

**Written submission for Panel on Environmental Affairs
to be held on 28th May, 2018**

I write representing the views of BLOOM Association Hong Kong. It is my greatest pleasure to see the discussion of sharks and other plants and animals associated with endangered species being discussed on the Panel of Environmental Affairs.

Indisputably, this discussion is extremely relevant for sharks. An updated retail market study completed in 2017 surveyed the Sheung Wan and Sai Ying Pun dried seafood district for 12 months, and identified the species of the fins randomly sampled via DNA testing. Results found at least 76 identifiable species of sharks on sale as shark fin, out of which about one third of the identified species are classified as threatened with extinction, according to definitions given by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

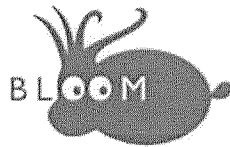
The results of the survey demonstrate not only the diversity of shark species made available in Hong Kong's dried seafood retail market, but also confirms the presence of endangered shark species sold as shark fin and related products. While these species are not necessarily currently regulated in the trade via enlistment in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), they nonetheless deserve management and conservation attention, given their IUCN Red List status indicating imminent threats to the species' survival.

For this reason, it is hoped that stronger regulations, and with that, greater monitoring capacities, may be put in place in Hong Kong for the trade of shark fin and related products. With its position as one of the world's largest trade hub of not only shark fins, but also several other dried seafood and wildlife products, Hong Kong has significant but yet unfulfilled potential to more strictly manage what is traded through our ports, and include species that are not yet listed in CITES, but known to be threatened with extinction, onto the list of regulated species in the trade specified under Hong Kong's legislative system.

Surrounding this issue, BLOOM Association Hong Kong has recently produced a document introducing eight policy-related suggestions surrounding the shark fin and wildlife trade. Coincidentally, the HK Shark Foundation has also produced a policy review document, with a further four suggestions. While the documents cannot be enclosed, these may be acquired from us separately and I welcome you to contact me anytime on this matter.

With the successful passing of the Amendment Bill in 2018, penalties for the illegal trade of wildlife products in Hong Kong have also been significantly increased. This is good news for Hong Kong, as the continued enlistment of new species under CITES will mean that more products involving CITES-listed species may be expected to come through our ports. The penalty review has arrived just in time to strengthen deterrence for the smuggling of wildlife products through Hong Kong's ports, helping the fight against wildlife crime.

Whether on the international or regional platform, it is foreseeable that the issue of criminality in the wildlife trade will increasingly take a centre stage. With the expected rise of CITES-listed products traded through our ports, it is sincerely hoped that the relevant government departments, including especially the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation



Department and the Customs and Excise Department, may receive greater resources necessary for tackling the immense issue that is wildlife crime and illegality in the trade of wildlife products. To do achieve this is to also fulfill Hong Kong's commitment to the international convention, CITES. In the past we have seen CITES implementations being delayed repeatedly for various reasons; however, in this problem of illegality and continued trade of regulated species there is certainly no room left for delay. To sufficiently equip the departments responsible for handling the wildlife trade and associated illegality is hence seen as a priority, to bring about effective monitoring and management of the trade.

Last but not least, throughout my submission I have digressed from shark species to include the wider wildlife trade. This is because I believe that, while sharks are for now an iconic species, which brings it to receive relatively more attention in the eyes of the public, many other less iconic but equally threatened marine species traded by Hong Kong are also expected for CITES enlistment in the near future. Success in sharks and in Hong Kong will not only provide a much-needed role model for other marine species, but also other wildlife products, and other trading ports in the region to follow.

For this reason, it is with sincere respect that I ask Hong Kong government and all honourable Legislative Council members to take into consideration a thorough review and update of Hong Kong's regulations, monitoring capacities and overall management strategies related to the shark, marine products, and wildlife trade.

Should the need arise, I wholeheartedly welcome your questions or comments on my submission. I may be reached by email ([REDACTED]).

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Stan SHEA
Marine Programme Director
BLOOM Association Hong Kong