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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EU Ends Fisheries for Endangered Sharks *Fishing Quotas for Spurdog and Porbeagle Slashed*

Brussels 15.12.09 The Shark Alliance applauds the EU Council of Fisheries Ministers' decision to end all fishing for porbeagle sharks and reduce by 90% fishing quotas for spurdog, in line with scientific advice and proposals from the European Commission.

"These dramatic reductions in spurdog and porbeagle quotas amount to a solid performance on the first big test of the new EU Plan of Action for Sharks," said Sonja Fordham, EU shark policy director for the Pew Environment Group and the Shark Alliance. "Ministers have acted in line with the Plan's pledge to follow scientific advice and a precautionary approach when setting fishing limits for inherently vulnerable sharks. Ending fisheries for critically endangered porbeagle and spurdog will allow European populations to recover while enhancing the EU's ability to promote conservation of the species on a global scale," Fordham said.

Most sharks and rays can be easily overfished because they grow slowly, mature late and produce few young. Porbeagle and spurdog sharks are included on the IUCN Red List as *Critically Endangered* in the Northeast Atlantic.

The EU has proposed that porbeagle and spurdog sharks be listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) at the Conference of the Parties in March 2010.

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Notes to Editors:

The Shark Alliance is a coalition of 76 conservation, scientific and recreational organizations dedicated to improving European shark fishing policies.

The Shark Alliance was initiated and is coordinated by the Pew Environment Group, the conservation arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a non-government organisation that is working to end overfishing in the world's oceans. www.SharkAlliance.org <<http://www.SharkAlliance.org>>

The International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES), which provides scientific advice for European fisheries management, recommends prohibiting the landing of porbeagle shark and setting spurdog TACs at zero.

The EU Shark Action Plan was adopted by the College of Commissioners in February 2009 and endorsed by the Council of Fisheries Ministers in April 2009.