

Gear and handling procedures

Best practice gear and handling procedures ensure the ethical and humane treatment of captured animals, which is vital to the survival, sustainable management and conservation of sharks and rays.

Sharks and rays play important roles in our aquatic ecosystem and decisions relating to gear selection and handling practices can impact survival rates.

All sharks and rays not planned to be retained, should be **immediately returned to the water**. The following guide applies to 'best practice' recreational fishing of sharks and rays:

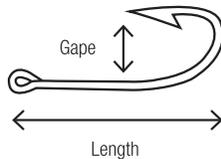
State-wide gear restrictions

- You must use hooks less than size 12/0
- Nylon coated wire trace must be less than or equal to 2mm in diameter

Metropolitan shark fishing restrictions

The following restrictions apply when shark fishing in the area between the southernmost breakwater at Outer Harbor and Yankalilla Bay between 5am and 9pm daily:

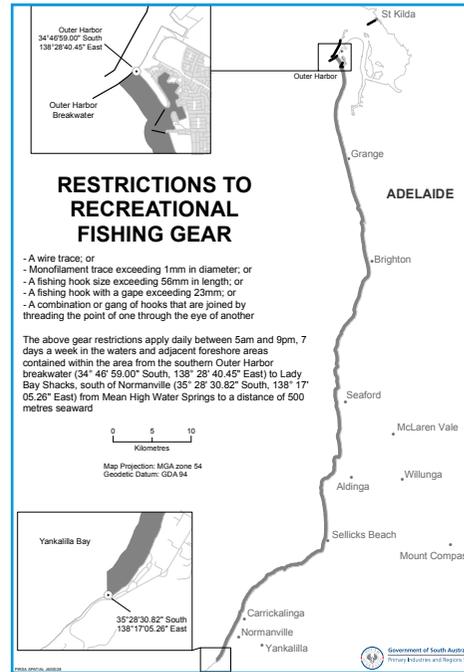
- The use of wire trace is prohibited
- Monofilament trace exceeding 1mm in diameter is prohibited
- Hooks must not exceed a shank length greater than 56mm in length and a gape greater than 23mm between 5am and 9pm
- A combination or 'gang' of hooks that are joined by threading the point of one through the eye of another must not be used



We recommend use of non-stainless steel circle hooks, wire cutters and suitable gloves. *Bait and berleying restrictions also apply in South Australian waters.*

For more information visit:

www.pir.sa.gov.au/sharkfishingrestrictions



Visit the **PIRSA** website for videos on the best way to handle sharks and rays

More information:

We all have important roles to play in protecting the sustainability of our fisheries and the health of our ecosystems as this will ensure we have fish for the future.

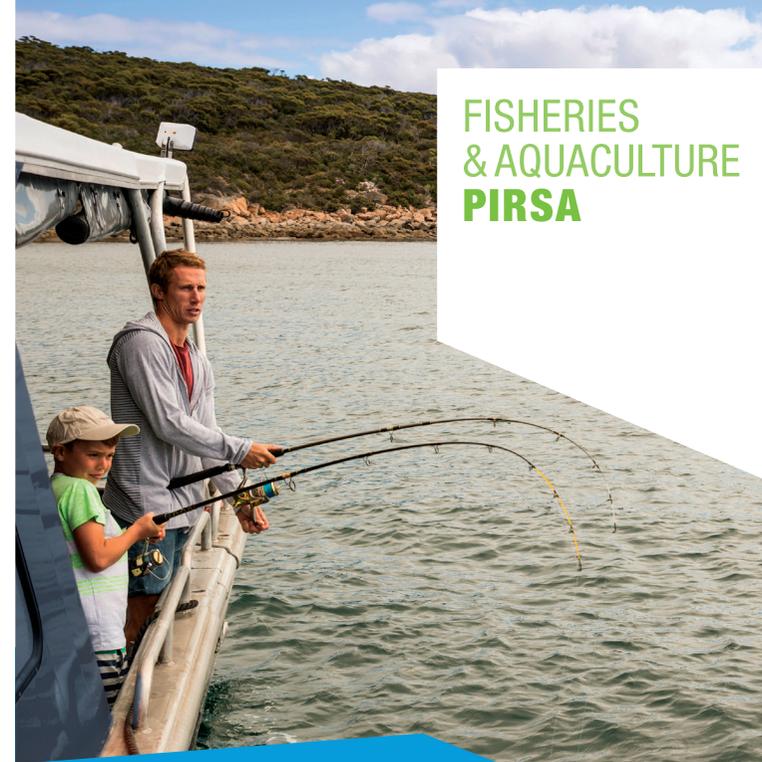
For more information about Sharks and Rays in South Australia including fact sheets, videos and identification information, visit: www.pir.sa.gov.au/sharksandrays

