

Ensuring the Sustainable Use and Smooth Trade of Sharks

Prepared under the supervision of
the Fisheries Agency
Government of Japan
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1. Purpose and use of this brochure

This brochure is intended to contribute to the sustainable use and smooth trade of shark species listed in the Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). It was created with the intention of being used by shark traders to provide business explanations regarding trade and transactions of sharks to their domestic and overseas affiliates.

Blue Shark (*Prionace glauca*)



(Figure : Fisheries Research and Education Agency)

2. Background of the listing of blue sharks etc. in Appendix II

- At the 19th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CITES held in November 2022, it was decided that 54 species of requiem sharks in the family *Carcharhinidae* including blue sharks, were listed in Appendix II.
- Of the family *Carcharhinidae* (54 species), 19 species including sandbar sharks (also known as Yajibuka in Japan), were decided to be listed in the Appendix II due to concerns on resource decline etc.
- On the other hand, 35 species other than 19 species above including blue sharks were decided to be listed in Appendix II as look-alike species claimed that it is difficult to distinguish them from endangered sharks on international trades.
- The decision to list these sharks in the family *Carcharhinidae* in Appendix II came into effect on November 25, 2023.

3. Meaning of listing species in Appendix II

- Species listed in Appendix II are defined as species which although not necessarily now threatened with extinction, but may become so unless trade in specimens of such species is subject to strict regulation, or other species which must be subject to regulation in order that trade in specimens of certain species may be brought under effective control.
- Thus, trade for commercial purposes of these species is possible as long as there is an export permit issued by the management authority of the exporting country based on the findings that the specimen was not obtained in contravention of the laws of that State for the protection of fauna and flora and the advice by the scientific authority of that State that the export will not be detrimental to the survival of that species.
- It should be noted that blue sharks are listed in Appendix II not due to the deterioration of the stock situation, but because it is difficult to distinguish them from endangered shark species on international trade (so called “look-alike species”).

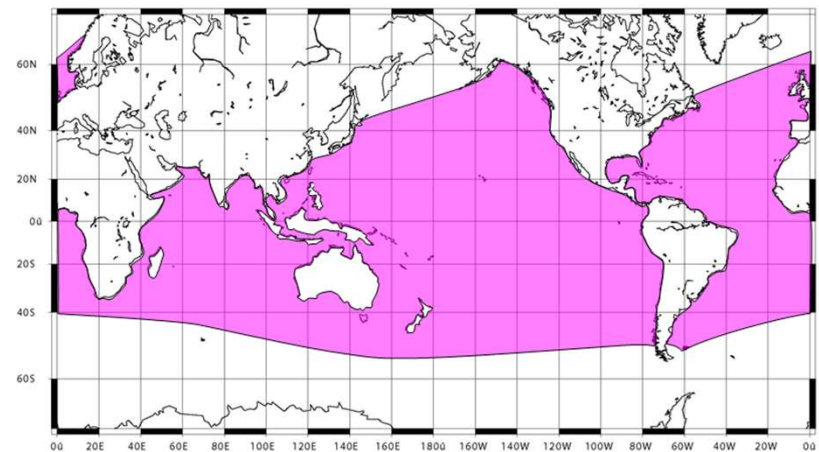
4. Stock status of blue sharks

- Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) have been established in each area to ensure the sustainable use of fisheries resources, and according to evaluations by the scientific committee of each RFMO, the status of blue shark stocks are generally in good conditions as of 2023.
- In addition, approximately 100,000 tons of blue sharks are sustainably harvested in approximately 60 countries around the world every year. Blue sharks are not an endangered species but species that can be used sustainably.

➤ Stock statuses of blue sharks

Management area	Year	Stock status*	Assessment institution
North/South Pacific	North:2022 South:2021	Good	North: ISC South: SPC/WCPFC
Indian Ocean	2021	Good	IOTC
North/South Atlantic	2015	North : Good South : Under investigation (increasing biomass trend)	ICCAT

➤ Habitat of blue sharks



(Figure : Fisheries Research and Education Agency)

5. Contribution of sharks such as blue sharks to local communities and economies

- For local communities and economies depending on shark species such as blue sharks, their listing would cause negative socio-economic impacts, including irrational hindering of the food security and sustainable development of fisheries in the communities.

(Photos: Shark City Kesenuma Promotion Council)



(Shark hampen)



(Shark cutlet)



(Shark ramen)



(Shark leather goods)

6. Response to appendix listing of sharks such as blue sharks

- Japan believes that listing blue sharks as a look-alike species in Appendix II is irrational and unscientific. Thus, Japan has made a “reservation” on the decision to list blue sharks in Appendix II in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. (In addition, Japan has made reservations on such other shark species as mako sharks in Appendix II.)
- However, Japan intends to issue export permits in accordance with CITES regulations to certify the legality of Japanese shark products and indicate the eligibility of sustainable use of the shark resources.
- In addition to imports and exports of sharks such as blue sharks, Japanese fishing vessels unload (export) them at overseas ports. Therefore, Japan coordinates the import and export procedures with related countries and regions to ensure the sustainable use and smooth trade of sharks including blue sharks.

7. Contacts

- For inquiries relating to export procedures of sharks including blue sharks listed in Appendix II of CITES, please contact to
 - **Office of Trade Licensing for Wild Animals and Plants, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, or**
 - **Ecosystem Conservation, Fisheries Agency of Japan**