

# 1 Conservation and management of New Zealand sharks

Over 113 species of sharks have been reported in New Zealand waters. Sharks are now known to be an important part of marine ecosystems and New Zealand's *National Plan of Action – Sharks* (available at [www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz)) recognises this.

## SHARK FINNING BAN

From 1 October 2014, it is **ILLEGAL TO REMOVE THE FINS FROM A SHARK AND DISCARD THE BODY OF THE SHARK AT SEA**. The Fisheries (Commercial Fishing) Regulations 2001 require that any shark fins landed must be naturally attached to the body of the shark (see fact sheet 2).

The Regulations provide exceptions to the “fins attached” requirement for eight species of shark. These exceptions take two forms, the first is for blue shark and it allows the fins to be removed from the body but requires that the fins be attached to the trunk after processing (before landing). The second exception is for seven other QMS species, for which the fins may be landed separately but in accordance with a gazetted ratio (see fact sheet 3).

Note that you are not required to land any fins.

Approach	Species	
Fins naturally attached	Spiny dogfish	SPD
	All non-QMS species	
Fins artificially attached	Blue shark	BWS
Ratio	Elephant fish	ELE
	Ghost shark	GSH
	Mako shark	MAK
	Pale ghost shark	GSP
	Porbeagle shark	POS
	Rig	SPO
	School shark	SCH

The management of individual shark species depends on the scale of catch, as well as other factors such as how vulnerable they are to fishing. You are likely to come across the following categories –

### • QUOTA MANAGEMENT SPECIES

- Blue shark BWS
- Elephant fish ELE
- Ghost shark GSH
- Mako shark MAK
- Pale ghost shark GSP
- Porbeagle shark POS
- Rig SPO
- School shark SCH
- Spiny dogfish SPD

Nine species of shark are managed under the Quota Management System (QMS). Catches of these species must be retained like any other QMS species, unless they are listed on Schedule 6 of the Fisheries Act 1996. A separate fact sheet is available explaining the conditions under which Schedule 6 applies and providing information on the appropriate recording of Schedule 6 releases (see fact sheet 4).

### • NON-QUOTA SPECIES

The remainder of shark species are not managed under the QMS. Reporting obligations still apply for these species, but they do not have to be retained and landed.

You are encouraged to use best practice handling methods to release sharks alive wherever possible.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fact sheet 2 – Landing sharks with fins attached

Fact sheet 3 – Landing shark fins subject to a ratio

Fact sheet 4 – Requirements for returning sharks to the sea (Schedule 6)

A copy of the regulations is available at: <http://legislation.govt.nz>

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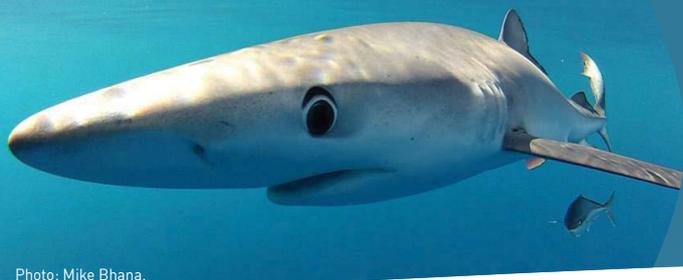
# Conservation and management of New Zealand sharks

- **PROTECTED SPECIES** – catches of these species both in the EEZ and on the high seas cannot be retained by law, but all catches must be reported on the “non-fish protected species catch return”:
  - Basking shark BSK
  - Great white shark (White pointer shark) WPS
  - Oceanic whitetip shark OWS
  - Deepwater nurse shark ODO
  - Whale shark WSH

- **CITES-LISTED SPECIES NOT OTHERWISE PROTECTED:**
  - Porbeagle shark POS
  - Smooth, scalloped and great hammerhead sharks HHS

Porbeagle and hammerhead sharks were recently listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Any landings from the high seas now require a “CITES introduction from the sea” permit before bringing any sharks into NZ fisheries waters. Exports of these sharks or their products now requires a “CITES export/re-export” permit.

