



IWMC WORLD CONSERVATION TRUST
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SPECIES DU JOUR
THE GREAT WHITE SHARK – The CITES History

After having witnessed the Great White Shark (GWS) attacks in Australia, IWMC felt that historical background on the role played by Australia on the listing of the GWS on the CITES Appendices was needed to understand the current situation.

Prop. 11.48 to include the Great White Shark on Appendix I of CITES was presented by Australia and the United States of America at the CITES CoP 11 in Kenya (2000). During the debate, the main argument to oppose the proposal came from ... Australia itself, who stated that “the Great White Shark was not involved in international trade”, a basic condition for listing a species in the Appendices. Extract from the proposal: *“Trade in specimens of the species, though not well documented, is known to occur”*. The proposal was rejected.

At CP13, Bangkok (2004) Australia reintroduced a modified version of the proposal, Prop. 13.32, co-sponsored by Madagascar. The proposal included a very vague statement that *“Illegal national and international trade in white shark teeth and fins has been reported”*. This proposal was approved.

<https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/11/prop/48.pdf>

<https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/13/prop/E13-P32.pdf>

<https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/common/cop/13/inf/E13i-25.pdf>

Is the CITES listing of the GWS the sole responsible for the serious problems encountered, not only in Australia, but in many parts of the world? Maybe not, but it certainly has a lot to do with the recent hysteria “to save the sharks”. What about the overprotection of wild species that is negative to both people and the targeted species. It also has a lot to do with the unacceptable transfer of human rights (Fishers, Farmers, Surfers, Beach-users, Ocean lovers) to animal rights (GWS).

The next CITES CoP19 will occur in 2022, in Costa Rica. Between now and then, more attacks on human are bound to happen, more humans are going to be deprived from their livelihoods and their legitimate enjoyment of life.

While the Great White Shark recovery is essential, the coastal communities and water users should be able to ascertain their subsistence and have a safe access to the sea. At CoP19, are we going to see a proposal to delist the Great White Shark from the CITES Appendices?

This might be something for Australia to ponder...