

# *4. International Efforts to Advance the Goals of the Shark Finning Prohibition Act*

The key components of a comprehensive framework for international shark conservation and management have already been established in global agreements, organizations and fora. These relevant mechanisms and fora have identified, adopted, and/or published detailed language, provisions, or guidance to assist States and regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) in the development of conservation and management measures for the conservation and sustainable management of sharks. Some of these mechanisms have created international legal obligations with regard to shark conservation and management, while others are voluntary. To that end, the United States continues to promote shark conservation and management by having ongoing consultations regarding the development of international agreements consistent with the Act. Discussions have focused on possible bilateral, multilateral, and regional work with other nations. The law calls for the United States to pursue an international ban on shark finning and to advocate improved data collection (including biological data, stock abundance, bycatch levels, and information on the nature and extent of shark finning and trade). Determining the nature and extent of shark finning is the key step toward reaching agreements to decrease the incidence of finning worldwide.

## **4.1 Bilateral Efforts**

NMFS has participated in bilateral discussions with a number of States and entities, which included issues relating to international shark conservation and management. Emphasis in these bilateral consultations has been on the collection and exchange of information, including requests for data such as shark and shark fin landings, transshipping activities, and trade. In addition, the United States continues to encourage other countries to implement the FAO's International Plan of Action (IPOA) for the Conservation and Management of Sharks by finalizing and implementing their own National Plans of Action.

## **4.2 Regional Efforts**

The U.S. Government continues to place priority on shark conservation and management globally and works within regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) and other

regional entities to facilitate shark research, data collection, monitoring, and management initiatives, as appropriate. In recent years, the United States has successfully led efforts to ban shark finning and implement shark conservation and management measures within a number of such organizations. Table 4.2.1 lists RFMOs and regional/multilateral programs in which the United States has worked to address shark conservation and management. Of the list in Table 4.2.1, ICCAT, NAFO, WCPFC, and the IATTC have adopted finning prohibitions. Other RFMOs the United States is not a Party to also have adopted finning prohibitions, such as IOTC, GFCM, SEAFO, and NEAFC. Recent activities or planning of the RFMOs that the United States is a Party to are discussed below as a supplement to last year's *Report to Congress*.

**Table 4.2.1 Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Programs.**

<b>Regional Fishery Management Organizations and Programs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)</b></li> <li>• <b>Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)</b></li> <li>• <b>Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)</b></li> <li>• <b>International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)</b></li> <li>• <b>Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)</b></li> <li>• <b>Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)</b></li> <li>• <b>South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO)</b></li> <li>• <b>General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)</b></li> <li>• <b>North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)</b></li> <li>• <b>Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT)</b></li> <li>• <b>Treaty on Fisheries Between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America (South Pacific Tuna Treaty)</b></li> <li>• <b>International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)</b></li> </ul>

**North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO)**

At its 26th Annual Meeting in September 2004, the NAFO Fisheries Commission became the first regional fisheries management organization in the world to establish a catch limit for a directed elasmobranch fishery. The total allowable catch for skates in Division 3LNO (the “nose” and “tail” of the Grand Bank) was set at 13,500 metric tons, for each of the years 2005–2007 and 2009. The total allowable catch was subsequently reduced to 12,000 mt for 2010. This total allowable catch was higher than the United States had initially sought, but the U.S.

delegation ultimately joined the consensus of which this measure was a part. In addition to this catch limit, NAFO adopted a U.S.-proposed resolution regarding data collection and reporting relative to elasmobranchs in the NAFO Regulatory Area. At its 27th Annual Meeting in September 2005, the NAFO Fisheries Commission adopted a ban on shark finning in all NAFO-managed fisheries and mandated the collection of information on shark catches. At the 2006 NAFO Annual Meeting, a U.S.-Japan proposal for improving elasmobranch data collection was also adopted.

#### **Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR)**

Five shark species (*Lamna nasus*, *Somniosus antarcticus*, *Etmopterus cf. granulosus*, *Centroscyrmnus coelolepis*, and *Squalus acanthias*) are known to occur in the northern part of the area addressed by CCAMLR. Only the first three species appear to be abundant enough to have the potential to attract commercial interest. The identification of a sixth species (*Halaelurus canescens*) from observer reports at South Georgia has yet to be confirmed.

