



Photo by Boogs Rosales

Shark, Ray, and Chimaera Conservation and Fisheries Management Framework



2025–2030



BAGONG PILIPINAS



In collaboration with Marine Wildlife
Watch of the Philippines and
Save Sharks Network Philippines

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FISHERIES OFFICE
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**SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SHARK, RAY, AND CHIMAERA
CONSERVATION AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

In the exigency of the service, the Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) adopts and implements the Shark, Ray, and Chimaera Conservation and Fisheries Management Framework, pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 8550, as amended by Republic Act No. 10654, and in alignment with relevant international conventions including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

This document will serve as a strategic guide for national and local actions to ensure the conservation of shark, ray, and chimaera species and their habitats, address threats to their populations, and promote their sustainable utilization.

Accordingly, the following are hereby ordered:

1. The DA-BFAR Central and Regional Offices shall integrate the strategies and priority actions identified in the Framework into their respective programs and annual work and financial plans, focusing on research (e.g., National Stock Assessment Program (NSAP) catch monitoring, Fisheries Observer Program), enforcement, habitat conservation, and sustainable utilization.
2. Local Government Units (LGUs), Fisheries Management Area (FMA) Management Bodies, and other implementing partners shall be encouraged to adopt and localize the Framework, including developing species-specific measures, local ordinances, and education campaigns.
3. A National Technical Working Group (TWG) on Shark, Ray, and Chimaera Conservation shall be convened to coordinate the implementation of the Framework, monitor progress, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and recommend policy enhancements.
4. All relevant stakeholders, including fisheries and tourism operators, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, and development partners, are encouraged to support implementation through research, technical assistance, data-sharing, capacity-building, and public awareness.





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5. BFAR, in coordination with the TWG and FMA Management Bodies, shall lead the development of a monitoring and evaluation system to assess compliance and measure outcomes in line with the goals of the Framework.

All Orders, Memoranda, and other issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby deemed revoked.

This Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in force unless otherwise amended or repealed.

Issued this 6TH day of MAY, 2025 in Quezon City, Philippines.



ELIZER S. SALILIG, MFT
National Director





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FISHERIES OFFICE ORDER

NO. 267

Series of 2024

SUBJECT: CREATION OF TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES FOR PHILIPPINES SHARKS MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

In the exigency of service, a Technical Working Group (TWG) is hereby created to ensure the effective implementation of activities/projects under collaborative initiatives of Philippines sharks management and conservation. The TWG shall be composed of the following:

Chairperson	:	Assistant Director for Technical Services
Vice-Chairperson	:	Capture Fisheries Division
Members	:	Chiefs or alternates of the following Divisions/Unit: Fisheries Resources Management Division Fisheries Regulatory and Licensing Division Fisheries Inspection and Quarantine Division Legal Division Information and Fisherfolk Coordination Unit

As well, the TWG shall solicit technical expertise and inputs from the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI) and other relevant agencies, academic institutions, international & local scientists, and/or private scientific organizations, if may be deemed necessary.

This Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in force unless revoked in writing. All orders, memoranda, and other issuances inconsistent herewith are deemed revoked.

Done this 16th day of May 2024.

ISIDRO M. VELAYO, JR., MDM
Officer-in-Charge, BFAR



Message from the BFAR Director

DIRECTOR ELIZER S. SALILIG, MFT

Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

On the Publication of the Shark, Ray, and Chimaera Conservation and Fisheries Management Framework (2025 to 2030)

The development of the Shark, Ray, and Chimaera Conservation and Fisheries Management Framework is a step forward in the Bureau's commitment to improve the way we manage vulnerable species in our marine waters. These species play a critical role in sustaining ecosystem balance, yet for too long, most have remained unmanaged, overlooked, or unregulated.

This framework consolidates years of field experience, technical assessments, and institutional learning. It is grounded in existing policy, guided by science, and shaped by collaboration. We thank our regional offices, enforcement units, technical personnel, and stakeholders who contributed their expertise throughout its development. We also acknowledge the Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines, whose earlier work helped lay the foundation for this initiative.

