REQUIEM SHARKS

Support Proposal to list all species of requiem sharks (family Carcharhinidae) in Appendix II, including 19 Critically Endangered and Endangered Species, and others that are similar in appearance.

Many requiem shark populations are rapidly declining due to unsustainable fishing pressure, driven in part by the international trade demand for their fins and meat. The deterioration of habitat, as well as the low reproductive output of these species, are additional factors driving population declines. The goal of this proposal is to list 19 Critically Endangered or Endangered species of requiem sharks on Appendix II at CoP19 in order to ensure that international trade in these species is non-detrimental and, due to the difficulty of distinguishing among the species in the family Carcharhinidae, to include the remaining 35 species of the requiem shark family in the listing as "look-alikes" under Article II.2(b) of the Convention and Criterion B in Annex 2(a) of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17).

Proponents of Listing

Bangladesh, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, European Union, Gabon, Israel, Maldives, Panama, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Distribution and Habitat

The species included in this proposal are members of the family Carcharhinidae (requiem sharks), the dominant family of sharks in tropical continental shelf and offshore habitats. Some species are also found in subtropical and warm temperate seas. Several of the species included in this proposal prefer coral reefs and oceanic islands, though the range of some species extends into open ocean waters.

At Risk of Extinction in the Wild

As is commonly the case with shark species traded for their fins, over 68% of species in the family Carcharhinidae are currently categorized as threatened under the IUCN Red list of Threatened Species (Dulvy et al. 2021). In addition to international trade demand for their products, these species

Lino 2015

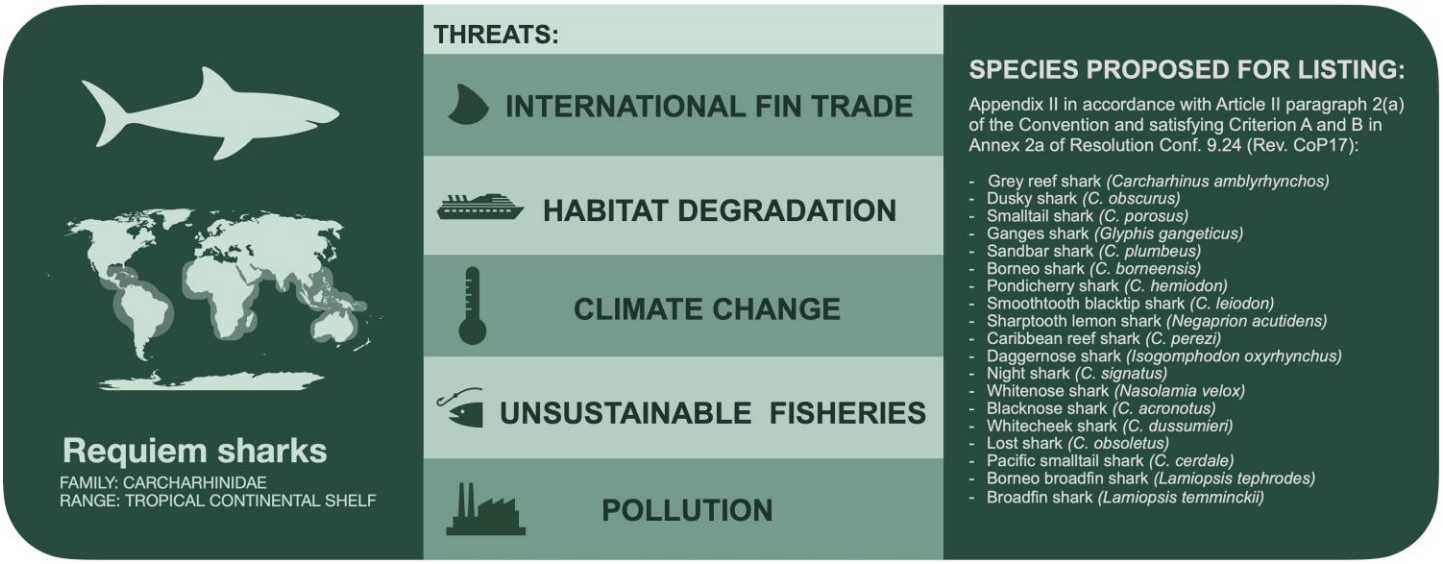
COMMON NAME: Requiem sharks
FAMILY: Carcharhinidae
IUCN STATUS: 68% of species are listed as threatened
MAJOR THREATS: International fin trade, habitat deterioration, conservative life history characteristics, harmful fishing practices, climate change, pollution
RANGE: Tropical continental shelf and offshore habitats

are affected by unsustainable fisheries (covering most of their range), habitat deterioration, and their low reproductive output.

International Shark Fin Trade

The global shark fin trade remains one of the key threats to shark and ray species around the world, particularly in markets in East Asia. International demand for fins not only serves as a driver of overfishing, but it also incentivizes the retention of sharks caught incidentally as bycatch that may otherwise be released alive. International demand for their fins, compounded by a lack of appropriate catch and trade management, has led to extensive population declines throughout these species' ranges.

The family Carcharhinidae plays an outsized role in the global trade in shark fins. In total, at least 35 species of Carcharhinidae, including all 19 `lead species´, have been documented in the fin markets of Hong Kong SAR, China and mainland China, making up approximately 46% of all species recorded in these markets, the largest shark fin markets and consumption centers in the world (Fields et al. 2018 Cardeñosa 2020). More specifically, studies of the shark fin market have identified 77.1% of small fins in Hong Kong SAR, China trade ports as from carcharhinids



(Cardeñosa et al. 2019). Smaller fins, such as those from carcharhinids, are used along with the by-products of fin processing for inexpensive shark fin soup dishes (Cardeñosa et al. 2019). The small fin trade is rapidly rising, increasing the threat to species frequently used to prepare these dishes (Cardeñosa et al. 2019).

Currently, only two species in the Carcharhinidae are listed in Appendix II, but similarities among the members of the family more broadly justify a family-level listing of requiem sharks. The difficulty of distinguishing among species of the family is important because the close visual similarity applies to the most commonly traded forms of the species, including their fins, dressed carcasses, and meat (Cardeñosa et al. 2018, Clarke et al. 2006, Fields et al. 2018). Due to the significant challenge in distinguishing among species, excluding any members of the Carcharhinidae from an Appendix II listing would likely increase pressure on unlisted species and faciliate laundering of products from listed species, greatly complicating enforcement efforts and potentially contributing to the rapid decline of the entire family.

Habitat Degradation and Loss

Species in the Carcharhinidae depend on inshore and freshwater habitats to survive, but many of the river systems they depend on are already deeply compromised by anthropogenic activity (Aggarwal et al. 2020). The worsening threat of climate change is also impacting inshore habitats, such as coral reef ecosystems, that species like the grey reef shark depend on, causing catastrophic reductions in populations (Hoegh-Guldberg et al. 2017). These inshore and riverine habitats are also some of the world's most heavily fished rivers and coastal regions, leaving species of requiem sharks susceptible to the additional threat of being caught as bycatch in demersal trawl, net and longline fisheries (Jabado et al. 2017, Quieroz et al. 2019).

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