

Scientist champions conservation of neglected predators

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Some of the world's most threatened rays and sharks could be one step

closer to being saved.

The governments of Senegal and Sri Lanka recently announced they will propose listing giant guitarfish and wedgefish in the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#), an international agreement protecting animals and plants from over-exploitation in [international trade](#). The government of Mexico will also propose listing the shortfin mako shark and longfin mako shark in CITES.

Mark Bond, a postdoctoral associate in FIU's Department of Biological Sciences, helped collect and analyze the data supporting Senegal and Sri Lanka's proposals. In Mexico, Bond will help authorities organize regional workshops and gain support for their proposal.

"These developments are a significant step toward regulating highly traded, commercially valuable species," Bond said. "In some countries, this is the first piece of management for shark and ray fisheries. Given the strength of CITES legislation countries are mandated to implement, the hope of ensuring the sustainability of these species rests with CITES."

Guitarfish and wedgefish are highly prized and traded for their fins. Mako sharks are targeted by sport and commercial fisheries, and they are often killed as bycatch in fishing lines intended for other fish. Despite their value and declining populations, these ray and shark species have little or no international management.

The decision whether to list 18 species of wedgefish, guitarfish and mako sharks will be made by CITES in 2019.

Bond has dedicated his career to studying the distribution, abundance and behavior of sharks and rays and whether they benefit from [marine](#)

[protected areas](#). His efforts have been instrumental in obtaining protections through international treaties. In 2016, he was part of an international effort to have four [shark species](#) and nine mobula rays added to the CITES list of protected species.

Provided by Florida International University

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