



IWMC
World Conservation Trust

MEDIA RELEASE

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Shark Rejection Applauded

Santiago, 13 November 2002: IWMC World Conservation Trust today applauded CITES for not succumbing to pressure from western countries to place the basking shark and whale shark into its Appendix II. Both species of shark have been severely depleted in some regions but remain abundant in other parts of the world and neither is considered endangered.

The basking shark is extremely common in the south Pacific region where it is only caught in small numbers as incidental catch. Around the British Isles basking sharks have been severely depleted by over-fishing but are no longer a targeted species and their populations are therefore expected to recover without a CITES listing.

Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC, said: "With all the over-fishing that has taken place around the British Isles over the last twenty years, it is extraordinary that the UK should suddenly appear in Santiago and assume that its own profligacy has been replicated by everyone else and requires trade restrictions. Its basking shark proposal contained no information to suggest that this species is heavily targeted elsewhere in the world, yet an Appendix II listing would have caused needless operational problems for fishermen everywhere."

Whale sharks also remain common in various regions, although populations around India and the Philippines are currently depleted.

Mr. Lapointe added: "CITES and fisheries go together like chalk and cheese. The fisheries industry has a whole host of characteristics that make it unsuited to the type of administrative processes that CITES can impose, with just one example being that CITES simply could not move quickly enough to manage species effectively."

IWMC (International Wildlife Management Consortium) World Conservation Trust is attending CITES COP12 as an official observer organization and is actively participating in many of the discussions. It has several leading academics and conservation experts from different continents among its delegation.

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The International Wildlife Management Consortium (IWMC) World Conservation Trust is an international organization that promotes sustainable use as a conservation mechanism, the protection of the sovereign rights of independent nations and respect of diverse cultures and traditions. It is a non-profit body supported by donations.

IWMC World Conservation Trust was established in 1994 and has its Headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, and offices in, Argentina, Canada, China, Japan and the United States. Eugene Lapointe, President of IWMC World Conservation Trust was Secretary General of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) from 1982 to 1990.

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