



Press release

## Urgent action needed to protect sharks and rays in the Mediterranean

***Shark and ray experts from all over the Mediterranean will meet in Mallorca from 4 – 7 November to discuss the status and identify actions to improve the conservation of sharks, rays and chimaeras – some of the most threatened groups of marine species in the Mediterranean Sea.***

**Mallorca, 31st October 2019.** – Sharks play a vital role in maintaining the food chain balance in Mediterranean marine ecosystems. However, their negative image has overshadowed the vulnerability of this group of species. Currently 53% of sharks, rays and chimaeras are estimated to be at risk of extinction in the Mediterranean region, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

From 4 to 7 November, the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med) together with the support of Marilles Foundation will bring together international marine conservation specialists, NGOs and other organisations to review current threats and identify actions to protect these species.

*“Our goal is to capitalise the information that we have from the species, increase the visibility of the existing management initiatives throughout the Mediterranean and find synergies and opportunities between them”* - explains **María del Mar Otero**, marine biologist from the IUCN Mediterranean Marine programme.

Moreover, the relationship with Mediterranean fisheries, as well as the commercial value of these species and related issues, such as the incidental catch will be also subject to discussion.

More than 50 researchers and conservationists will attend this meeting, including representatives from: University of Siena, Al-Azhar University in Egypt, the Agricultural University of Albania, the Institute of Marine Biology of Montenegro, the National Research Council of Italy, Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer in Tunisia, Halieutique Campus Universitaire from Algeria, Enalia Physis Environmental Research Centre in Cyprus, AKD Turkey, WWF, iSea in Greece, Sathoan in France, Kahn Marine Research Station in Israel, Universidad de Valencia, members of IUCN’s Shark Specialist Group and more.

### **The situation on the Balearics**

The last day of the conference on 7<sup>th</sup> November will focus on the state of sharks and rays in the Balearic waters; the pressures they are subject to and actions to revert this trend. This session aims at laying the foundations of a future Shark and Ray Conservation Plan for the Balearic region.

*“Shark and rays are amazing species which have suffered a severe decline across the Mediterranean and the Balearics are no exception to this. Restoring shark and ray populations to healthy levels is a key priority for us. This meeting is an excellent opportunity to start working on a Conservation Action Plan to protect these species in the Balearics”*, says **Aniol Esteban**, director of Marilles Foundation.



**For more information, photographs or interviews, please contact:**

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Further info:

[https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/brochure\\_medredlist\\_sharks.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/brochure_medredlist_sharks.pdf)

**Nota de editor:**

**About IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation**

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, is a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,300 Member organisations and the input of more than 10,000 experts. IUCN is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. The IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation opened in Malaga (Spain) in October 2001 with the core support of the Spanish Ministry of Environment, the regional Government of Junta de Andalucía and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID). The Centre's mission is to influence, encourage and assist Mediterranean societies to conserve and use sustainably the natural resources of the region and work with IUCN members and cooperate with all other agencies that share the objectives of IUCN.

Website: [www.iucn.org/mediterranean](http://www.iucn.org/mediterranean) | Facebook: IUCNMed | Twitter: @IUCN\_Med

**About Marilles Foundation**

Marilles is a non-profit foundation working to make the Balearics a world-leading example of marine conservation. We work with a wide range of local organisations to tackle the challenges faced by the marine environment of the Balearics. Working with other foundations and private donors, we fund projects that improve the conservation of the Balearic Sea and its coast.

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