Note that sharks caught in the New Zealand EEZ but not exported are not subject to CITES regulation. The CITES documentation process is administered by the Department of Conservation. For more information see <http://www.doc.govt.nz/cites>



## 2 Landing sharks with fins attached

The Fisheries (Commercial Fishing) Regulations 2001 require that for all non-quota management system (QMS) species, spiny dogfish, and blue shark, any fins to be landed must be attached to the remainder of the shark.

### Blue shark

If you are planning to land the fins of any blue shark they must be attached to the trunk of the shark.

If you are retaining blue shark fins, you may land the shark either green (whole) or as the new primary landed state of **“SHARK FINS ATTACHED”** (SFA). This landed state is described as the shark being processed to the dressed state (see Figure 1 over the page) and then the fins re-attached by some artificial means. This includes (but is not limited to) stitching them on, or storing both the dressed trunk and the fins in the same bag (one shark per bag).

This rule will allow the small fishery for blue shark meat to continue, by allowing processing at sea to maximise the value of the fish, but still allowing for retention of the fins.

Note that you are not required to land the fins; you may land a different primary landed state of blue shark. It is only if you wish to retain the fins that you must land it in either the **“SHARK FINS ATTACHED”** state or green. You will also be allowed to return unwanted blue shark to the sea under Schedule 6 provisions (see fact sheet 4).

### Spiny dogfish and all non-QMS species

For spiny dogfish and non-QMS species, any fins landed must be **naturally** attached to the remainder of the shark. This means that there must be some portion of uncut skin connecting the fins to the body. If you are retaining fins, you may land these sharks either as green (whole) or as the new primary landed state **“SHARK FINS ATTACHED”**. This is defined for spiny dogfish and all non-QMS species as the fish being processed to the headed and gutted state with the primary fins naturally attached (i.e. the pectoral fins, dorsal fins and some or all of the caudal (tail) fin).

You may cut the fins to allow them to be folded flat against the fish, or to allow for bleeding, but they must remain naturally attached to the trunk of the shark if they are being landed.

Note that this does not preclude landing another primary landed state. It is only if you wish to retain the fins that you must land it in the **“SHARK FINS ATTACHED”** state.

Non-QMS species can also be legally returned to the sea (dead or alive) if you don't wish to retain them (reported on landing returns against destination type code 'D'). Spiny dogfish can be returned (dead or alive) and reported on landing returns under the destination type code 'M'.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fact sheet 1 – Conservation and management of New Zealand sharks

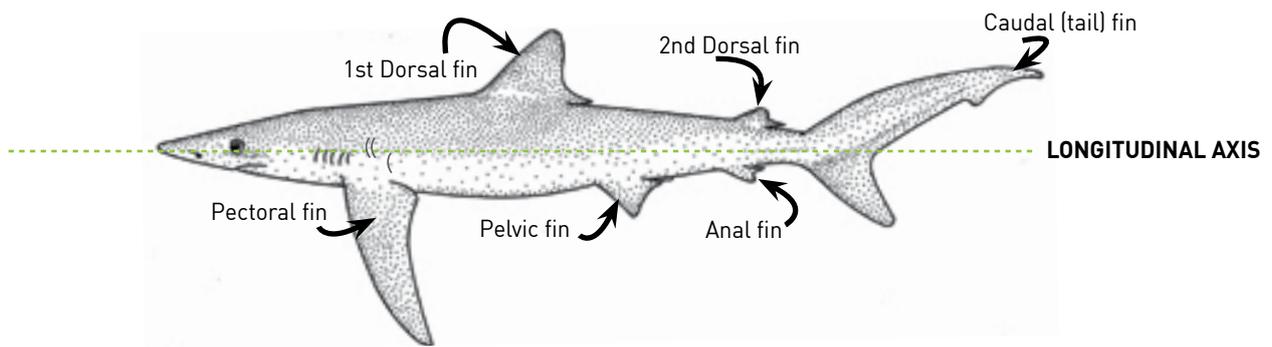
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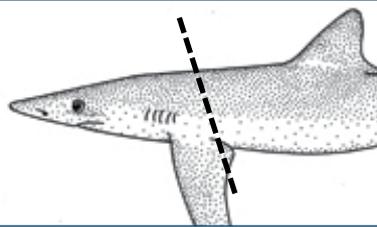
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## FIGURE 1: BLUE SHARK (BWS) DRESSED (DRE)



