

# The white Shark

## *Carcharodon carcharias*

### Current Status

Globally, there has been a reported decline of between 60-95% in White Shark numbers in the last 50 years. A decline can be seen in several studies and reports. Supporting data, for the declining White Shark population and the need for protection, can be found in data sets from shark control programs in NSW and QLD, game fishing records in SA and NSW, sighting reports in SA, and international reports. Reports of catches from commercial fishing in



NSW have also changed from large adults to juveniles and also suggest a decline in numbers. Tourism operators have reported a decline in sighting frequencies in SA.

The White Shark is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red list of Threatened species. In 2004 the White Shark was CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora) protected. This means that a permit is needed to trade in any part of the white shark.



In 1996 NSW declared the White Shark a protected species making it an offence to kill a shark, with a possible \$20,000 fine and up to 6 months jail sentence. In December 1997 Australia declared the protection on the White Shark under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act 1999), prohibiting hunting and harassment of the species in Commonwealth waters.

The question is why should people care if the white shark goes extinct. It is a threat to our safety in the water and is a big scary fish. Ecologists would put forward that it is an apex predator and the ecosystem requires the White Shark to function. Others would argue that the white shark, like all animals, has a right to live and that humans have no right to decide if that right to live has expired. Others simply view the white shark as an amazing animal that inspires awe and is functionally beautiful. To Quote Adrian Martin

“The White Shark is a rare breed that adds to the diversity and mystery of our world. In this day and age of frantic apathy, there is no longer room for unicorns and dragons. We need real 'monsters' like White Sharks to fill us with awe



and fire our fantasies. Our world would be a poorer, darker, lonelier place without them.”