For information about size, bag and boat limits visit: www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing

Information is also available via the free SA Recreational Fishing Guide Smartphone app, available for download at: www.pir.sa.gov.au/recfishingapp



To report suspicious or illegal fishing activity call Fishwatch on 1800 065 522.



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Recreational fishing guide
on appropriate fishing gear
and handling techniques
of sharks and rays

Recreational fishing for sharks and rays from the shore, jetty or boat, is a popular activity around the world, with most fishers adopting catch and release practices.

In South Australia, there are around 65 different species of sharks and rays, with the Port Jackson Shark, Southern Fiddler Ray, Southern Eagle Ray, Gummy Shark, School Shark, and Bronze Whaler commonly caught by recreational fishers.

For many South Australians, catching a shark or ray from the shore provides an affordable opportunity to access and experience game fishing.

While the majority of sharks and rays are released back into the water, it is important that fishers follow appropriate gear and handling procedures.

Sharks and Rays Biology and Identification

Sharks and rays are generally long-lived, slow growing, late maturing and produce few offspring when compared to most bony fish. All efforts must be taken to optimise the survival of sharks and rays destined to be returned to the water.

Most people wrongly assume that because of the predatory nature of sharks and rays, they are strong and resilient to capture and handling. While this may be the case for some species, all are potentially vulnerable to injuries due to capture, landing and handling during fishing and therefore should be handled using appropriate techniques.

Sharks and rays die a slow death when left on the jetty or shore. If fish are to be retained, they should be euthanised as humanely and as quickly as possible, consistent with the national code of practice for recreational fishing:

www.recreationalfishing.com.au/practice/

Handling Procedures

1

When catch-and-release fishing, human safety on the vessel and the welfare of the shark or ray must each be considered carefully.

2

Have all of the necessary equipment ready to safely catch, handle and release the target species before commencing fishing.

3

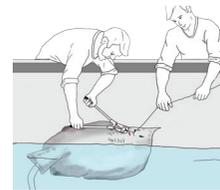
If possible, release the shark or ray without landing it and whilst it is in the water.

4

A soft knotless landing net can be used for landing purposes if the shark or ray is small.

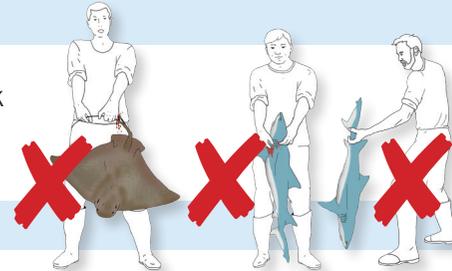
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If the shark or ray is hooked inside the mouth and will not be retained, cut the line as close as safely possible to the hook and release it immediately.



6

Never lift a shark or ray by its tail.



7

Take care not to squeeze the gills as these are delicate structures that can easily be damaged.

8

Do not enter the radius within a tail length of rays during handling and release, as large smooth and black rays can use their tail and barbs to strike at the area near their own head, which can be very dangerous.

9

Do not touch rays on the tail as the venom in the barbs is toxic and can cause painful injuries.

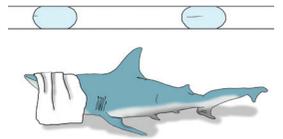
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If sharks or rays have to be landed, avoid placing them on warm or dry surfaces. Do not expose them to the sun for extended periods.



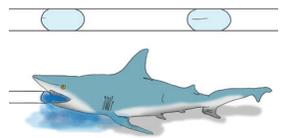
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A large, soft, wet cloth can be carefully placed over the eyes of the shark and rays to help calm the animal and keep handlers safe.



12

Once landed, resuscitate the animal by running water across the gills. This can be done for sharks using salt water deck washes, buckets, or by leaving the animal in the water and moving it slowly forwards either by walking on the shore or using the boat's engine when at sea.



13

Keep hands behind the line of the pectoral fins when handling sharks to reduce the chances of being bitten.

14

Release the shark or ray as soon as possible.