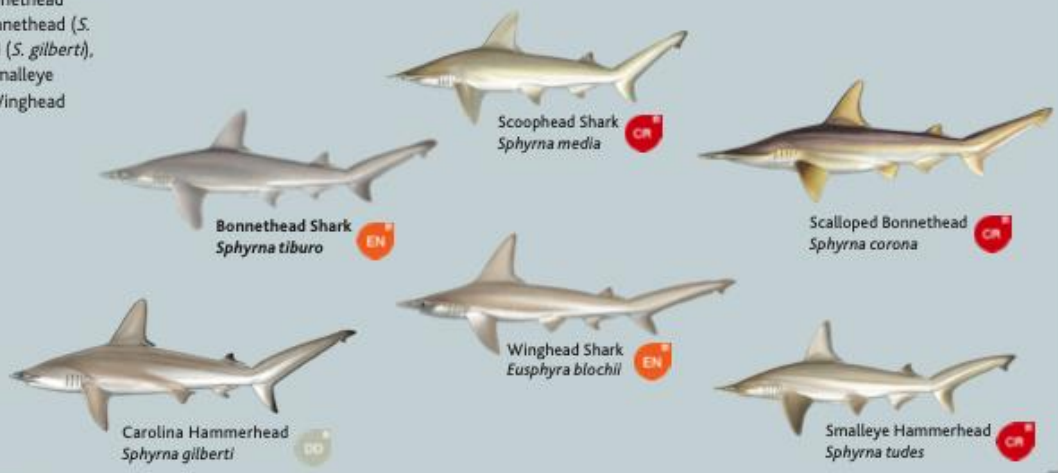
SPHYRNIDAE

HAMMERHEAD SHARKS

Three species are currently listed in Appendix II: Great Hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*), Scalloped Hammerhead (*S. lewini*), and Smooth Hammerhead (*S. zygaena*).



The remaining six species in the family are proposed for inclusion: Bonnethead Shark (*S. tiburo*), Scalloped Bonnethead (*S. corona*), Carolina hammerhead (*S. gilberti*), Scoophead Shark (*S. media*), Smalleye Hammerhead (*S. tudes*), and Winghead Shark (*Eusphyra blochii*).