In 2006, CCAMLR adopted a conservation measure prohibiting directed fishing on shark species in the Convention Area, other than for scientific research purposes. The Commission agreed that the prohibition shall apply until such time as the CCAMLR Scientific Committee has investigated and reported on the potential impacts of this fishing activity and the Commission has agreed on the basis of advice from the Scientific Committee that such fishing may occur in the Convention Area. It also agreed that any bycatch of shark, especially juveniles and gravid females, taken accidentally in other fisheries, shall, as far as possible, be released alive.

During the discussion of the conservation measure at CCAMLR, the United States stated that the issue of management of shark-related fisheries, with a particular focus on the practice of shark finning, is an important one for CCAMLR to consider. The United States noted that it has enacted legislation and regulations banning the practice of shark finning, and has been using educational efforts and enforcement actions to ensure that U.S.-flagged vessels and foreign vessels making U.S. port calls comply with the statutory ban on retaining shark fins without retention of the shark carcasses to the first point of landing.

The United States expressed hope that the investigations of the Scientific Committee would yield analysis of the stock abundance, shark bycatch levels, and other important biological data of the shark species of the Southern Ocean. It is believed that this conservation measure is an important first step to an eventual ban on the practice of shark finning. The United States also mentioned the need for future efforts to collect information on the extent of shark finning in the Convention Area and the amount of trade/transshipment through ports of Contracting and non-Contracting parties. The United States urged all Contracting Parties to prepare and submit their respective National Plans of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks to the FAO Committee on Fisheries, as set forth in the IPOA for the Conservation and Management of Sharks, if they have not already done so.

#### **Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)**

In August 2010, the IATTC convened the 1<sup>st</sup> technical meeting on sharks to discuss the new role of the IATTC in the conservation and management of sharks under the Antigua Convention, stock assessment methods for sharks, life-history studies, the availability of data from national

and regional programs, bycatch mitigation methods, and data collection needs and standardization.

### **International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)**

#### ***Science***

Assessments of Atlantic shortfin mako and blue sharks were completed in 2008 by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS). The assessment findings, characterized by high levels of uncertainty due to data limitations, indicated that blue sharks in the North and South Atlantic are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. With respect to North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks, there is a non-negligible probability that this stock could be below the biomass that could support MSY and above the fishing mortality rate associated with MSY. Recent biological data show decreased productivity for this stock. NMFS has determined that North Atlantic shortfin mako is not overfished, but is approaching an overfished status and is experiencing overfishing. The status of South Atlantic shortfin mako sharks remains unknown.

In 2008, the SCRS also conducted ecological risk assessments for ten shark species and one stingray species based on biological productivity and potential susceptibility to ICCAT longline fisheries. The results indicated that most Atlantic pelagic sharks have exceptionally limited biological productivity and can be overfished even at very low levels of fishing mortality. Bigeye thresher, longfin mako, and shortfin mako sharks have the highest biological vulnerability of the shark species examined. All species considered in the ecological risk assessments are in need of improved data. The SCRS recommended that precautionary measures be considered for shark stocks with the greatest biological vulnerability and that management measures be species-specific whenever possible. SCRS is planning to conduct another round of ecological risk assessments for a number of sharks, as well as stock assessments for North and South Atlantic shortfin mako sharks in 2012.

The SCRS and ICES conducted a joint assessment of porbeagle shark in 2009, including four stocks (northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast Atlantic). The northwest Atlantic porbeagle stock is overfished, but overfishing is not occurring. Despite the improving status of the northwest stock, rebuilding is projected to take decades due to low productivity. While conclusions for the northeast Atlantic stock were also characterized by uncertainty, it was estimated that the stock is overfished and that overfishing is occurring or close to occurring. Stock recovery in the northeast Atlantic is predicted to take between 15 and 34 years under a no fishing scenario. No conclusions on the status of the two South Atlantic porbeagle stocks could be reached due to data limitations.