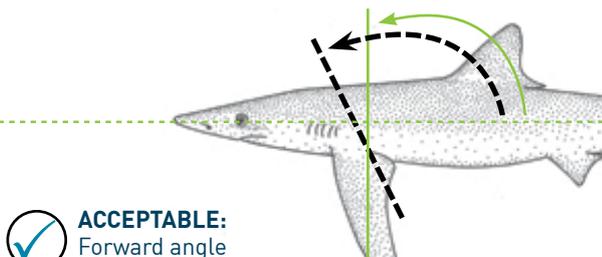
The body of a fish from which the head, gut and fins have been removed with:

1) the anterior cut being a straight line passing immediately behind the posterior insertions of both pectoral fins.

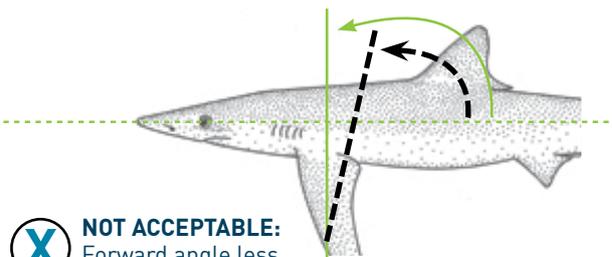


*(The posterior insertion of the pectoral fin means the point along the body of a fish at which the rear [posterior] edge of the pectoral fin emerges.)*

2) the forward angle of the anterior cut not less than 90 degrees in relation to the longitudinal axis of the fish.

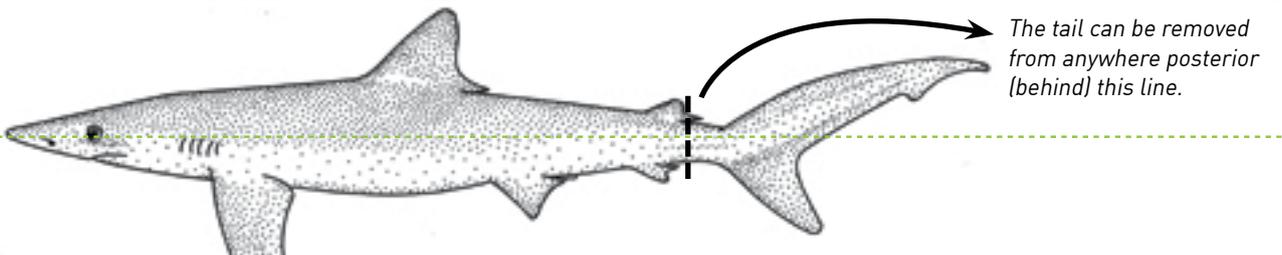


✓ **ACCEPTABLE:**  
Forward angle greater than 90°

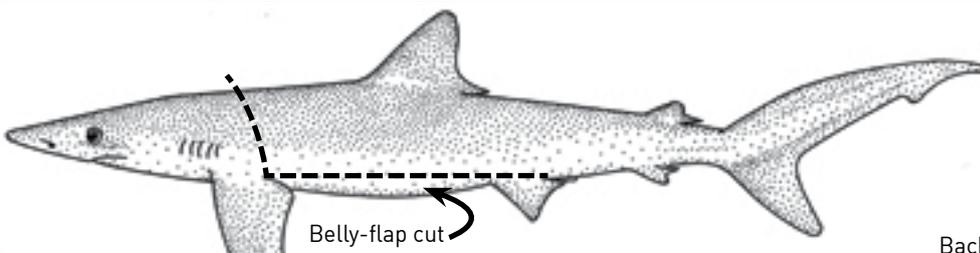


✗ **NOT ACCEPTABLE:**  
Forward angle less than 90°

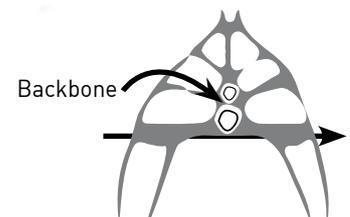
3) no part of the tail cut forward of the posterior base of the anal fin.

