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MEDIA RELEASE

Shark and ray trade dealt a blow

March 14, 2013

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Dulvy best contacted by email until Mar. 18 as he is travelling internationally

Nick Dulvy, a prominent Simon Fraser University marine biologist and shark specialist, says a record number of countries have taken a historic step towards preserving the world's sharks and Manta Rays.

On March 12, delegates from 149 countries at the **16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16)** in Thailand voted to secure the sustainable trade of five more shark and two Manta Ray species.

The Parties are countries that observe the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (**CITES**). The agreement aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

Prior to this meeting, CITES had listed only three sharks and seven sawfishes as being protected.

The rising demand for shark fins, shark meat, and gill plates is seriously threatening sharks' and rays' existence. Canada is helping to drive the demand for unsustainably and potentially illegally sourced shark fins.

"In the past, most attention at CITES was paid to land animals and plants, such as elephants, rhinos, tigers and mahogany timber," says Dulvy, co-chair of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (**IUCN**).

Now, after nearly two decades of efforts to secure sustainable fisheries management for sharks and rays, countries have finally recognized the need for concrete measures to secure the survival of the species."

The recent vote means that international trade in Oceanic Whitetip Shark, Scalloped Hammerhead Shark, Great Hammerhead Shark, Smooth Hammerhead Shark, Giant Manta Ray and Reef Manta Ray will be regulated.

Dulvy notes: "The Global Red List Assessments, produced by the IUCN Shark Specialist Group based at SFU, paved the way for this transformation in the fate of the world's most threatened sharks and rays.

"The CoP16 vote sets the marine fisheries conservation and sustainable management agenda for the foreseeable future."

Backgrounder:

IUCN Red List:

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and comprised of more than 1,000 member organizations in 140 countries, including government and non-government organizations, the IUCN is the world's largest professional conservation network.

Updated twice a year, the IUCN Red List is the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of plant and animal species. It is based on an objective system for assessing the risk of extinction of a species should no conservation action be taken.

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