**Communiqué**

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE SHARK-PLAN REPRESENTATIVE GROUP

The eighth meeting of the Shark-Plan Representative Group (SRG) was held on 2 December 2020 via Microsoft Teams.

The SRG meets annually 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 II).

SRG members acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 and commended the continuing work to implement the objectives of Shark-Plan II during the pandemic, noting that it required the identification of new ways to do business and engage with stakeholders.

SRG Members noted that jurisdictions had progressed several actions to improve shark management:

* Victorian Fisheries Authority successfully implemented new fisheries notices and handling guidelines to improve the handling of rays caught on piers, which were incorporated into the Victorian Fisheries Regulations 2019.
* Queensland implemented a range of fisheries reforms that include a requirement for Net and Line operators in the East Coast Inshore Fishery to land shark product with fins naturally attached.
* Western Australia had started developing a formal harvest strategy for its temperate shark fisheries.
* New South Wales formally adopted strategies for threatened sharks in its Priorities Action Statement.

SRG members noted that COVID-19 had affected the progress of research in several jurisdictions. Despite this:

* Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies released its research report on the vulnerability of the Maugean Skate population in Macquarie Harbour.
* The Australian Government’s National Environmental Science Program funded Shark Action Plan will be launched in March 2021.
* Australian Marine Conservation Society and Humane Society International released their review of recovery plans for threatened sharks.

Shark depredation was identified as a significant issue across multiple jurisdictions and FRDC agreed to coordinate a cross-jurisdictional working group to further discuss shark depredation.

The SRG discussed the need to better understand the international trade of shark product and the interactions between the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs). The secretariat agreed to investigate the use of domestic Australian Harmonized Export Commodity Classification codes for shark import and export and encourage intersessional communication between CITES and RFMOs.

Jurisdictional information has been updated and is available at: www.agriculture.gov.au/fisheries/environment/sharks

The next meeting of SRG members will be held in late-2021.