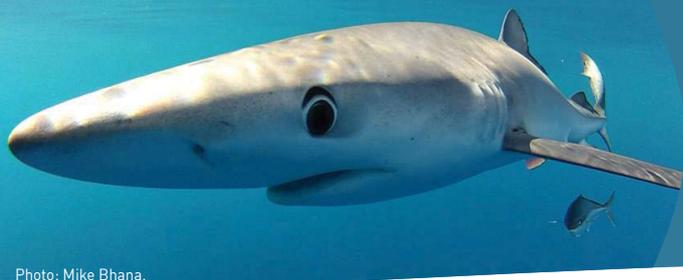


4) the belly-flap may be removed by a cut, no part of which is dorsal to the cartilaginous backbone.



**CROSS-SECTION:**  
No part of belly-flap cut to be above this line





# 3 Landing shark fins subject to a ratio

The Fisheries (Commercial Fishing) Regulations 2001 prohibit shark finning and require that any shark fins landed must be naturally attached to the remainder of the shark (or artificially in the case of blue shark). However, an exception to the fins attached requirement is provided for seven QMS species to allow at-sea processing to continue.

These seven QMS species are:

- Elephant fish           ELE
- Ghost shark            GSH
- Mako shark             MAK
- Pale ghost shark       GSP
- Porbeagle shark       POS
- Rig                      SPO
- School shark           SCH

For these species, the weight of all fins landed must not exceed a specified percentage of the greenweight of the shark. For example, if the ratio for a particular species is set at 3.5, if sharks are landed that have a total greenweight of 100 kgs, the fins of that species landed cannot weigh more than 3.5 kgs. They may weigh less than that. The ratios will be applied to landings on a trip-by-trip basis.

The species which may have fins landed separately, the specific ratios for each species, and the “primary fins” which have been used to set the ratios are defined in a *Shark Circular* which can be found at:

[www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz)

Note that landing other fins may result in being over the gazetted ratio for a species.

### How will the ratio work?

For species where you normally process the catch at sea and keep both a trunk (for example, dressed) and

also the fins, not a lot should change, but you will need to **STORE AND LAND THE FINS SEPARATELY BY SPECIES.**

Fins must be landed wet. This will be a legal requirement from 1 October 2014, and will allow monitoring to make sure you are not retaining any more shark fins than the trunks they come from.

Future reviews of ratios will be based on direct sampling over the coming years.

For the main inshore shark species, the ratios have been set so that if you follow normal processing practices, you shouldn't exceed the ratio with your landings of shark fins. The ratios for each species have been set based on statistical analysis of at-sea sampling data. However, you will need to monitor your landings more closely so you can be confident you aren't exceeding the weight ratio, especially as you become familiar with the new rules.

**FOR MAKO AND PORBEAGLE**, there are some differences in cut and which of the fins are retained across different fleets. **THE RATIO IS SET BASED ON RETAINING THE WHOLE TAIL (CAUDAL) FIN.** This has been done to try and avoid any accidental non-compliance (which could occur if the

ratio was set lower), but you will still need to monitor your landings more closely to ensure you don't exceed it, especially if your vessel normally lands the whole tail. You can choose to land just the lower tail lobe. Close monitoring will occur to make sure no high-grading is occurring within the ratio.

Over the next two years, there will be ongoing monitoring and continued data collection to ensure that the ratios are set appropriately. Monitoring and enforcement will differentiate between slight variation around the ratios, which is to be expected, and a consistent trend of too many shark fins compared to shark bodies.

