



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITES LISTINGS OF REQUIEM SHARKS CAME INTO EFFECT ON 25 NOVEMBER 2023

On 28 November 2023, in gazette no. 49774, the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment published the amendments to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendices I and II to give effect to amendments agreed by the Conference of the Parties at its 19th meeting held from 14 to 25 November 2022 in Panama. The amendments include the listing of an additional 56 species of the requiem shark family (Family Carcharhinidae) to CITES appendix II. Thus, as of 25 November 2023, 146 species of sharks and rays belonging to the Class Elasmobranchii, are now included in CITES appendix II and any trade [i.e. import, export or introduction from the sea (high seas)] of any part (dead or alive) of these species would require a valid CITES permit.

CITES Appendix II listing grants species a greater protection at an international level and requires that the issuance of CITES permits in respect of these species, is based on Legal Acquisition Findings as well as Non-detrimental Findings before an international trade in such species or part thereof can be authorised.

Species included in the Carcharhinidae family are 'critically endangered' and 'endangered' species affected by international trade, mainly the shark fin trade. These include amongst others, species such as bronze-whaler shark (*Carcharhinus brachyurus*); Zambezi/bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*); Blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*); Blue shark (*Prionace glauca*); dusky sharks (*Carcharhinus obscurus*) and porbeagle sharks (*Lamna nasus*). Realising that requiem sharks account for over 50% of the shark fin trade; other shark species were listed for "look alike" reasons, meaning there is a close visual resemblance between the most traded forms of the critically endangered and endangered species and are therefore included in the CITES Appendices to ensure that effective control of trade in the species at risk is achieved.

As a country with one of the most diverse Chondrichthyans (sharks, rays, skates and chimaeras) fauna in the world; it is acknowledged that the demand for South African shark products (fresh, frozen, dried) has grown considerably in the past two decades. Thus, it is important that trade of these vulnerable and endangered marine species listed on CITES as well as those listed on the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004: Threatened or protected marine species regulation, 2017; is properly controlled and that enforcement action is taken where required. In addition, it remains a priority to support the sustainability of the fisheries sectors managed in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998; which prohibits catching, landing, transporting, transshipping of sharks or disposing of their fins; without a permit. Improved collaborations between border agencies such as the South African Revenue Service (SARS) Customs, the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Home Affairs and the newly established Border Management Authority (BMA) is crucial to curtail the illegal trade (i.e. importation and export) of the vulnerable marine species.

A full list of the amendments to the CITES appendices and list of marine species that are threatened or protected, are accessible on the official CITES website, www.cites.org and the Departmental website on https://www.dffe.gov.za/legislation/gazetted_notices, respectively.

Any enquiries on related vulnerable marine species may be directed to Mr. Mpho Tjiane at Tel: 012 399 9596 and or Mr. Gcobani Popose at Tel: 021 493 7359 or through email: OCPermits@dffe.gov.za.