Organized around five thematic areas: research and development, conservation and adaptive management, communication and awareness, enforcement, and socio-economic safeguards. The framework provides clear direction for implementation. It complements Fisheries Administrative Order No. 272 and strengthens the foundation for more coordinated, responsive, and inclusive fisheries management.

This document is not meant to stay on the shelf. It is intended to guide action, support local applications, and improve protection where it is most needed. With shared effort across agencies, partners, and communities, we are better positioned to secure the future of these species and the ecosystems that sustain them.

Maraming Salamat!

A stylized blue ink signature of Elizer S. Salilig, MFT, consisting of a large loop and several vertical strokes.

ELIZER S. SALILIG, MFT
National Director



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The background is a solid teal color. It features several light teal silhouettes of fish swimming in different directions. There are also darker teal silhouettes of coral and rocky seabed at the bottom. A large, light teal shark silhouette is positioned on the right side, swimming downwards.

Part 1

INTRODUCTION



There are over 1,250 species of sharks, rays, and chimaeras of the Order Chondrichthyes in the world, occupying varied marine, brackish, and freshwater habitats. In the Philippines, there may be over 200 species present, although this number may be limited by the scarce research on this taxonomic group.

Threats to sharks

Globally, there has been a 71% decline in oceanic shark and ray populations since 1970 (Dulvy et al., 2021).

Twenty percent of reefs surveyed in 54 countries are already devoid of sharks (McNeil et al., 2020). Simpfendorfer et al., (2023) reported that five of the most common reef shark species have experienced a global decline of up to 73%.

Population declines are a result of targeted fishery and bycatch that are consumed, utilized, traded and even discarded. An estimated 63 to 273 million sharks are killed each just for their fins, but there are also other products derived from sharks, like meat, oil, skin, and cartilage. Fishery is the biggest threat to sharks. The demand for products comes from China where the fins are used as the main ingredient to shark fin soup. Shark meat mostly ends up in Latin America and within the European Union. Moreover, degradation of their coastal habitats (including mangroves, seagrass, and coral reefs) negatively affects the whole marine ecosystem and is further exacerbated by climate change. Recent studies show that 37% of Chondrichthyes are International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List Threatened (Dulvy et al., 2021), including 11.5% of deep-water sharks (Finucci et al., 2024).

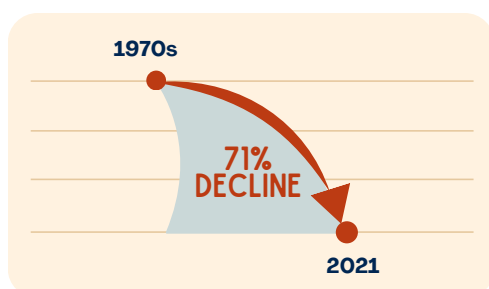


Figure 1. There has been a 71% decline in oceanic shark and ray. populations since the 1970s

Chondrichthyan conservation presents challenges due to their varying distinct biology and classification as a fishery resource. Chondrichthyes are K-selected species, characterized by the following traits:



Figure 2. Traits of K-selected species

Given this life history, when overfished, Chondrichthyes' long stock recovery makes them highly vulnerable to overexploitation (BFAR, 2009). Consequently, conventional fisheries management methods may not be that effective.

Typically, Chondrichthyan protection is less rigorously enforced compared to other protected wildlife such as the dugong, marine turtles, or the Philippine eagle. These species benefit from specific conservation programs administered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the government agency tasked with safeguarding wildlife and their habitats. The exception to this trend is the whale shark, which has gained iconic status and tourism value in the country. Their management also falls under the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) mandated to ensure sustainable fisheries management to contribute to the nation's food security.

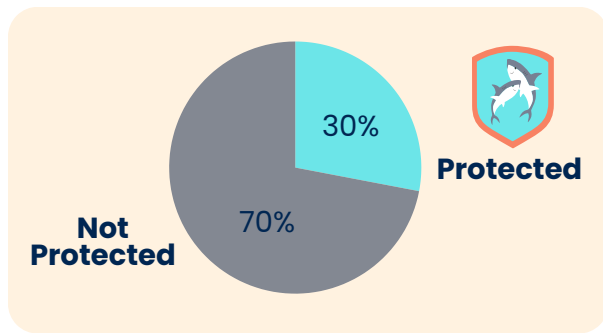


Figure 3. Percentage of protected vs. Not Protected Species in the Philippines

As of 2025, only 58 species of Chondrichthyan listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendices are legally protected in the country. This leaves three-quarters open to exploitation with no regulation in place. There are several more species in the Philippines that are not protected but are classified by the IUCN as Threatened, including 30 Vulnerable, 20 Endangered, and two Critically Endangered species.

