

# cites

GREENPEACE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITES COP13  
CITES, WILDLIFE TRADE AND THE THREAT TO GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY

POSITION STATEMENT 2004

## great white shark carcharodon carcharias

PROPOSAL 32

The Governments of Australia and Madagascar have proposed the listing of the great white shark on Appendix II with a zero quota as a means to control international trade in response to dwindling populations.

Despite its high profile, the great white shark has become a rarity in the world's oceans. Falling numbers of this species due to commercial fishing, habitat degradation and game hunting are further compounded by the shark's low reproduction rate. As great white sharks travel long distances and cross national boundaries, intergovernmental efforts to protect the species are crucial to their survival.

GREENPEACE RECOMMENDS: **support proposal 32**



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# trading away the planet

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**GREAT WHITE SHARK**

CARCHARODON CARCHARIAS

PROPOSAL

**description**

The great white shark is found worldwide, and is a long-lived, slow-growing, late maturing species which gives birth to only a few large pups after a long gestation period. This low fecundity means that sharks are not able to recover rapidly from human exploitation. Despite the great white shark's notoriety, information on its numbers worldwide is limited. However where data is available the number, and average size of white sharks is shown to be declining.

The great white shark is currently listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as *Vulnerable*, however the IUCN notes that "a global status of endangered may prove more accurate for this shark as further data are collected". In 2002, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) listed the great white shark in both Appendix I and II of the Convention. This CMS listing accords species strict protection in recognition of their endangered status, as well as encouraging the development of a regional cooperation mechanism.



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NATUREPL.COM**threats**

**habitat degradation:** The coastal waters preferred by great white sharks are likely to be affected by human populations altering the marine shore environment. As great white sharks are at the top of the food chain, their prey populations are often affected by over-fishing. Some bathers protection nets also result in white shark deaths.

**commercial fishing:** Commercial fisheries target white sharks for their highly valued meat, fins, teeth, jaws, hide and liver oil. They are also vulnerable to incidental capture.

**trophy sport:** Great white sharks are targeted by game fisheries for their massive jaws and teeth. Mature females are most vulnerable as they can grow up to six metres. This naturally impacts on the birth rate.

**trade:** Trade in great white shark products is illegal in some countries however it is rarely regulated. Teeth and jaws are freely traded over the internet or bought as curios by tourists in countries such as the USA, South Africa, and Australia. A jaw from South Africa was recently valued at US\$ 50,000, while smaller jaws fetch as much as USD 12,500–15,000 (IUCN Shark Specialist Group 1998, Anon 2004).

**benefits of appendix II listing**

Currently the only international trade control measure is an Appendix III listing by Australia. Up-listing the species to CITES Appendix II with a zero quota will help end the trade in great white shark meat, teeth, jaws and fins. It will also complement and enhance domestic measures to protect this species in countries such as South Africa, Namibia, the Maldives, Australia and the USA.

This CITES listing will be a critical tool in contributing to international conservation and management measures such as the CMS and the FAO international plan of action for the conservation and management of sharks.

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