

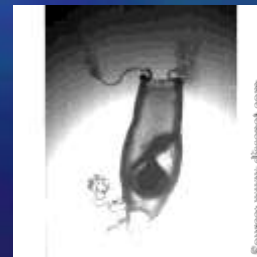
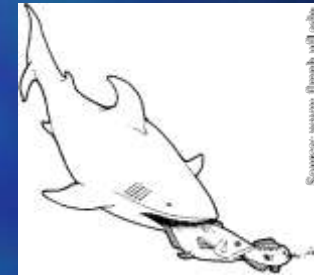
# Shark conservation:

## A Portuguese NGO perspective



## 1 Introduction

- Sharks have been swimming the Earth's seas for more than 400 million years, but now face an uncertain future
- They are important as top predators
- *Sharks are especially susceptible to overexploitation, owing to their specific biological and life history characteristics*
- Long life spans and slow growth
- Long reproductive cycles
- Late maturity (with some species not giving birth until the age of 20 or above)
- Small number of offspring
- Slow to recover once depleted



# 2

## Introduction

### The problem...

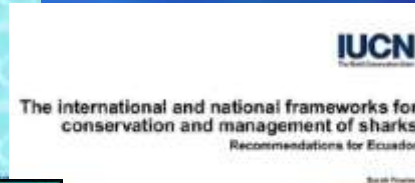
- Sharks populations are declining worldwide due to overfishing
- Contrary to popular belief, Europe plays a major role in the global catch, export and import of sharks



# SHARKS AT RISK !

## 3 Introduction

- NGOs and some Governmental institutions promote public events alerting to shark over-fishing and finning
- Many reports and web sites show the extent of this problem



# 4 Introduction

- Media have an important role informing about shark overfishing



- Ongoing concern

- Making people aware

- More than 100 million Sharks are caught every Year (FAO, 2007)

Three sharks die every second (Shark Foundation, 2007)

# 5 Shark Fisheries

- Both pelagic and deep-sea sharks such as hammerheads, oceanic whitetips, deep-sea sharks and thresher sharks are being massively depleted by overfishing (mainly as bycatch).



### According to CITES and FAO:



- more than 100 out of 400 shark species are being commercially exploited
- many of these shark species are so overexploited that even their long-term survival can no longer be guaranteed
- a serious monitoring and control program is lacking for international shark trade.

# 6

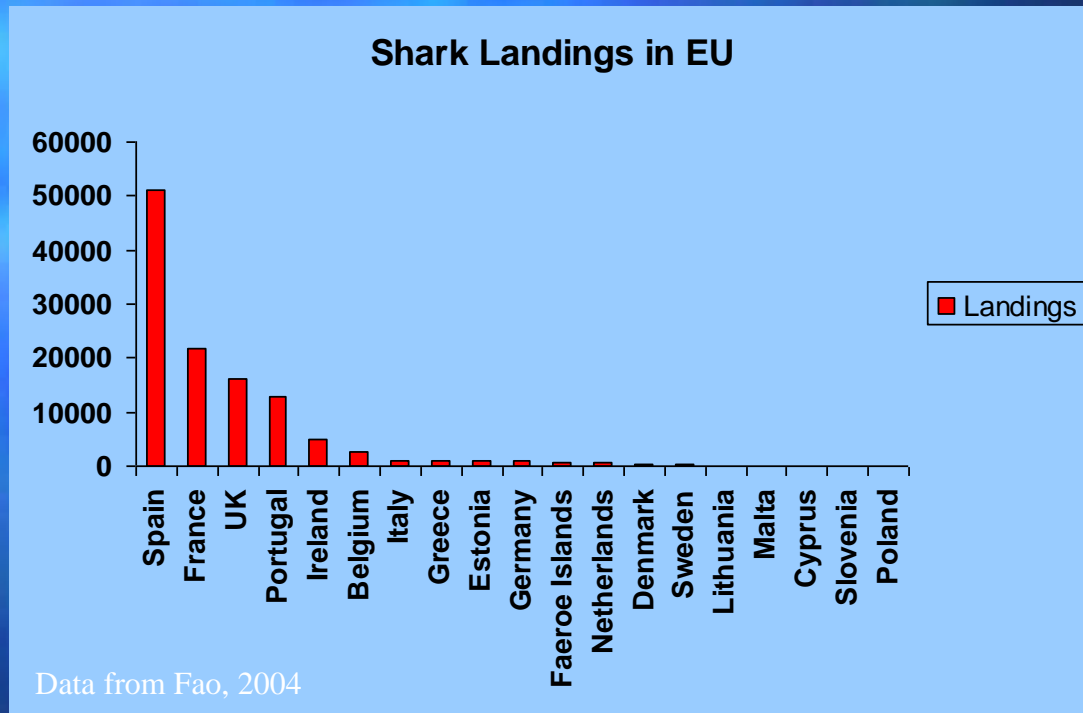
## Shark Landings

Top catchers...

