



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

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Agenda item 14 (b)

INTERNATIONAL WHALE SHARK CONFERENCE

Note by the Secretariat

The CMS Secretariat is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, the open *communiqué* of the International Whale Shark Conference held in Perth, Australia, in May 2005, submitted to the Secretariat by ECOCEAN. The document is provided unedited in the format and language that it was submitted.

Open Communiqué

International Whale Shark Conference

We the participants of the International Whale Shark Conference, comprising scientific experts and representatives of Non-Government Organisations, intergovernmental organisations, the eco-tourism industry and Western Australian government agencies, having assembled from 23 countries of the world at Perth, Australia in May 2005 with the objectives of:

Advancing local, regional and international efforts for the conservation of whale sharks, and

facilitating regional and international collaboration in research on whale sharks,

Having heard fellow participants present 60 papers over 3 days in themes of Conservation, Science, Ecotourism, Socioeconomics and Management,

Agree that

There is cause for heightened concern over the state of global whale shark populations.

The state of scientific knowledge in regard to whale sharks is insufficient to determine the precise level of threat to the survival of whale sharks, however the evidence points to serious declines in the abundance of whale sharks in some parts of the world following even short periods of exploitation.

As such, there is wide scientific consensus on the need for urgent regional and international conservation measures.

Greater levels of whale shark protection can also ensure healthier economic outcomes for coastal communities around the world where whale sharks occur by encouraging and enabling them to prosper through the non-consumptive use of whale sharks,

and as such we

Call upon Nations, Governments, Organisations and Individuals to act with intent and vigour to:

Ensure worldwide protection of the whale shark and its habitat for the maintenance of biodiversity, ecosystem health and appreciation by future generations;

Facilitate a rapid transition away from harvesting of whale sharks in order to bring prosperity to communities through sustainable economic alternatives, such as ecotourism;

Secure a greater level of local, regional and international effort, cooperation and collaboration in scientific whale shark research including:

distribution, abundance, movement, behaviour, life-history biology, genetics and ecological interactions with and dependencies on the physical and bio-geochemical environment;

through the development of projects and the use of scientific and other networks; and

Secure a greater level of local, regional and international effort, cooperation and collaboration in whale shark conservation including:

wildlife and habitat protection agreements, fisheries monitoring and management programs, education, community-based conservation projects, economic feasibility studies, capacity building;

through the development of projects and the use of conservation and other networks; and

We also undertake to facilitate greater sharing of data and information of all types which support these goals and to meet again at a time in the future in conference to review progress.

**Agreed by Conference in session and released
12 May 2005 at Perth, Australia**