**Communiqué**

**ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE SHARK-PLAN REPRESENTATIVE GROUP**

The eleventh meeting of the Shark-Plan Representative Group (SRG) was held on 13 March 2024 via Microsoft Teams.

The SRG meets regularly (usually on an annual basis) to review, monitor and report on the implementation of Australia’s second National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (Shark-Plan 2) and to enhance communication between key stakeholders in government and non-government organisation with an interest in shark management and policy. The 2023 meeting of the SRG was delayed to allow members to discuss the implications of significant decisions in relation to sharks made during late 2023 and early 2024.

These issues included the entry into force of the decision by the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to include in Appendix II of CITES 54 species in the requiem shark family, including many “look alike” species and also the grey nurse shark. It also included a number of decisions taken by the Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments to protect the Maugean skate. The SRG noted these decision will have limited impact on Australia’s wild-capture fisheries.

The SRG considered the high-level review of Australia’s National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks conducted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The SRG agreed to recommend to the Australian Fisheries Manager’s Forum the adoption of a Revised Shark-Plan 2. Many actions in the Shark-Plan have been implemented and the focus of work has moved to monitoring and enforcement, this is reflected in the revised plan. The Revised Shark-Plan 2 has also incorporated actions to address emerging issues, such as climate change, and to encourage continued research to inform the work of policy makers and fisheries managers. Recognising the growth of the charter fishing industry, and the benefits of broad representation, the SRG welcomed the provision for a representative of the sector on the SRG.

The SRG noted relevant action since the last meeting on:

* expanding video monitoring systems in NSW fisheries which interact with sharks;
* work to consider the cumulative impacts on school shark;
* the Australian Government’s review of the regulation of Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; and
* the phase-out of gillnets in some Queensland fisheries.

Representatives of the conservation sector noted concerns around inconsistent application of CITES requirements in some countries and the unsustainable catch of deepwater sharks in international waters.

Research organisations noted the publication of the *Shark and Ray Report Card* and field trials to reduce shark depredation and bycatch in gillnet fisheries.

Given there was no meeting of the SRG in 2023, members agreed to hold a second SRG meeting in 2024, in November or December.