Local utilization of sharks

The domestic market does not consider shark fishing as commercially viable while internationally, the Philippines is an important player in the global trade of sharks (BFAR, 2009). The Philippine elasmobranch fisheries reached its first peak in 1991 at 19,049 MT and followed a downward trend of 6,398 MT per year from 1992 to 2006 (BFAR-NFRDI, 2017).¹ Between 1990–1994, the Philippine National Statistics Office recorded eight countries importing shark fins from the Philippines: Australia, Brunei, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan, with Hong Kong being the top importer (90% of total traded fins) (BFAR-NFRDI, 2017). Exports for shark liver oil were documented from 1973 to 1981. Volumes of squalene export began at 7,300 kg in 1973, reached its peak at 336,079 kg in 1980, and dropped to 190,190 kg in 1981 (Chen, 1996).

Studies have shown that local consumption of shark and ray meat may be prevalent enough to be significant in artisanal fisheries and sustain demands (MWWP, 2023). Bycatch of sharks and rays in the country are typically consumed and have been viewed to produce a significant volume, which includes protected species (MWWP, 2023).



Figure 4. Local dishes that have shark parts

Aside from shark fins and meat, the following products from sharks and rays are also traded: skin, cartilage, liver oil, ray tails, and shark jaw to supply furniture, leather accessories, cosmetic, and nutritional supplement manufacturers, as well as tourism and curio shops (MWWP, 2023).

Considering all these factors, there is a need **"to balance fishing efforts and resource exploitation with conservation and management to attain sustainable marine fishery resources"** (BFAR, 2009:5).

More so, it is important to note species-specific strategies for their protection that will effectively engage diverse stakeholders and communities, with the goal of managing or overcoming these challenges and threats.

¹ Data on PEF in the Sharks and Rays: Philippine Status Report and National Plan of Action 2017–2022 were combined from various sources: Compagno, 1990; Bonfil, 1994; UN Food and Agriculture Organization's FishStat; and the Philippines' Department of Agriculture's National Stock Assessment Program and Bureau of Agricultural Statistics



Policies and legal frameworks

Conservation of Chondrichthyans in the Philippines is covered by international agreements, national legal frameworks such as the Philippine Fisheries Code (Republic Act 8550 as amended by Republic Act 10654). It is further supplemented by governmental Fisheries Administrative Orders,

the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act (Republic Act 9147), and local ordinances from the Local Government Units (LGUs) (Table 1). Despite this, comprehensive legislation is still needed to curb illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) shark fishing that continues to be prevalent in the country (Oposa and Techera, 2023).

International Agreements	National Laws
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Fisheries Code (RA 8550 as amended by RA 10654)
Convention on International Trade in and Flora (CITES)	The National Integrated Protected Endangered Species of Wild Fauna Areas System Act of 1992 (RA 7586)
Convention on Migratory Species Agreement on Sharks	Wildlife Resources Conservation and including the Memorandum of Protection Act of 2001 (RA 9147)
West and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission	Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 160)

Fisheries Administrative Orders and other Memorandum Circulars

FAO 193 Series of 1998: Ban on the taking or catching, selling, purchasing and possessing transporting and exporting of Whale Sharks and Manta Rays
FAO 208 Series of 2001: Conservation of Rare, Threatened, and Endangered fisheries/aquatic species (does not include sharks and rays)
FAO 233 Series of 2010: AQUATIC WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
DOT-DA-DENR-DILG Joint Memorandum Circular No. 01 Series of 2020: Rules and Regulations Governing the Conduct of Marine Wildlife Tourism Interactions in the Philippines.
FAQ 271 Series of 2023: Rules and Regulations for the Protection of Cetaceans and Whale Sharks from Purse Seine and Ring Net Fishing Operations
FAO 272 Series of 2023: Rules and Regulations for the Conservation and Management of Sharks for Philippine Fishing Vessels
FAO 208-1 Series of 2024: Aquatic Wildlife Conservation