- Spain, Portugal, the UK and France are among the world's top 20 shark fishing nations (which are responsible for 80 per cent of the global catch).
- However, Total EU landings have dropped in recent years, with the exception of Spain whose catch increased dramatically.



# 7 Shark Landings



- Portugal is among the world 5 top catchers –
- contributing with 10.5% of total catches



# 8

## Shark Fishing in Portugal



- Shark catches are increasing, threatening reproductivity and therefore endangering shark populations



- Recreational and commercial shark fisheries are increasing without rules or effective inspection

- Only deep-sea shark catches are regulated



# 9

## Portugal needs

- A sustainable management of shark fisheries – Responsible fishing
- Implement conservation measures to protect shark populations
- Adopt restrictions on shark fisheries to limit catches
- Minimize bycatch fishing of sharks.
- Stop issuing special fishing permits which allow removal of fins at sea.
- Promote these measures at the EU.



Source: [www.animalport.com](http://www.animalport.com)



Protect...

# 10 Measures

- 1 - Develop extensive studies on shark populations
- 2 - Assess periodically the state of shark stocks
- 3 - Regulate shark fisheries under the National Fisheries Policy
- 4 - Establish TACs, quotas and recreational limits.
- 5 - Monitoring shark fisheries
- 6 - Effective inspection of shark fishing
- 7 - Better control of shark landings
- 8 - Monitoring and surveillance of recreational shark fisheries
- 9 - Develop and promote measures to minimize bycatch
- 10 - Sharks landed with fins attached (discontinue special fishing permits)





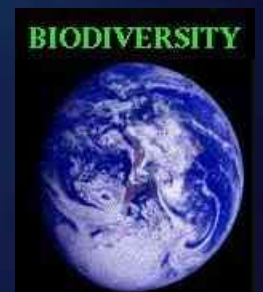
# 11 Recommendations

## *- Recommendations for effective management proposed by NGOs\**

- Landings of sharks with their fins attached and landed at the same port
- Fishing of commercially exploited shark species by EU vessels must be regulated under the Common Fisheries Policy, with fishing limits and quotas.
- Controlling Shark fisheries wherever the EU fleet operates – in European waters and worldwide.
- Migratory shark species exploited on the high seas must be regulated with catch limits and quotas.
- Effective management measures for bycatch reduction must be introduced and shark discards must be eliminated.
- Secure national legislation and regional agreements to protect and conserve shark species listed under global and regional wildlife treaties and those considered Endangered or Critically Endangered
- Vessels taking sharks must have independent observer coverage on board.
- Distinct trade statistics for shark products (meat, fins and liver oil), differentiated by species, must be developed.
- Develop an European Plan of Action for Sharks must be implemented that includes precautionary limits on catch based on ICES advice,
- Recovery plans for depleted species and management plans for others.

# 12 Final Remarks

- Sharks are important to ocean ecosystems.
- The environmental impact of removing large numbers of sharks from ocean ecosystems is hugely complex and unpredictable.
- Most sharks are top predators and scientists believe sharks play a key role in marine ecosystems by keeping their prey populations in check.
- Removing this control is likely to have a damaging effect on marine ecosystems.
- Biodiversity is also affected



# 13 Final Remarks



- Sharks fill an important ecological niche, keeping in balance the numbers of animals lower on the food chain.

- Yet populations of sharks are remarkably fragile.

- Unregulated shark fisheries can result in population collapse within a few years and take decades or centuries to recover, if at all...



# 14

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The beginning...

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**Changing mentalities**

**Protecting the environment**

**Action is needed**

**NOW IS THE TIME!**



# Thank you



[www.quercus.pt](http://www.quercus.pt)



[www.lpn.pt](http://www.lpn.pt)



[www.geota.pt](http://www.geota.pt)