#### ***Management***

At ICCAT's 2008 annual meeting, several shark-related proposals were presented and two were adopted. The first proposal called for ICCAT and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to coordinate the assessment of porbeagle sharks, which occurred in June 2009, in Copenhagen, Denmark (see above). The measure also contemplated that a meeting of concerned RFMO Chairs be convened just after the joint assessment to consider compatible management measures for the species. At the time of this writing, this meeting had not yet been scheduled. The second measure adopted by ICCAT in 2008 requires the release of bigeye

thresher sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by ICCAT and that are still alive when brought to the vessel, as well as the recording and reporting to ICCAT of incidental catches and live releases of this species.

In 2009, the United States proposed to reduce mortality of North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks with a cap on shortfin mako landings from pelagic longline vessels. While the proposal received broad support, it did not achieve consensus. Some parties wanted to exempt mako sharks taken as bycatch despite the fact that bycatch is the primary cause of mortality on this species. In 2010, the United States again proposed a cap on shortfin mako landings. Instead, the Commission adopted a measure that reinforces existing requirements to reduce mortality on the North Atlantic stock and requires reporting on actions taken in this regard for review by the Compliance Committee beginning in 2012. This recommendation underscores obligations to report data on shortfin mako stocks to SCRS and prohibits parties that do not report shortfin mako catch data from retaining this species, beginning in 2013.

Two other shark recommendations were agreed on at the 2010 meeting. ICCAT adopted a measure that prohibits retention of oceanic whitetip sharks caught in association with ICCAT fisheries and requires parties to collect and report the number of dead discards and live releases of this species. ICCAT adopted a measure to prohibit retention of all species of hammerhead sharks (with the exception of bonnethead sharks) that are caught in association with ICCAT fisheries, with limited exceptions for developing countries that rely on sharks as an important food source. Parties taking advantage of this exception must ensure that these sharks and their parts do not enter international trade. Given the coastal nature of hammerhead sharks, a statement was included in the record noting that several ICCAT members, including the United States, consider that this measure does not apply to directed fisheries in coastal waters.

In 2009, and again in 2010, Belize, Brazil and the United States submitted a proposal to require that all sharks be landed with their fins naturally attached. There was support for this proposal from several ICCAT members but consensus could not be reached as some parties noted such a significant change in management required additional research. The issue is expected to be reconsidered at ICCAT's 2011 annual meeting.

Canada and the EU submitted a proposal for Northeast Atlantic and Northwest Atlantic porbeagle stocks at ICCAT's 2009 annual meeting. Several ICCAT parties, including the United States, expressed concerns that the proposal was not in line with scientific advice and that porbeagle measures should be coordinated with other relevant RFMOs. No consensus on this proposal could be reached. In 2010, the EU proposed a prohibition on the retention of porbeagle sharks, which the United States supported. Canada, however, sought an exception for its directed fishery on the Northwest Atlantic stock, arguing that Canadian management measures are based on the 2009 stock assessment. After vigorous debate, including a willingness by Canada to consider some reduction in its national quota for this stock, consensus could not be reached.

In 2009, EU proposed a prohibition on retention of all thresher sharks (*Alopias spp*) but consensus could not be reached. Instead ICCAT adopted a recommendation prohibiting retention of bigeye thresher sharks in all fisheries with the exception of a small-scale Mexican

coastal fishery, which is allowed to retain 110 bigeye thresher sharks. It includes a requirement to submit catch and effort data for *Alopias* species other than bigeye thresher, and mandates that the number of discards and releases of bigeye threshers be recorded with the indication of status (dead or alive) and reported to ICCAT. In 2010, Mexico withdrew its claim to its retention allowance for bigeye thresher. Also in 2010, the EU again proposed a prohibition on the retention of common thresher sharks. The proposal was not adopted as there were questions about the scientific basis for the proposal.

