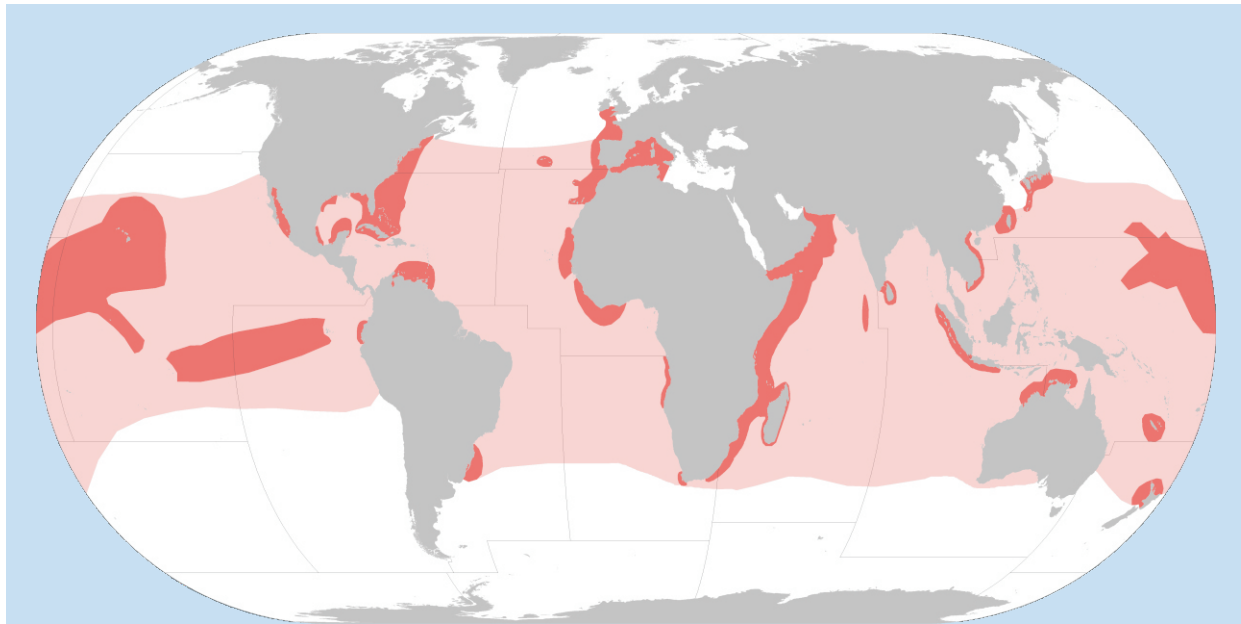




Bigeye thresher shark *Alopias superciliosus*

Does Not Meet CITES Listing Criteria

Scientific assessment in accordance with CITES biological listing criteria



Bigeye thresher shark distribution.
Dark shading confirmed distribution, light shading is not confirmed.
There has been no change in overall distribution of bigeye thresher shark.

Bigeye thresher, *Alopias superciliosus* is a highly migratory open oceanic species with a worldwide circumglobal distribution in tropical and temperate oceanic and coastal seas. Genetics data indicate that the Indo-Pacific and Atlantic populations are distinct, but there are no data to evaluate finer scale population structure.

No global population estimates are available for bigeye thresher, however, the population is unlikely to be small. The Panel considered this a low productivity species and determined that of the indices considered, most did not meet the CITES decline criteria.

In the Atlantic Ocean, a recent analysis of observer data

found the trend in bigeye thresher abundance to be relatively stable from 1992–2014. However, it was noted that the exploitation of this stock began at least two decades before these series began.

In the Indian Ocean, the only available information was for catch rather than catch rate (catch per unit effort CPUE) and thresher shark genus (all species) instead of for the bigeye thresher, and therefore this information was considered unreliable.

In the Western Central Pacific, a standardized CPUE series for the thresher genus for 1996–2014 showed a slight decline in the most recent three years possibly due to late reporting, but excluded the important Hawaiian

longline observer data. A standardized CPUE series from the Hawaiian longline fishery, which operates in one of the areas where bigeye thresher is most abundant, was generally stable with a recent increase in the catch rate over the 1995–2014 period.

The indices that did meet the criterion were not specific to bigeye thresher, suffered from methodological problems or were older analyses that were not consistent with recent studies using the same datasets.

In summary, the Panel concluded that there is no reliable evidence to support a decline of bigeye thresher that would meet the Appendix II listing criteria.

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Comments on technical aspects in relation to management, trade and implementation

Management

The FAO IPOA-Sharks underscores the responsibilities of fishing and coastal states for sustaining shark populations, ensuring full utilisation of retained shark species and improving shark data collection and monitoring.

At a regional level all Tuna RFMOs have adopted prohibitions on finning and encourage the release of live

sharks where possible. In addition to international, regional and national management measures that apply to all sharks, there are some species-specific management measures for bigeye threshers. Retention of bigeye thresher sharks is prohibited in ICCAT and GFCM, except for a measure enabling the retention of 110 specimens annually by Mexico. IOTC does not

permit retention of any thresher shark species.

Catches of thresher sharks are only reported to FAO by a small number of States, others report shark catches at more generic levels. Where there are prohibitions on retention of thresher sharks, they are still caught and mortality rates of those released may be in the order of 50 percent.

Trade

Thresher sharks are largely caught when fishers are targeting tunas. Retention, where permitted, is for local consumption and

international trade. Thresher shark products are in international trade in different forms, including meat and fins. Thresher shark fins are

considered by traders to be one of the least valuable types of shark fins on the market.

LIKELY EFFECTIVENESS FOR CONSERVATION

It is noted that if properly implemented, a CITES Appendix II listing could be expected to result in better monitoring and reporting of catches entering international trade of bigeye thresher shark and look-alike species. Improved monitoring should enable new or enhanced assessments of stock status and the subsequent adoption of management measures that ensure the sustainability of harvests where these are still permitted. Harvests from international waters would fall under the 'Introduction From the Sea' (IFS) provisions of the Convention. These would require CITES documentation to the species level for specimens

entering the jurisdiction of a State from international waters, along with a non-detriment findings (NDF) indicating that the harvest was sustainable and consistent with relevant measures under international law.

Listing would also provide an additional control to ensure that products entering international trade are derived from legal and sustainable fisheries. A CITES Appendix II listing, if implemented effectively, could also act as a complementary measure for regulations implemented by fisheries management authorities; in particular, where Regional Fisheries

Management Organisations have adopted measures prohibiting retention of thresher sharks.

It should be noted that States' abilities to make NDFs for highly migratory species is limited in the absence of region-wide assessments as evidenced by difficulties encountered in making NDFs for shark species that have already been listed. Under these conditions, the following outcomes can occur: previous trade ceases, trade continues without proper CITES documentation (i.e. illegal trade) and/or trade continues with inadequate NDFs.