| *Lead species proposed in* ***bold*** |

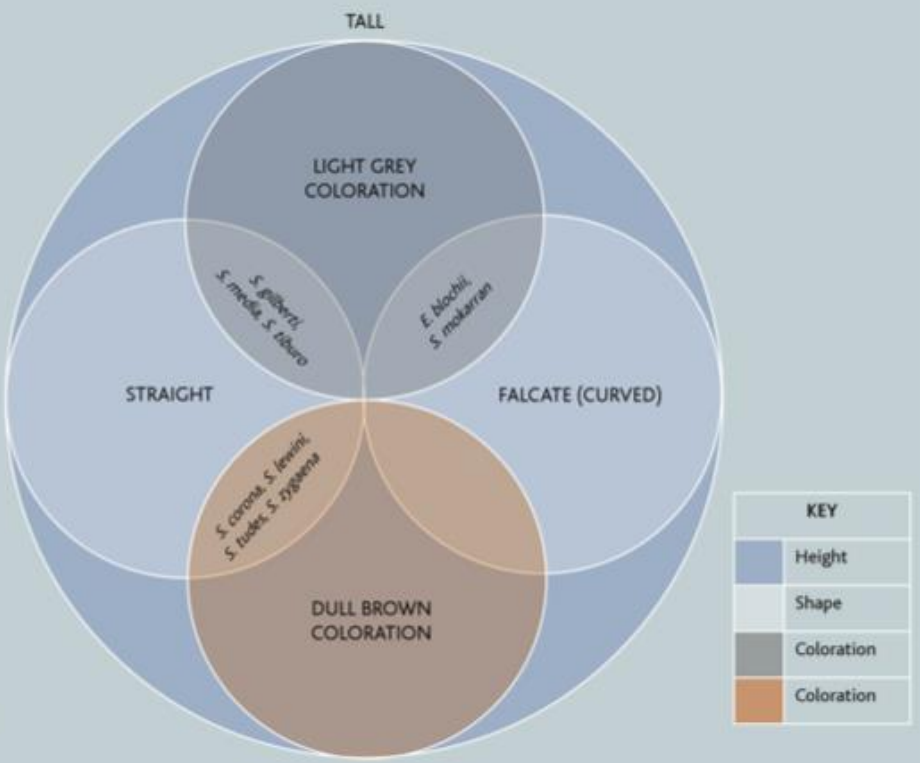
SPHYRNIDAE

HAMMERHEAD SHARKS

DORSAL FINS

All hammerhead dorsal fins are considered tall fins. Two species have tall and falcate dorsal fins, namely, the Great Hammerhead (*S. mokarran*) and the Winghead Shark (*E. blochii*). The Great Hammerhead is already listed in Appendix II. It is not possible to distinguish between the dorsal fins of these two species.

The remaining hammerhead species have tall dorsal fins with a straight anterior margin. In wet form, there might be a slight distinction in the coloration of the dorsal fins (light grey or dull brown). However, dry fins are likely to all look the same. Overall, it is not possible to distinguish between dorsal fins derived from juveniles of all these species (noting exception above). Large dorsal fins might be attributed to the Scalloped Hammerhead (*S. lewini*) or Smooth Hammerhead (*S. zygaena*) which are already listed on Appendix II. Overall, it is not possible to determine the species the fins might originate from. Genetic techniques are required.



SPHYRNIDAE

HAMMERHEAD SHARKS

PECTORAL FINS

It is difficult to distinguish between most pectoral fins deriving from hammerhead sharks. In wet form, there might be a slight distinction in the coloration for some species (i.e., yellow coloration). Features related to the shape and color on the underside of the fins (i.e., black or dusky at apex) are common to several species. It is therefore not possible to determine the species the fins might originate from. Genetic techniques are required.

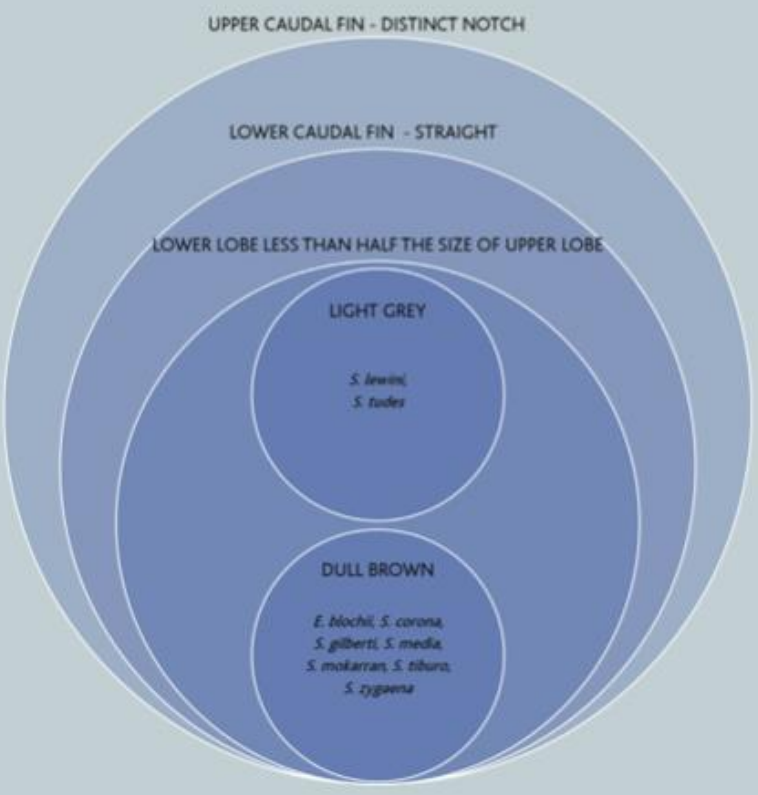
Note – Great Hammerhead pectoral fin size might appear large rather than short and broad due to the maximum total length this species can reach and the proportion of the fins compared to the body.

SPHYRNIDAE

HAMMERHEAD SHARKS

CAUDAL FIN

It is not possible to distinguish between whole caudal fins or lower caudal lobes derived from hammerhead sharks. In wet form, there might be a slight distinction in the coloration of the lower caudal lobe (light grey or dull brown). However, it still is not possible to determine the species the fins might originate from. Genetic techniques are required.