### **Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)**

At its 5th Regular Session in December 2008, the Parties to WCPFC adopted a U.S. proposal to modify and strengthen a 2006 measure for the conservation and management of sharks. The revised measure applies to all vessels regardless of size or gear type. Commission Members, Cooperating non-Members, and participating Territories (CMMs) must report annually regarding their retention and discards of total shark catches as well as their annual catch and effort by gear type for key shark species. The 2008 measure identified blue shark, oceanic whitetip shark, mako shark, and thresher shark as key species. At the annual meeting in December 2009, the Commission amended the 2008 measure to include silky shark on the list of key species and at the annual meeting in December 2010, the Commission amended the measure to include porbeagle and hammerhead sharks on the list of key species.

### **Joint Meeting of Tuna Regional Fisheries Management Organizations**

The European Community organized and hosted the Second Joint Meeting of Tuna RFMOs from June 29 to July 3, 2009 in San Sebastian, Spain. The Participants of the Second Joint Tuna RFMOs Meeting agreed to call on RFMOs, consistent with the FAO IPOA-Sharks, to establish precautionary, science-based conservation and management measures for sharks taken in fisheries within the convention areas of each tuna RFMO, including as appropriate:

- Measures to improve the enforcement of existing finning bans;
- Prohibitions on retention of particularly vulnerable or depleted shark species, based on advice from scientists and experts;
- Concrete management measures in line with best available scientific advice with priority given to overfished populations;
- Precautionary fishing controls on a provisional basis for shark species for which there is no scientific advice; and
- Measures to improve the provision of data on sharks in all fisheries and by all gears.

### ***Kobe II Bycatch Workshop***

The Kobe II Bycatch Workshop (K2B), held in Australia in June 2010, was co-hosted by the United States and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. Dr. Rebecca Lent (NMFS IA) led the U.S. delegation. The workshop was part of a series of technical workshops developed as a result of the Kobe process, a collaboration of the five global tuna RFMOs to address cross-cutting issues. The goals of the K2B workshop, as outlined by the terms of reference agreed to at the second Kobe meeting, were to better assess, reduce, and mitigate bycatch and to improve coordination and cooperation on bycatch related issues, including sharks, across the tuna RFMOs. The workshop's recommendations call for assessment of bycatch in tuna and tuna-like fisheries, development of bycatch data collection standards, and enhancement of observer and port sampling programs. K2B participants further recommended that tuna RFMOs seek binding

measures or strengthen existing mitigation measures for bycatch that reflect international agreements, tools and guidelines, evaluate the effectiveness of current measures, and support bycatch related research. The recommendations include a list of elements necessary for successful bycatch measures such as being binding, clear and direct, measureable, science-based, and ecosystem-based. To assist the developing nations in carrying out the mandate of K2B, the recommendations call for RFMO members to consider capacity building programs for developing countries.

To enable greater coordination across the tuna RFMOs, participants agreed to support the creation of a joint tuna RFMO working group on bycatch with participants from each of the five tuna RFMOs. This working group was charged with identifying methods to harmonize data collection protocols, identify species of concern, review the efficacy of existing bycatch measures, and compile information on bycatch research. This joint working group will meet for the first time at the Kobe III meeting, held in La Jolla in 2011.

#### **International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)**

The Tenth Plenary session of the ISC (ISC10) was convened in Victoria, Canada July 21–26, 2010. The Plenary established a new Shark Working Group responsible for conducting stock assessments and other scientific studies as required on sharks. The new working group will focus on North Pacific fisheries for shark catch and bycatch particularly for blue, shortfin mako, bigeye thresher, pelagic thresher, silky, oceanic whitetip, hammerhead, and any other shark species for which stock assessments may be needed. The working group will collaborate with other RFMOs of the Pacific and initially focus on stock assessments of blue and shortfin mako shark. Scientists from NOAA's SWFSC and PIFSC were nominated to work with other international scientists and the ISC Chairman in organizing the first meeting of the working group to be held in Taiwan in April 2011. The agenda for the first meeting includes election of a working group chairperson and development of a work plan for blue and shortfin mako shark assessments.

