

The Great white Shark

Carcharodon carcharias

Threats

Commercial fishing

White Sharks are taken as by-catch in nets and on long lines by commercial fishers. Estimates of annual capture, based on anecdotal reports, range from less than 10 to 100 per annum in SA. The mortality rate of the White Shark is difficult to determine as many commercial fisheries out of Australia do not have requirements to report catches of White Sharks. The reporting of interaction with White Sharks must be improved by commercial fisheries. About 40% of captured White Sharks are released alive although post release survival rates are unknown.



Recreational fishing

Game fishing of the White Shark was carried out in SA, QLD, NSW and to a lesser degree in VIC and WA before protective legislation was brought about. The recreational fishing of white sharks peaked in the late 50s and early 60s as the sharks jaws were regarded as a highly regarded trophy and still fetch a high price.

Shark Control Activities

Beach meshing is used as a protective measure for swimmers, divers, and surfers against shark attacks. Shark nets do not completely enclose beaches but are usually 150 metres long and 6 metres high, with a mesh size of 50 to 60cm (Krogh 1994). The nets are set parallel to the shore in around 10-15m depth with the bottom resting on the ocean floor and the top supported by a series of floats. White Sharks caught by beach meshing programs are usually small with over 98% being under 4 metres in length. This suggests that these programs operate close to pupping grounds or in juvenile nursery habitats.



Drumlines are also used to protect humans from sharks. Drumlines are baited lines anchored to the bottom and has a float and marker buoy at the surface. Drumlines are intended to target dangerous species of shark and reduce the by-catch of non-target species.

Trade

Illegal trade of shark products such as, jaws, teeth and fins, is a threat to the population of White Sharks. Direct pressure on Great White Shark populations comes from their being targeted for their teeth, jaws and fins, or when they become a nuisance to fishing operations. There has been a substantial increase in value of shark products since the 1980's. White Shark jaws can be sold for tens of thousands of dollars.