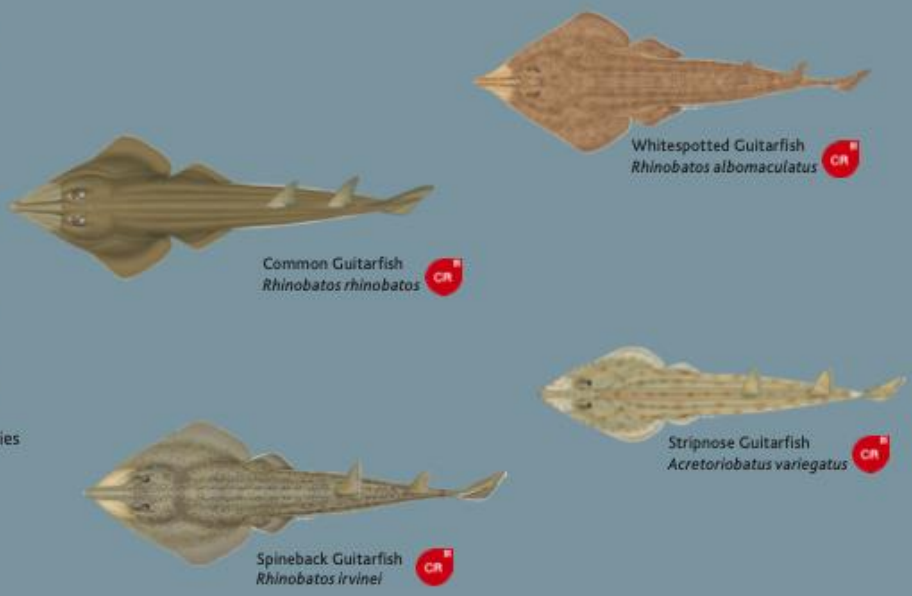


RHINOBATIDAE

GUITARFISHES

There are currently no guitarfish species of the Family Rhinobatidae listed on CITES appendices.

All 37 species in the family are proposed for inclusion: Stripenose Guitarfish (*Acroteriobatus variegatus*), Brazilian Guitarfish (*Pseudobatos horkelii*), Whitespotted Guitarfish (*Rhinobatos albomaculatus*), Spineback Guitarfish (*R. irvinei*), Common Guitarfish (*R. rhinobatos*), and Brown Guitarfish (*R. schlegelii*) along with all other species in the family.