It is your responsibility to ensure you are within the ratio, but if you think the ratio is set incorrectly for a particular species, talk with MPI and/or a commercial stakeholder organisation such as Fisheries Inshore.

If you land any fins, you will need to report the actual weight of the fins for each species in the “greenweight” column on the landing returns.

Retaining the fins from one shark and the trunk from a different shark (high grading) is an offence under the shark finning regulations.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

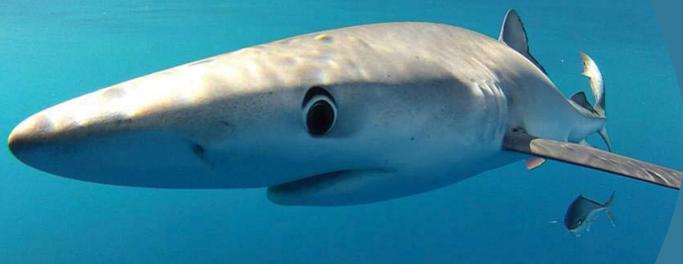
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# 4 Requirements for returning sharks to the sea (Schedule 6)

Photo: Mike Bhana.

**Schedule 6 of the Fisheries Act 1996 sets out QMS species that may be returned to the sea, so long as the specified conditions are met.**

As part of the regulatory package to ban shark finning, MPI has made changes to Schedule 6 for several species of shark to allow them to be returned to the water. This provides a legal option for fishers who accidentally catch a shark for which they have no market.

In many cases, the best option is to try and avoid catching the sharks altogether if they are not marketable species. There may be different ways to avoid shark catches, depending on the species and the fishery. Some research is currently being done for surface longline fisheries.

Schedule 6 returns to the sea provide another option if you have already caught the shark. This fact sheet has been produced to explain the Schedule 6 provisions for shark species and detail the associated reporting requirements.

### Live release only

The following species of sharks may only be returned to the sea **ALIVE**, if they are **LIKELY TO SURVIVE** and returned as soon as practicable:

- Rig SPO
- School shark SCH

Any returns of these species must be reported on landing returns with the Destination Type Code "X" and will not be counted against your Annual Catch Entitlement (ACE).

### Live or dead – pelagic sharks

For the following species:

- Mako shark MAK
- Porbeagle shark POS
- Blue shark BWS

Sharks may be returned to the sea **ALIVE**, if they are **LIKELY TO SURVIVE** and returned as soon as practicable. Any sharks returned to the sea **ALIVE** must be reported on landing returns with the Destination Type Code "X" and will not be counted against ACE.

As of 1 October 2014, these sharks may also be returned to the sea if they are **DEAD** or **UNLIKELY TO SURVIVE** provided they are correctly reported. Any sharks returned to the sea dead or unlikely to survive must be reported on landing returns with the Destination Type Code "Z". These returns will be counted against ACE. You need to accurately estimate the weight of the sharks discarded this way.

### Live or dead – spiny dogfish

Spiny dogfish may be returned to the sea either live or dead. There is no differentiation between live and dead fish. Any spiny dogfish returned to the sea must be reported on landing returns with the Destination Type Code "M" and will be counted against ACE.

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# Requirements for returning sharks to the sea (Schedule 6)

## SUMMARY OF OPTIONS BY SPECIES OF SHARK

SPECIES		LIVE RETURN	Destination Code	Balanced with ACE	DEAD RETURN	Destination Code	Balanced with ACE
School shark	SCH	Yes	X	No	Only observer- authorised discards	J	Yes
Rig	SPO	Yes	X	No	Only observer- authorised discards	J	Yes
Mako shark	MAK	Yes	X	No	Yes	Z	Yes
Porbeagle shark	POS	Yes	X	No	Yes	Z	Yes
Blue shark	BWS	Yes	X	No	Yes	Z	Yes
Spiny dogfish	SPD	Yes	M	Yes	Yes	M	Yes