Atlantic Forest region between Sooretama and Linhares contains some of the last viable populations of this species, and even isolated mortality events could have population-level implications for a bird contending with significant habitat loss and illegal capture (Ribeiro et al., 2025, *Oryx*, 59, 553).

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Conservation roadmap and species action plan workshop for Ethiopian antelopes

Ethiopia harbours more than 30 species and subspecies of antelopes, many of them endemic or near endemic (i.e. with 70% or more of their range in the country). Antelopes inhabit a wide range of ecosystems in Ethiopia, including the Afromontane highlands, Danakil desert, Somali arid bush, Sudanian savannah and Gambella wetlands (part of the Sudd ecosystem). Ethiopia thus has one of the highest diversities of antelopes in Africa. To develop a conservation framework for these species, a stakeholder planning workshop was held in Addis Ababa during 23–25 September 2025. The workshop was co-organized by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Antelope Specialist Group, and funded by the St Louis Zoo Wildcare Institute, USA.

There were 60 participants, representing the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, national parks, Addis Ababa and Hawassa universities, Ethiopian Conservation Thinktank, African Parks, Cheetah Conservation Fund, international donors (the German agency for international cooperation, GIZ, and the German state development bank, KfW), tourism and hunting sectors, and the SSC Antelope Specialist Group. The aims of the workshop were to update the status of antelopes in Ethiopia, assess threats, develop a roadmap for all species, and identify the species in most urgent need of conservation attention. The first part of the workshop comprised presentations on the current conservation status of several key species, followed by an update of the status of all species, a review of the principal threats along with their scope and severity, and development of a roadmap (including a long-term vision, goal and strategic objectives). The second part comprised a prioritization exercise to rank the importance of each taxon in terms of global threat status, endemism, national population share and other factors, and then to draft action plans for a first set of species. The Director General of the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, Kumara Wajira, opened and closed the workshop. The five antelopes that were ranked most highly in terms of conservation priority, and for which action plans were drafted, were the mountain nyala *Tragelaphus buxtoni*, dibatag *Ammodorcas clarkei*, Swayne's hartebeest *Alcelaphus buselaphus swaynei*, beisa oryx *Oryx beisa* and Nile lechwe *Kobus megaceros*. Action plans for the second set of priority species will be drafted in the next stage of the process.

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First documented movement of a whale shark between Madagascar and Seychelles

On 3 December 2025, the Madagascar Whale Shark Project and Marine Conservation Society Seychelles documented the first confirmed movement of an Endangered whale shark *Rhincodon typus* between Madagascar and Seychelles. The record was established through a collaborative comparison of photo-identification databases, providing information for regional whale shark management in the western Indian Ocean.

Since 2015, the Madagascar Whale Shark Project has identified 545 individual juvenile whale sharks around Nosy Be, north-west Madagascar, through long-term photo-identification involving Malagasy students, tourism operators and citizen scientists. However, sightings in Nosy Be declined from 147 individuals in 2019 to 39 in 2025. The Marine Conservation Society Seychelles recorded an increase in whale shark sightings in the Seychelles during 2022–2025, reversing a decline in its estimated population size from 348–488 in 2007 to just 33 in 2014. These contrasting trends prompted renewed photo-identification comparisons.

In November 2025, the Marine Conservation Society Seychelles shared 20 identification photographs from 2025. Using the semi-automated software *I3S*, these images were matched against the complete Madagascar whale shark catalogue by the Madagascar Whale Shark Project team. Both organizations confirmed that one shark—MD-393 (Mistral), first recorded on 26 November 2019 as a 4.5 m long male feeding off Nosy Be, Madagascar—was subsequently photographed off Mahé, Seychelles, on 29 August 2025, where it was estimated to be 6 m in length. This is the first resighting of a whale shark from Madagascar in another western Indian Ocean country.

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The estimated 1,200 km movement of Mistral adds to the limited number of confirmed multi-country resightings in the region, previously documented only between Mozambique and Seychelles in 2010, and between Mozambique and Tanzania in 2018. Such cases remain rare and highlight the need for coordinated photo-identification and data sharing across national boundaries.

Although many whale sharks show strong seasonal fidelity to Nosy Be, long-distance movements are known to occur. Earlier satellite tagging studies revealed that individuals using Madagascar's western coastal waters can travel several thousand kilometres, moving along the coastline before returning in subsequent years. The newly confirmed movement between Madagascar and Seychelles supports the hypothesis that juvenile whale sharks may migrate between feeding grounds, depending on prey availability.

Whale sharks face multiple threats across the region, including bycatch in tuna fisheries, vessel strikes and climate-change-driven shifts in oceanographic conditions. Although the whale shark is protected in Seychelles since 2003, Madagascar currently lacks formal protection for the species. This confirmed transboundary resighting underlines the urgency of regional cooperation. The Madagascar Whale Shark Project and Marine Conservation Society Seychelles will continue to share photo-identification data, to improve our understanding of whale shark movements and the emerging shifts in regional distribution. Both organizations plan to expand satellite tagging and acoustic telemetry studies.

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New IUCN Species Survival Commission Goby and Blenny Specialist Group

In August 2025, the IUCN Species Survival Commission launched the Goby and Blenny Specialist Group, dedicated to the conservation of c. 4,000 species of gobies, blennies, clingfishes and dragonets. This phylogenetically diverse but functionally coherent guild comprises small, benthic fishes that are critical for ecosystem functions. Yet these taxa face many significant but poorly addressed conservation challenges. Their limited distributions and microhabitat specializations render them vulnerable to both broad and local disturbances such as coastal development, wetland conversion, habitat degradation and fisheries. The loss of even small habitat patches can result in population decline or extirpation.

The small size and cryptic colouration of these fishes cause them to be overlooked in biodiversity assessments and monitoring programmes, and significant proportions of these taxa remain undescribed. Current understanding indicates widespread prevalence of cryptic diversity, suggesting that more species exist than are currently recognized, and that each of these species thus occupies a smaller distribution range than now inferred. Detailed life history or ecological information is available for only a small subset of species, hindering threat assessments and effective conservation planning. These gaps in taxonomic and ecological knowledge mean species may go extinct before they are ever formally documented.

Mounting anthropogenic pressures exacerbate the threats. Some species of gobies and blennies are targeted in small-scale and artisanal extraction, commonly in multi-species fisheries; although primarily for local consumption, these are often intensive. Managing these fisheries is particularly challenging because determining catch composition is difficult, and small catch volumes translate into a large number of individuals. In addition, impacts from live extraction for the global aquarium trade are poorly understood. The combination of increasing collection pressure, destructive fishing methods, limited distribution and inadequate data may place many species at risk, especially in areas with high endemicity. Conversely, some species, such as the round goby *Neogobius melanostomus*, have established populations outside their native range, to the detriment of recipient communities.

The Goby and Blenny Specialist Group aims to unite taxonomic experts, conservation practitioners and stakeholders to fill critical knowledge gaps, promote action and coordinate global conservation efforts. Our diverse expert network will provide technical advice to shape research priorities and inform management policies, ensure comprehensive assessments for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and IUCN Green Status of Species, and develop strategic conservation plans to guide conservation action. Follow us as we build a connected global community that advances the conservation of these small but important fish taxa.

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