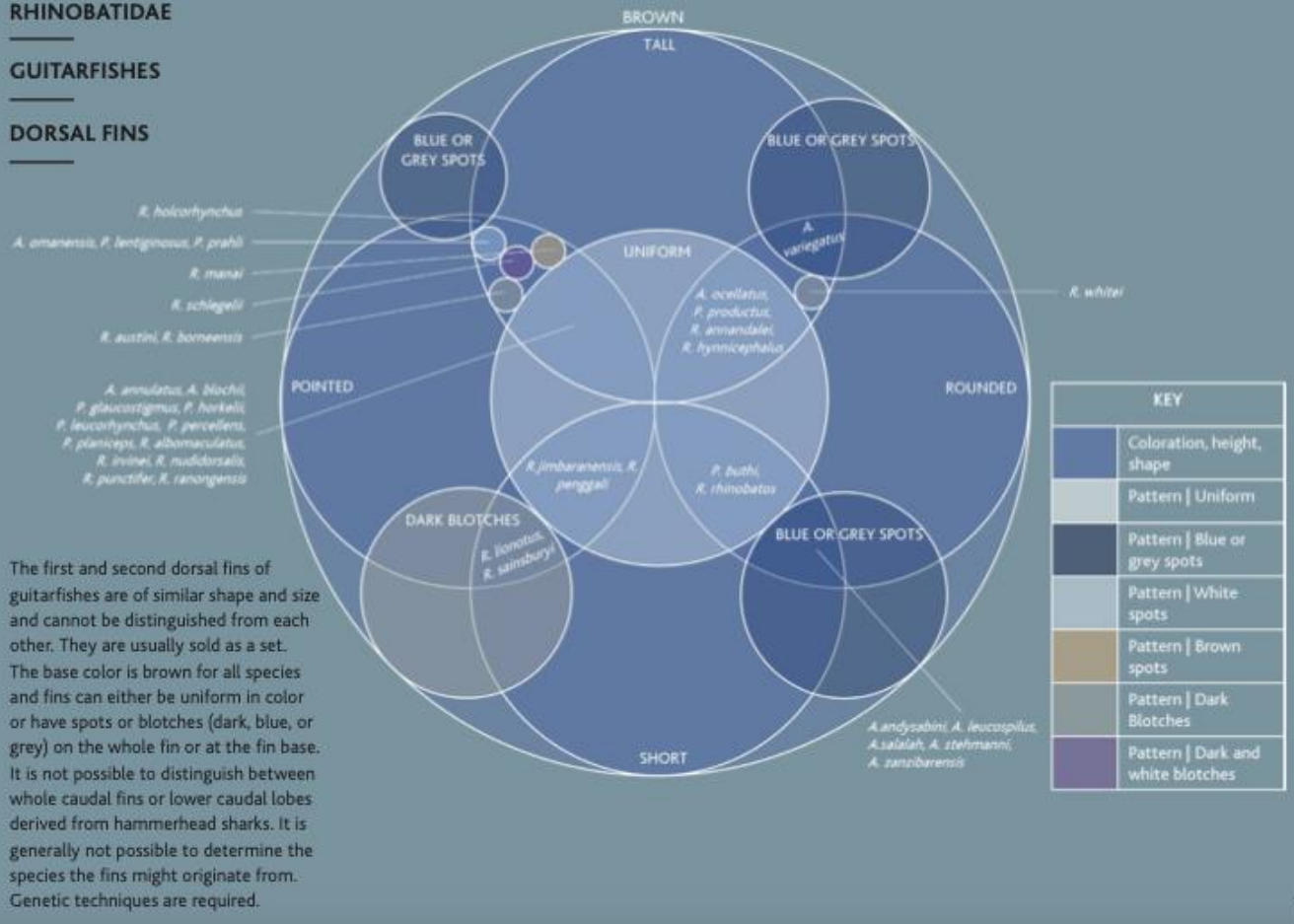


| Not all lead species proposed are illustrated |

RHINOBATIDAE

GUITARFISHES

DORSAL FINS



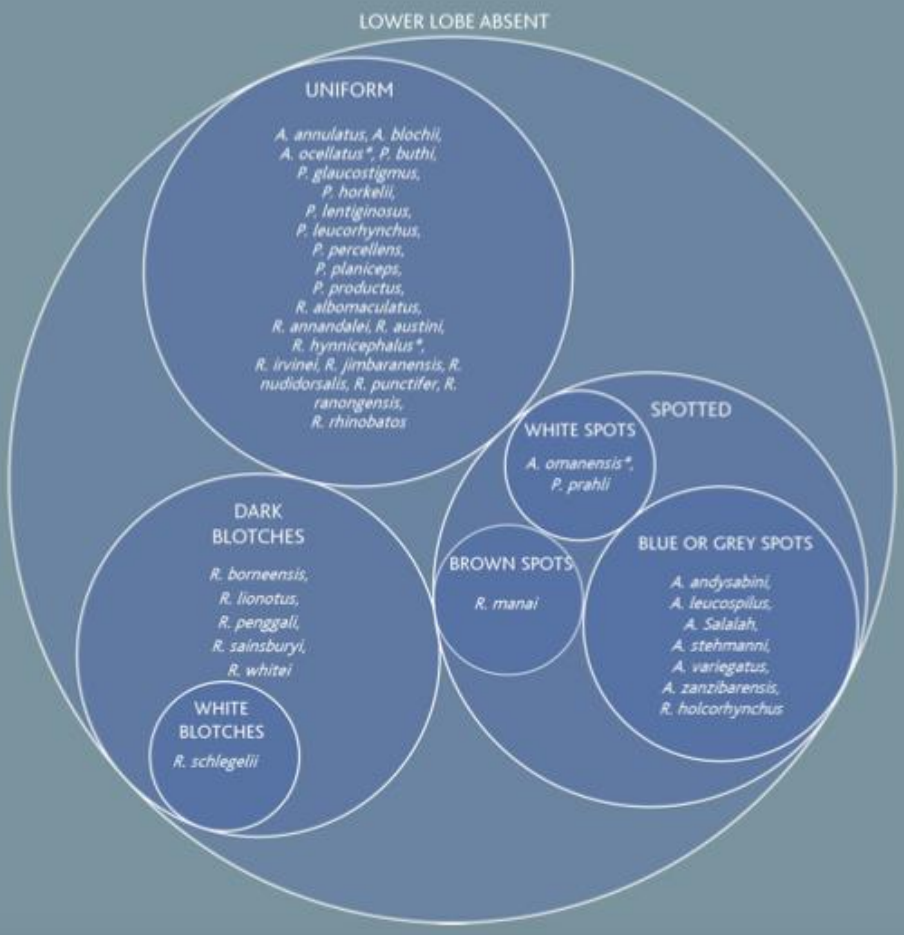
The first and second dorsal fins of guitarfishes are of similar shape and size and cannot be distinguished from each other. They are usually sold as a set. The base color is brown for all species and fins can either be uniform in color or have spots or blotches (dark, blue, or grey) on the whole fin or at the fin base. It is not possible to distinguish between whole caudal fins or lower caudal lobes derived from hammerhead sharks. It is generally not possible to determine the species the fins might originate from. Genetic techniques are required.