Table 1: Selected international agreements and national laws relevant to the protection and management of Chondrichthyans in the Philippines (see NPOA 2017-2022; Oposa and Techera 2023)



Committee identified Key Result Areas (KRAs) to improve the status of sharks and rays in the SSME, as follows:

- a. Develop and promote options and new conservation and management agreements for whale sharks and other CITES-listed species in the SSME;
- b. Provide recommendations on the management of threatened pelagic migratory sharks and rays in overfishing or as bycatch in specific fisheries and fishing gear; and,
- c. Promote conservation and management of endemic cartilaginous species (sharks and rays). The Philippines' National Plan of Action (NPOA)-Sharks 2017-2022 also had key actions to address gaps in Chondrichthyan conservation. It is due for an update in 2022.

The NPOA-Sharks and Rays will be reviewed and updated following the approval of the Shark Framework, which will serve as the overarching guide for formulating specific actions under the NPOA.

Generally, there is difficulty in promoting proper management without sufficient data, emphasizing the need for research and fisheries monitoring. The uses of Chondrichthyans vary from consumption (e.g., meat, fins, oil, cartilage), trade, and non-consumptive activities (e.g., tourism) which are all in need of better management interventions. The situation is made more complex considering the significance of sharks and rays to communities in terms of commerce and traditional beliefs. This makes conservation and regulation challenging.

The Shark, Ray, and Chimaera Conservation and Fisheries Management Framework aims to address these challenges through five themes: (1) Research and Development; (2) Conservation and Adaptive Management; (3) Communication, Education, and Public Awareness and Capacity-Building; (4) Monitoring Control Surveillance; and (5) Socio-Economic Safeguards.

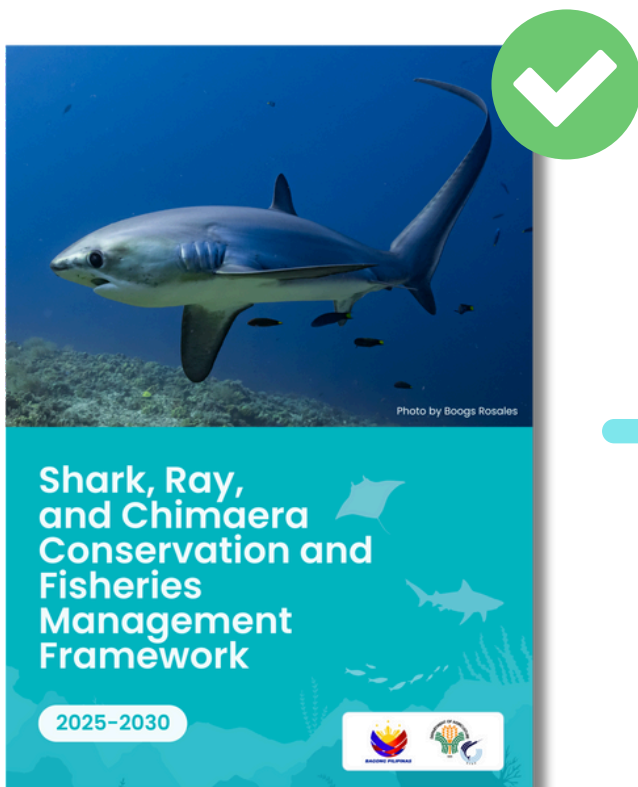


Figure 5. The Shark, Ray, and Chimaera Conservation and Fisheries Management Framework serves as the foundation for the National Plan of Action for Sharks.

Part 2

NATIONAL CONSERVATION AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



1. RESEARCH



2. CONSERVATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT



3. COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC
AWARENESS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING



4. MONITORING CONTROL SURVEILLANCE



5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SAFEGUARDS



The Philippine government, through the Management Authority and all relevant stakeholders, shall implement this framework to attain this goal.

