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CONTACT: Julia Roberson
202.640.5496
jroberson@seaweb.org

TRADE PROTECTION FOR VALUABLE MARINE SPECIES UNDER UN REVIEW

Panel Will Help Decide Fate of Species at Global Trade Meeting in March.

ROME, ITALY — Proposals to list red and pink coral, bluefin tuna and several species of sharks under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) will be reviewed next week by an international panel of scientific experts. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will base its recommendations for or against international trade protection for these valuable marine species on the outcomes of the panel.

The FAO recommendations have come under fire in the past due to a perceived lack of transparency, according to some wildlife trade experts. Of seven marine proposals considered at the last CITES Conference of Parties (CoP14) the FAO panel rejected five, including sharks and red and pink coral. These recommendations went against the views of other independent analyses, including those undertaken by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, as well as those issued by the Secretariat or governing body of CITES. The two proposals that the FAO recommended, the European eel and all species of sawfish, successfully received trade protection under CITES.

At the next Conference of Parties in March 2010, the United States and the European Union will again put forward red and pink coral for international trade protection, alongside Monaco's proposal to list bluefin tuna. SeaWeb's *Too Precious to Wear* campaign is calling for an Appendix II listing of red and pink coral, as they are the most valuable and widely traded of all precious coral species. Environmental organizations are watching the FAO panel process with interest, to ensure the science and global trade data that indicates these species clearly meet the criteria for a CITES listing is heeded.

What: The FAO Ad-Hoc Expert Advisory Panel

When: December 7 - 12, Rome, Italy

Why: The FAO Panel reviews the proposals to grant marine species international trade protection under CITES, with recommendations made for or against each proposal.

- Many CITES member countries look to the FAO recommendations to develop their own position on each proposal.
- A positive FAO recommendation for red and pink coral, bluefin tuna and sharks is critical to ensuring these species receive protection under CITES at the next Conference of Parties in March 2010.
- Panel results will be available in early January 2010.

For further information:

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES): www.cites.org
Previous FAO ad-hoc expert advisory panel reports: <http://www.fao.org/fishery/topic/16340/en>
SeaWeb's *Too Precious to Wear* campaign: www.tooprecioustowear.org

Too Precious to Wear is a SeaWeb campaign to create a demand for coral conservation. The campaign is calling for red and pink coral to be listed under Appendix II of the Convention on



International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in March 2010. *Too Precious to Wear* is made possible with support from The Tiffany & Co. Foundation, Kingfisher Foundation, and The Ocean Foundation. www.tooprecioustowear.org

SeaWeb, founded in 1996 to raise awareness of the growing threats to the ocean and its living resources, is a communications-based nonprofit organization that utilizes social marketing techniques to advance ocean conservation. By increasing public awareness, advancing science-based solutions and mobilizing decision makers around ocean conservation, SeaWeb has brought together multiple, diverse and powerful voices for a healthy ocean. www.seaweb.org

