

The Impact Of Shark Liver Oil Trade On The Conservation And Management Of Threatened Shark Species In Zanzibar, Tanzania.

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Background

For decades, shark products trade has been one of the principle economic activities in many fishing villages around the world, including those in Zanzibar, Tanzania. However, information on the impact of the shark liver oil trade in Zanzibar is largely lacking. This study aimed to determine the impact of the shark liver oil trade in the conservation and management of threatened shark species in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

Method

Shark liver sampling, focus group discussion, questionnaires, interviews, and shark landings were used to collect data for this study. Additionally, the acid value and viscosity of the shark liver oil were also used as sources of data for this study.

Results

Species such as Tiger shark, Sickletin lemon shark, Bull shark, Giant guitarfish, and Shortfin mako shark were the most prone species to shark liver oil trade. Additionally, Giant guitarfish was the most preferred shark liver oil for wooden boat maintenance with a viscosity of 10.3 m²s⁻¹ and 70.5 mg NaOH/g acid value, however, less in the quantity of 60 liters production. Tiger shark produces the highest quantity of shark liver oil approximately 360 liters per shark. Despite the verbal banning of the shark products trade in Zanzibar, shark/elasmobranchs landings have increased to up to 1.7 million tons in 2020.

Conclusion

This shows that sharks are under threats of overexploitation not only for shark fin and meat trades but also the market of the shark liver oil trade. Although shark squalene found in the shark liver oil, is considered to be used in the manufacturing of vaccines for the COVID 19 disease hence half a million shark species could be at risk of extinction. Strong management and conservation strategic plan and use of shark oil alternatives are highly required to regulate the status of shark species prone to this kind of trade in Zanzibar, Tanzania.