

IUCN Shark Specialist Group hosts mini Red List Workshop in Cairns, June 2010

Over the last decade, the IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG) has undertaken a Global Shark Red List Assessment, resulting in the evaluation of 1,044 chondrichthyans for the IUCN *Red List of Threatened Species* (the 'Red List') up to the end of 2007. The recent description of new species along with a number of taxonomic changes has resulted in a large number of species requiring evaluation against the Red List Categories and Criteria. The rate of taxonomic progress is a credit to the small community of dedicated systematists who have discovered a new chondrichthyan species, on average, once every two weeks! The *Sharks International* conference held in early June in Cairns, Queensland, Australia (www.sharksinternational.org/) provided an opportunity to bring together a group of chondrichthyan experts to begin the process of assessing these newly named species. The SSG hosted an afternoon mini-Red List Workshop in Cairns on Sunday 6 June prior to the opening of *Sharks International* with the aim to assess currently Not Evaluated chondrichthyan species against the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria.

Twenty-two participants from seven countries attended, with a blend of experienced assessors and those new to the Red Listing process. We discussed the status of 92 species of mainly Indo-Australasian chondrichthyans. Species considered included some for which conservation concern has been raised, such as gulper sharks *Centrophorus* spp, as well as many poorly-known species of deepwater skates, catsharks and chimaeras. The workshop sought to draw out the biology and fisheries knowledge of the participants pertaining to each species, to assign assessors to each species and in some cases to assign Red List categories. Participants volunteered to assess the species considered and will now work independently or in collaboration with colleagues to prepare Red List assessment documentation. The SSG aims to compile these new assessments by the end of 2010 for submission to the IUCN Red List team.

The SSG's Red List programme is an ongoing and dynamic process, and relies solely on volunteer effort and contributions from SSG members and other chondrichthyan experts. Species need to be evaluated every 10 years, and a large number are already coming up for re-evaluation. The SSG is currently considering the most effective way to coordinate the re-evaluation process. For some species it will be facilitated through the new SSG Forum (www.iucnssg.org/forum/), a dedicated message board to facilitate the sharing and discussing of new knowledge of species biology, status and threats. A few species are already being discussed on the forum, including the barndoor skate and oceanic whitetip shark. For further information on the work of the IUCN SSG or to find out more about the forum and the assessment process please contact the SSG Program Officer (Lucy Harrison; iucnshark@gmail.com) or visit our website (www.iucnssg.org).

The SSG wishes to thank all workshop participants, and also thanks the organisers of *Sharks International* for the opportunity to host the workshop.

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Cairns SSG Red List Workshop convenors