

JANUARY 2025

Task Force II (Biodiversity and Ecosystems) Update

Our Future Work on Biodiversity and Endangered Species

Biodiversity is crucial for the functioning of the ecosystems on which seafood production depends. No biodiversity, no seafood production. The loss of biodiversity around the world is of vital concern for the seafood industry.

SeaBOS members understand that work focused on reducing the threats to endangered species is an essential part of ocean stewardship. As a result, in 2020 they decided to devote more efforts to this complex topic, with an initial focus on endangered elasmobranchs (sharks and rays) and seabirds – two species groups that have been particularly closely studied, where mitigation measures to reduce threats are substantially developed and regulated. These species groups are also known to play important roles in the ecosystems they inhabit. The five goals the SeaBOS members agreed on in 2021 were:

1. Put science-based and operational measures in place that, when combined, substantially reduce the risk of harm to endangered elasmobranch (sharks & rays) and seabird species from our own operations by October 2022; and substantially reduce the risk of harm to these species in operations which are part of our supply chains.
2. We will publish, by January 2022, a list of “best practice” measures for limiting harm to endangered elasmobranch and seabird species ([see here](#)).
3. By May 2022 we will develop a monitoring and reporting framework for interactions with endangered elasmobranch and seabird species for adoption in October 2022.
4. We will report in October 2023 and October 2025 on progress towards meeting Goal 1 and the rapid action intended to mitigate harm to endangered species whenever identified.
5. Drawing on lessons learned from focusing on elasmobranchs and seabirds in this initial phase of endangered species work, initiate process in October 2023 to expand the scope and focus of the SeaBOS endangered species work, with an aim to eliminate, in a step wise fashion, all negative impacts on endangered species.

This set of goals has not been met, but our work towards them has contributed to a deeper understanding of the challenges of collective action on ocean stewardship. Action as a group was limited for a number of reasons. These included the realization that endangered species were only perceived as directly relevant for a small number of companies with direct seafood operations and that certain measures had already been taken by some companies to address these species groups. Some suppliers pushed back on additional reporting requirements related to endangered species, while others cited challenges related to cost, complexity of implementation, and resistance from vessel operators.

At times, a narrow and targeted approach is useful to focus efforts and maximize impact. In this instance, however, it was agreed that a broader approach to biodiversity and endangered species was merited, which should facilitate greater collective action and learning across the diverse membership. While elasmobranchs and seabirds remain key priorities, this shift in focus also reflects an effort to align with recent changes in international and regulatory policy. These include Target 15 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the emergence of the Task-force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).

In an effort to continuously learn from the science-industry collaboration and to move forward on the vital issue of biodiversity and endangered species in a collective manner, SeaBOS members have consequently set a new short-term goal for biodiversity:

By October 2025, all SeaBOS companies will have individually assessed and transparently disclosed their risk, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity along their operations, supply and value chains and portfolios.

Those interested in tracking SeaBOS progress on this key topic can review these disclosures in October 2025 to better understand the group's ambitions and actions on biodiversity.

Further Readings

- [SeaBOS Task Force II: Advancing protection of endangered species](#)
- [SeaBOS Endangered Species Strategy](#)
- Information sheets on [Elasmobranchs](#) and [Seabirds](#)
- [Best practices for reducing negative impacts on endangered elasmobranchs and seabirds](#)

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