### **4.3 Multilateral Efforts**

The U.S. Government continues to work within other multilateral fora to facilitate shark research, data collection, monitoring, and management initiatives, as appropriate. Table 4.3.1 lists these multilateral fora. Of the list in Table 4.3.1, the recent activities for four organizations are discussed below as a supplement to last year's *Report to Congress*.

Table 4.3.1 Other multilateral fora.

<b>Other Multilateral Fora</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)</b></li> <li>• <b>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI)</b></li> <li>• <b>United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)</b></li> <li>• <b>Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)</b></li> <li>• <b>International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)</b></li> <li>• <b>World Summit on Sustainable Development</b></li> <li>• <b>International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)</b></li> <li>• <b>Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum and the Convention on Migratory Species (APEC)</b></li> </ul>

**Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**

CITES has addressed the issue of sharks on several recent occasions. Whale sharks, great white sharks, and basking sharks have been listed in Appendix II of CITES as species that may become threatened with extinction unless trade is subject to regulation. In June 2007, at the 14th Conference of the Parties, the United States successfully proposed that sawfishes (Pristidae) be listed in Appendix I, thus banning commercial trade in sawfish and sawfish products, with the exception of largetooth sawfish (*Pristis microdon*). Largetooth sawfish is listed in Appendix II for the exclusive purpose of allowing international trade in live animals to appropriate and acceptable aquaria for primarily conservation purposes. CITES convened the 15th Conference of the Parties in Doha, Qatar from March 13 – 25, 2010. The United States developed and submitted proposals to add the oceanic whitetip shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*), and scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini* (with several look-alike species: great hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*), smooth hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna zygaena*), dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*), and sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*)) to Appendix II of CITES. Palau co-sponsored the U.S. proposal. In addition to these species proposals that were submitted by the United States and Palau, the European Union submitted proposals to add porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*), and spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), to Appendix II. During the meeting, the United States amended the scalloped hammerhead proposal to remove the sandbar shark and dusky shark as look-alike species. The United States also amended both shark proposals at the request of the United Arab Emirates and other Parties to delay implementation of the CITES listings for 24 months to allow time for capacity building and implementation guidance to be developed that would assist in the identification and enforcement of these proposals. The final proposal for hammerhead shark species was not adopted (there were 75 votes in support of the proposal, 45



votes in opposition, and 14 abstentions). The final proposal for the oceanic whitetip shark was also not adopted (there were 75 votes in support of the proposal, 51 votes in opposition, and 16 abstentions). Both proposals fell short of the two-thirds majority needed for adoption by a few votes. The proposals for porbeagle and spiny dogfish submitted by the European Union were also defeated.

### **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI)**

In 1999, the FAO adopted the IPOA for the Conservation and Management of Sharks, which is understood to include all species of sharks, skates, rays, and chimaeras (Class Chondrichthyes). The IPOA calls on all FAO members to adopt a corresponding National Plan of Action if their vessels conduct directed fisheries for sharks or if their vessels regularly catch sharks in non-directed fisheries. The United States was one of the first countries to prepare a National Plan, which was publicly released in 2001. At the time this report was written, the following entities had developed National Plans of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Ecuador, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Seychelles, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay.

FAO convened a joint workshop between FAO and CITES to review the application and effectiveness of international regulatory measures for the conservation and sustainable use of elasmobranchs in Genazzano (Rome), Italy from 19-23 July 2010. The workshop was attended by experts from different geographic areas and sectors including scientific assessment, fisheries management, fishing industry, fish trade, monitoring and control, and government administration. The workshop attempted to outline the strengths and weaknesses of the various types of regulatory measures and regulations and to discuss their effectiveness with regard to implementation and stock recovery, as well as their impact on fisheries, livelihood, food security, markets and trade, and government administrations. A final report from that workshop is still pending.

### **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**

The United States continues to use the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) process to develop a more specific call to States and RFMOs to strengthen measures to reduce the bycatch of sharks. Most recently, the United States was successful in negotiating specific language for the conservation and management of sharks at the United Nations Fish Stocks Resumed Review Conference. Specifically, the Resumed Review Conference recommended that States and regional economic integration organizations, individually and collectively through regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements, strengthen the conservation and management of sharks. The United States has also worked with other countries to propose and successfully adopt conservation and management language and recommendations specific to sharks in the annual UNGA sustainable fisheries resolutions. Since 2005, provisions have been adopted that call on States and RFMOs to significantly improve the conservation and management of sharks.

