

# Japan to reject international shark trade regulation

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A worker turns over drying shark fins at a processing factory in Kesenuma City in northern Japan on March 12, 2013. The Japanese government has decided to reject landmark rules on the trade in sharks, an official said Friday, opting for status quo despite a global push to protect the predators.

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Japan is filing a "reservation" about the regulation under the 178-member Convention on International Trade in [Endangered Species](#) (CITES), to restrict cross-border trade in the oceanic whitetip, the porbeagle and three types of [hammerhead shark](#).

"It is the Japanese government's position that the species should be managed under the existing management bodies," said a Japanese diplomat assigned to the issue.

Asian nations led by Japan and China—where [shark fin soup](#) is considered a delicacy—tried to block the regulations in March at a Bangkok convention, but greater support for the measure from the rest of the world overwhelmed them.

Global [shark populations](#) have been decimated over recent decades. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), humans kill about 100 million sharks each year, mostly for their fins.

Conservationists warn that dozens of species are under threat. Over the past 100 years, 90 percent of the world's sharks have disappeared, mostly because of overfishing, the FAO says.

Tokyo's move, Kyodo News said, risks global criticism of Japan, whose appetite for seafood has been seen as pushing some oceanic creatures, most notably tuna, toward extinction.

Japan has long faced criticism from maritime [conservationists](#) for its regular whale hunting programmes, which Tokyo claims are carried out for scientific purposes while making no secret that the meat ends up on dinner plates.

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