RHINOBATIDAE

GUITARFISHES

CAUDAL FIN

It is often difficult to distinguish between whole caudal fins derived from guitarfish species. All species lack a lower lobe, but some may have uniform colored caudal fins, or have various markings or patterns at the cross-section of the fin or on the whole fin. These markings may or may not be visible depending on how the caudal fin has been cut. If markings or patterns are visible on the caudal fin, these may be in form of dark or white blotches or variously colored spots (i.e., white, brown, or bluish grey). Overall, it is not possible to determine the exact species the fins might originate from. Genetic techniques are required.



SUMMARY

An estimated 37% of sharks, rays, and chimaeras are considered threatened with extinction. Over the last decades, the fin trade has been a major driver of shark fisheries globally and this has led to drastic population declines for many species. CITES listings have attempted to regulate the trade of some of these species because they meet CITES Appendix II criteria. The current status of many shark and ray species necessitates additional and immediate action. With an increasing number of species edging towards extinction, it important to consider how trade regulations can support conservation measures for these species. Visual identification approaches that have been developed to support the current CITES shark and ray listings have been effective and allow to distinguish between most listed and unlisted species. With almost 100 species being considered at CoP19, it is important to evaluate how implementation of proposed listings can be effectively undertaken.

At the point of landing, all species included in Proposals 37, 38, and 40 are identifiable to the species level. Identification guides to support implementation of the proposed listings are often available at the national and regional levels and in multiple languages. This allows for species-specific management and monitoring, and the issuance of CITES permits before products enter the international trade (if supported with appropriate documentation such as non-detriment and legal acquisition findings). This in turn is likely to increase traceability and reporting at the species-level.

At the point of trade, the ability to visually identify first dorsal fins and pectoral fins (for some species) has been key to ensure effective implementation of species listings. With multiple species of requiem, hammerhead, and guitarfish species being proposed, visual identification to the species-level will become increasingly difficult and customs officials will need to rely on genetic approaches to determine the species entering the trade. As highlighted in this document, look-alike issues for the majority of these species will occur within each of the families proposed.

Finally, the trade in meat for sharks and rays has significantly increased over the last decade. Most species proposed for listing are likely to enter the international meat trade. The identification of meat (or often processed carcasses with no distinguishing features) products is needed to implement listings. However, visual identification to the species level is not possible and genetic techniques are required. This trade is an important challenge that needs to addressed.

The information provided in this guide demonstrates the difficulty in identifying fins to the species level for all three proposals. Combined with the current status of species, family level listings of sharks and rays are likely going to be more effective from both a conservation and implementation/enforcement perspective. This family level approach has also been adopted for other species such as seahorses and orchids and has encouraged the development of traceability mechanisms. Since the majority of fins of the newly proposed species cannot be distinguished from each other without genetic tools, a family listing would allow customs officials to implement new listings and support with regulating international trade.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