GOAL

To ensure the conservation of shark resources and their habitat and manage threats while promoting their sustainable utilization for the benefit of present and future generations of Filipinos.



1. RESEARCH

OUTCOME

Local knowledge and data generated and applied to inform sound conservation and management strategies, ensuring favorable conservation status of threatened species and the protection of critical habitats.

Objective 1.1: To improve information available on sharks through continuous and improved research, monitoring, and information-exchange;

Management Action	Timeline
I.1.1 Gather accurate data on shark populations, migration patterns, and habitat use.	Y1
I.1.2 Identify and prioritize research on vulnerable or threatened shark stocks	Y1
I.1.3 Improve the species-specific catch and landings data and monitoring of shark catches and trade data (e.g., market analysis, trade routes)	Y1-Y2
I.1.4 Identify and report on species-specific biological data (e.g., for establishment of closed season)	Y2-Y3
I.1.5. Conduct ecological, economic, and socio-cultural valuation of sharks, integrating the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System	Y3



Management Action	Timeline
1.1.6. Establish data and knowledge management systems to enhance quality and reach specific users, especially at the national, Fishery Management Areas (FMAs), and local levels (including population, sightings, date of sightings, and NSAP data)	Y3
1.1.7 Establish and formalize a science advisory group/ panel of experts can spearhead research agenda to make it more specific for FMAs	Y2
1.1.8 Establish a continuous exchange of information through conferences, workshops, and seminars	Y1 – Y5
1.1.9. Tap citizen scientists to contribute data (e.g., social media posts, videos, and photos) through an accessible, functioning and updated system	Y1 – Y5
1.1.10. Establish funding mechanism to sustain research activities	Y1

Objective 1.2: To develop science-based laws, regulations, and policies on the trade of shark products

Management Action	Timeline
1.2.1. Review and evaluate existing policies and laws	Y1
1.2.2. Integrate results of economic valuation studies (see 1.1.5) to deter imposable penalties in laws	Y3



2. CONSERVATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

OUTCOME

At least 5% increase in depleted shark, ray, chimaera populations above the baseline, moving towards the delisting of Threatened Sharks from the Philippine Red List.

Objective 2.1: To develop effective strategies that will result in the favorable conservation status of threatened species

Management Action	Timeline
2.1.1 Develop species recovery plans to include fisheries monitoring, regulation, and habitat protection	Y2
2.1.2 Enforce a regular monitoring and evaluation system on management strategies to ensure their flexibility and effectivity	Y2
2.1.3 Harmonization of shark-relevant policies for full implementation	Y1

Objective 2.2: To implement sustainable utilization of shark resources by adopting science-based harvest control strategies.

Management Action	Timeline
2.2.1 Manage fishing activities that directly or indirectly affects shark populations	Y1

Objective 2.3: To implement science-based laws, regulations, and policies on the trade of shark products

Management Action	Timeline
2.3.1 Adopt regulations and policies in the LGU-level emerging from the NDFs and stock assessments of species listed on CITES Appendix II and III. (e.g., affecting traditional practices, culture, gender and social norms, etc.)	Y3



Objective 2.4: To ensure the implementation of management measures and strategies for the conservation and protection for IUCN-identified threatened species and species listed in Appendix I of CITES and CMS

Management Action	Timeline
2.4.I. Strengthen compliance to existing policies and legal frameworks	Y1

Objective 2.5: To develop and introduce conservation and management measures in habitats important to sharks and rays

Management Action	Timeline
2.5.I Establish migratory corridors and/or network of marine protected areas (MPAs)	Y3
2.5.2 Increase measures for habitat protection and enforcement based on current baselines	Y3
2.5.3 Improve shark conservation in selected MPAs based on current baselines	Y2
2.5.4. Streamline policies and legal frameworks into FMA governance	Y2



3. COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC AWARENESS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

OUTCOME

Enhanced knowledge, attitudes, skills, and self-efficacy in implementing shark conservation and management measures, resulting in long-term changes in practices.

