



Shark Awareness Day

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The World Wide Fund for Nature has released a report highlighting the risks to Sharks in the Mediterranean region on the occasion of Shark Awareness Day which is observed on July 14th every year.



- Theme for the year 2019 is "**The sharks in crisis: a call to action for the Mediterranean.**"
- The risks highlighted by the report are:
 - **Overfishing:** While some species are targeted for food, many of the sharks fished in the Mediterranean are bycatch caught up in nets set for other fish.
 - **Plastic pollution:** The explosion of plastic pollution is endangering shark populations, either through the animals ingesting or becoming enmeshed in refuse items.
- More than half of shark and ray species in the Mediterranean were under threat, and almost a third of them have been fished to the brink of extinction.
- The report singled out **Libya and Tunisia** as the worst culprits, with each country's fishery hauling in about 4,200 tonnes of sharks a year — three times that of the next biggest Mediterranean fisher, Italy.

- The IUCN Red List of **endangered species** counts 79 endangered shark and 120 endangered ray species.

World Wide Fund for Nature

- The World Wide Fund for Nature is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961, working in the field of wilderness preservation, and the reduction of humanity's footprint on the environment.
- It was formerly named the World Wildlife Fund, which remains its official name in Canada and the United States.
- **Headquarters:** Gland, Switzerland.
- The group's mission is **"to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature"**.
- The **Living Planet Report** published every two years by WWF is based on a Living Planet Index and ecological footprint calculation.