### **Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)**

Also known as the Bonn Convention, the CMS aims to conserve terrestrial, marine, and avian migratory species throughout their range. An intergovernmental treaty, the CMS was concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme and currently has 116 parties. The United States is not a party to the CMS. However, non-parties are able to participate in the negotiation of and can sign onto individual instruments concluded under the CMS umbrella, including the newly signed global shark instrument.

In February 2010, the United States, along with 10 other States, signed a global Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Migratory Sharks under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species. The MOU aims to coordinate international action on the threats faced by sharks and works to improve their species conservation status. The MOU initially covers great white, basking, whale, porbeagle, shortfin mako, longfin mako, and the Northern Hemisphere population of spiny dogfish, but more species can be added later. NOAA and the Department of State are currently engaged in interagency discussions to draft a Plan of Work for International Shark Conservation to guide U.S. priorities and actions on this issue in the near term.

### **Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) Regional Workshops**

The United States has worked cooperatively with Governments in the Eastern Pacific Ocean to hold a series of regional workshops aimed at improving shark conservation and management efforts in the EPO. The first workshop was held in Manta, Ecuador, July 9-11, 2008, and was co-hosted by the United States, Ecuador, and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). National attendance was strong with representatives from nearly every country along the Eastern Pacific including Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Peru, and Chile. The workshop brought together a broad swath of stakeholders including commercial and artisanal fishermen, fisheries managers, scientists, (NGO's) and policymakers. As a result, a lively interactive discussion identified gaps and opportunities for capacity building and began a dialogue on developing regional cooperative measures for conserving and sustaining shark stocks in the Eastern Pacific. Presentations reviewed each country's National Plan of Action for shark conservation (NPOA), import/export trends in the shark fin trade, national laws prohibiting finning, and the latest science and forensic techniques used to identify species populations and enforce wildlife trafficking laws.

On December 3-5, 2008, the Government of Mexico hosted in Mazatlan, Mexico, the second workshop. It was organized by Mexico's National Commission of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CONAPESCA) with support from IUCN, and the U.S. Government. The Mazatlan workshop continued the dialogue undertaken in Ecuador to identify gaps and sampling needs along with assessing opportunities for capacity building efforts to conserve and sustain shark stocks in the EPO. The theme of the Mazatlan workshop focused on identifying what data exist and what data still need to be collected in order to develop some rudimentary stock assessment estimates for several key shark species including: silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*), scalloped hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*), shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), pelagic thresher shark (*Alopias pelagicus*), and blue shark (*Prionace glauca*). The workshop also addressed the production of a regional shark guide for the Eastern Pacific in order to facilitate shark stock assessments.

The workshop also included a session for administrators, government representatives and regional fisheries organizations to discuss regional cooperation in shark management and conservation. The objective was to define regional activities that would be consistent with the FAO's International Plan of Action for Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-SHARKS). Participants concluded that there was a need to establish a mechanism to strengthen regional cooperation in both the short-term and the long-term. Priority themes for cooperation include research, development of human resources, regulations and an exchange of technology and experience. Long-term activities include the development of a proposal to be presented to international donors that would provide funds for the themes described above.

The third Eastern Pacific Ocean Shark Conservation Workshop was held in Manta, Ecuador July 6-9, 2010. The following countries were represented at the workshop: Ecuador, Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Panama, Honduras, Columbia, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Belize, and Venezuela. The group agreed on a set of minimum data collection protocols to take back to their respective sampling programs. This agreement is considered a very important step towards a more regional shark management regime. The group also discussed the need for developing a harmonized sampling manual to accompany the Spanish language guide and/or national guides. The issue of data collection in relation to the volume of information necessary to complete a non-detriment finding under CITES was addressed in a broad sense. Each country presented a summary of their data collection and monitoring programs, as well as some of the pressing conservation and management issues in play.