Objective 3.1: To increase the level of awareness and appreciation on the role of sharks in the Philippine economy and ecology

Management Action	Timeline
3.1.1 Implement interactive and experiential learning activities targeting women, children, educators, schools, youth, LGUs, and the broader public	Y1
3.1.2. Develop information, education, and communication (IEC) materials promoting awareness on the Important Shark and Ray Areas	Y1

Objective 3.2: To mainstream shark conservation and managements across various programs, policies, and legal frameworks of National Government Agencies through engaging information, education, and communication strategies

Management Action	Timeline
3.2.1 Implement a nationwide audience-segmented Communication, Education, and Public Awareness Program to create a positive image for sharks	Y2
3.2.2 Apply CEPA for sharks to FMAs established under FAO 263	Y1
3.2.3. Integrate shark-related information and activities to existing programs such as Month of the Ocean, Fish Conservation Week, and Maritime and Archipelagic Nation Awareness Month where appropriate	Y1 – Y5
3.2.4. Integrate shark-related information and activities to relevant sectors and industries, such as but not limited to, fishing, tourism, maritime, education, and private institutions.	Y1



Management Action	Timeline
3.2.5 Increase collaboration among relevant stakeholders, such as government agencies, the private sector, and civil society organizations to promote awareness on shark issues and the conservation of shark species.	Y1

Objective 3.3: To build capacities to implement shark conservation measures across all layers of government and community

Management Action	Timeline
3.3.1 Conduct targeted training for on-the-ground personnel (National Stock Assessment Program technical staff, researchers, fisheries monitoring teams, quarantine officers, BFAR Enforcement groups, LGUs, Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine National Police-Maritime Group, prosecutors, and other related enforcement agencies)	Y2
3.3.2. Develop research skills of emerging researchers and scientists to build the next generation of shark scientists and researchers	Y3
3.3.3 Develop and update knowledge products such as toolkits, manuals, guidebooks, and other materials	Y1



4. MONITORING CONTROL SURVEILLANCE

OUTCOME

At least 80% compliance to shark protection and conservation laws

Objective 4.1: To ensure the implementation of management measures for the conservation and protection for IUCN-identified threatened species and species listed in the Appendices of CITES and CMS through enforcement.

Management Action	Timeline
4.1.I Enhance enforcement through capacity-building, asset support, establishment of database, implementation of policies and laws, and development of materials with emphasis on identification of shark fins and byproducts	Y2

Objective 4.2: To ensure compliance to international and multilateral agreements

Management Action	Timeline
4.2.I Implement conservation and management measures related to sharks as adopted by the various RFMOs such as WCPFC, IOTC and ICCAT where the Philippines is an active member	Y1



5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SAFEGUARDS

OUTCOME

Non-consumptive activities positively contributed to the conservation and welfare of both captive and wild sharks

Objective 5.1: To provide biodiversity-friendly enterprises (BDFE) and sustainable livelihoods to fisherfolk and other impacted stakeholders involved in shark and shark-related fishery.

Management Action	Timeline
5.1.1 Adopt consultative and inclusive approach to developing sustainable livelihood opportunities by determining possible areas for livelihood intervention and scoping of possible alternatives	Y1
5.1.2 Engage LGUs and NGAs (e.g., DOLE, BFAR, DENR) to determine appropriate BDFEs and livelihood programs to improve economic conditions of women and men	Y1
5.1.3 Reduce reliance of fisherfolk involved in shark and shark-related fishery on fisheries affecting sharks	Y5
5.1.4. Develop public and private funding mechanisms to sustain livelihood programs	Y2

Objective 5.2: To develop alternative, non-consumptive uses of sharks

Management Action	Timeline
5.2.1 Promote low impact non-intrusive shark tourism	Y1
5.2.2 Promote responsible tourism and interaction practices involving sharks	Y1
5.2.3. Provide incentives to stakeholders with high compliance to regulations	Y1



Objective 5.3: To ensure the ethical, inclusive and equitable conservation management approaches and community intervention and behavioral change strategies.

Management Action	Timeline
5.3.I. Engage with communities in identifying gaps, opportunities, and assistance to provide assistance in gear modification, catch monitoring, coastal law enforcement, and community livelihoods	Y2



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2025–2030



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