

Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera
President of Costa Rica

Dear Mr. President,

Shark Project E.V. wishes to inform you that 30 Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from 23 countries have nominated you to receive our international award:

“Shark Enemy 2016”

The overfishing of sharks by an assortment of fisheries and the consequent endangered status of many shark species, represents one of the main threats to global ecological well-being. Sharkproject e.V., headquartered in Germany, is one of the world's most important NGOs dedicated to shark conservation. Every year, we grant our award "Shark Enemy of Year" to persons or governments whose actions actively allow, encourage, and/or support the extermination of sharks, with the goal that the public exposure and shame will promote policy change that favors sharks.

Our organization has closely followed the development of shark conservation policy in Costa Rica, policies that have earned your country global fame. Only 10 years ago, the Costa Rican port of Puntarenas was the hub of the shark fins extracted from the Eastern Pacific. Foreign fleets, mainly Taiwanese, freely operated without controls of any sort. Authorities went so far as to officially tolerate the illegal use of private docks by foreign fleets, which facilitated "shark finning" activities. Over the last decade, Costa Rica not only advanced solid steps toward shark conservation in the country, but it has also promoted the conservation of sharks at international conventions, positioning itself as a global marine conservation leader (see insert).

Regrettably, according to the 30 NGOs that proposed your nomination, during your presidential term shark conservation has suffered serious setbacks. The NGOs noted a persistent and perverse urgency to reverse current shark conservation processes and perpetuate their overfishing, against the best available scientific evidence and the international commitments promoted by your own country.

During this last year your government has specifically:

- Allowed two exportations of hammerhead shark fins last December 24 and February 20, in violation of CITES commitments and Article 75 of the Wildlife Conservation Law.
- Declared the exportation of hammerhead shark fins of public interest, favoring the demands of the fishery and export sectors and ignoring the best available scientific information as well as environmental protection.
- Announced a moratorium on the exportation of hammerhead shark fins, even though such exportation is forbidden by Article 75 of the Wildlife Conservation Law.
- Blocked the protection of hammerhead and silky sharks, together with Taiwan, during the last meeting of the Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), last July in Ecuador.
- Publicly expressed last September 2 that the Government would not propose nor support further protection of sharks at international conventions.
- Made a commitment with the shark fishing industry to intercede before the international air cargo transport companies that suspended the transportation of shark fins in abidance to their own corporate responsibility policy, and persuade them to resume this activity.
- Made a further commitment to modify the Decree that regulates the operation and integration of the CITES Council of Scientific Authority Representatives, for the interested fishery sector to politically influence its technical decisions.
- Refused to immediately implement the Size at First Maturity Regulation, to the benefit of shark fishery interests.

The jury will initiate its deliberations in December 2015, and the winner will be announced in January 2016. For the sake of marine resources, food security, and the international image of Costa Rica, we appeal to your judgement and call on you to return your country to its original course in favor of the conservation of marine ecosystems. Mr. President, you have the power to turn Costa Rica back into a country with a true Blue Agenda, a country its citizens can be proud of, as well as the marine conservation leader that the world expects you to be.

Sincerely,

Gerhard Wegner, President. Sharkproject e.V.

More info: www.stop-finning.org



Costa Rica was formerly a global shark conservation leader

- **August, 2006.** Costa Rica is the first country to implement the famous anti-shark finning regulation known as "fins attached", which requires the landing of the animal with its fins naturally attached.
- **June, 2007.** Costa Rica calls for the global implementation of its visionary "fins attached" policy at the United Nations Consultative Process on the Law of the Sea in New York. This policy is currently implemented by the entire American continent, the European Economic Union and Australia.
- **December, 2007.** Costa Rica is one of six countries that elaborates the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of Migratory Sharks, in the framework of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
- **December, 2010.** Costa Rica orders the closure of private docks to the landing of foreign fleets.
- **March, 2013.** Costa Rica successfully leads the process, together with Honduras and Brasil, to include hammerhead sharks under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).
- **March, 2013.** Costa Rica publishes Size at First Maturity Regulation (AJDIP/105-2013), that bans the landing of hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*) and silky sharks (*Carcharhinus falciformis*) that have not reached their size at first maturity, effective as of June 2015.
- **November, 2014.** Costa Rica successfully leads the process together with Ecuador, to include hammerhead sharks under Appendix II of CMS.

BUT NOW...



Responsible signature:
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