



## Environmental Organisations call on the Ministry of Rural Development and Food to implement the legislation on the protection of sharks and rays in Greece.

Athens, 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2021

Another unfortunate incident of catching, selling and displaying a Great White Shark, occurred in the Mediterranean, this time in Greece, on the island of Naxos. This incident complements the growing [catalogue of illegal fishing of protected sharks and rays in the Mediterranean](#) and in [Greece](#).



The Great White Shark, *Carcharodon carcharias* (Linnaeus, 1758) is one of the most iconic animals of our oceans and the world's largest known predatory fish. Unfortunately, contemporary narratives widely presented in popular media, unfortunately, contemporary narratives widely presented in popular media regularly misrepresent this fascinating species.

Currently, the Mediterranean White Shark population is listed as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species due to the dramatic decline of its population in the last 50 years: declining from 52% to up to 96% in some regions.

Great White Sharks are included - together with 23 other species of sharks and rays- in Annex II of the Barcelona Convention Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean. Annex II species "...shall not be retained on board, transhipped, landed, transferred, stored, sold or displayed or offered for sale." In accordance with Recommendation 42/2018/2 of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). In addition, as an EU Member State, Greek Fisheries are subject to Regulations 2015/2102 (Article 16j) and 2019/1241 (Annex I).

While there are no targeted fisheries for the species in the Mediterranean, bycatch in different fishing gears, like the pelagic longlines, bottom trawls and purse seines are the most prevalent threat for White Sharks' collapsing population. All effort should be made to release bycatch of White Sharks.



It is particularly important that Greek Fisheries Authorities pay close attention to such incidents, taking into account the existing protection and conservation status of the species, and the fact that such accidental captures could allow the development of an illegal market. This could threaten the survival of the Great White Shark, a species that exhibits low reproductive and growth rates, long lifespan and a highly migratory nature.



We urge the Greek State to increase controls and enforce the existing national (PD 67/1981) and EU legislation regarding the protected species of sharks and rays, but also to undertake the corresponding protection measures imposed by the International Conventions, of which Greece is a signatory party. At the same time, we emphasize that the Audit Department of the Directorate of Control of Fishery Activities and Products, of the General Directorate of Fisheries of the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, must be activated and operate, as according to the P.D. 97/2017 (Government Gazette A '138 / 15.09.2017) is the only body with jurisdiction for controls in fish markets, fish shops and retail trade, so that there is a second control line for the trade of protected species of sharks and rays.

In addition, we call on all Mediterranean countries to work together to implement existing decisions and legislation. At the same time, there remains the need to educate and inform fishermen, stakeholders, citizens as well the media about the importance and status of protection of this iconic marine species, extremely important for the balance of Mediterranean ecosystems.

### **Applied legislations for the protection of the Great White Sharks in the Mediterranean**

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), inclusion in Appendix II (Species threatened with extinction)

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), such as the inclusion as a "protected species" in Appendix II (Migratory species conserved through Agreements)



EU: Council Regulation (EU) 2019/1241, in Annex I (prohibition to fish for, retain on board, tranship, land, store, sell, display or offer for sale, as referred to in Article 10(2)) in all waters

EU: Regulation (EU) 2015/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council – transposition of GFCM/42/2018/2 into EU Regulations applicable to the EU Fleet in the Mediterranean.

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2016/1251 in Table 1D (Species to be monitored under protection programmes in the Union or under international obligations)

Law on Fisheries n.64/2012 – amended on April 2020 by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Albania

Israel: protected since 2005

Italy: 1992, law on wildlife protection n.150/1992.

Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 26/15

Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 76/06

Spain: Real Decreto 139/2011 Listado de Especies Silvestres en Régimen de Protección Especial y del Catálogo Español de Especies Amenazadas

Slovenia: Decree on the protected free-ranging animal species (UL RS 46/04)

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**The Press Release is supported by:**

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Panhellenic Animal Welfare & Environmental Federation

All For Blue

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Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos (MedINA)

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ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE CORINTHIAN - PATRASIAN GULF "O NIREAS"

Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN)

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