



Photo: Kina Scollay.



Utilisation, waste reduction and the elimination of shark finning

Proposed Goal 2: Encourage the full use of dead sharks, minimise unutilised incidental catches of sharks, and eliminate shark finning¹ in New Zealand.

- Shark finning is removing the fins from a shark and discarding the body at sea.
- Live shark finning (i.e. removing the fins and returning the shark to the sea while it is still alive) is an offence under the Animal Welfare Act.
- Concerns about shark finning in New Zealand primarily relate to the issue of waste reduction and concerns that sharks may be killed solely for removal of their fins.
- Making use of shark fins landed as a secondary product (in addition to the meat) is entirely consistent with international calls to promote the full utilisation of sharks. A prohibition on the sale of shark fins has therefore not been considered in the review of the NPOA-Sharks.

A GLOBAL MARKET

Shark fins are consumed as shark fin soup and also used in traditional medicines in a range of Asian markets. Shark fins from all over the world are exported to key markets including Hong Kong (around 50 percent of global shark trade), Singapore, Malaysia, and China.

HOW WILL SHARK FINNING BE ELIMINATED IN NEW ZEALAND, AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The draft NPOA-Sharks proposes that fishery-specific strategies for prohibiting shark finning be developed by 31 March 2014. The strategies will be progressively implemented over a two-year period from the start of the next fishing year (1 October 2014).

The strategies will be developed in consultation with stakeholders and may include:

- A 'Fins Naturally Attached' policy for shark species and fisheries such as tuna longlining where high levels of waste are currently occurring; or
- A 'shark trunk-to-fins ratio' policy for high-utilisation shark species and fisheries.

There will also be supporting measures and regulatory changes, such as revised conversion factors to ensure accurate reporting of all catches; additional provisions for the return of sharks to the sea under Schedule 6 of the Fisheries Act 1996; development of guidelines for shark handling to maximise the survival of released sharks; liaison with fishers; and further strengthening of targeted monitoring including observer coverage and compliance activities.

This all takes time to implement, but it's important to get it right so the rules we put in place make sense, are easy to implement and enforce, and do not have unintended consequences.

WHAT ELSE IS PROPOSED TO IMPROVE UTILISATION AND REDUCE WASTE?

- The draft NPOA-Sharks includes objectives aimed at minimising unwanted catches of sharks, and improving handling so that more sharks can be released alive.



¹ Shark finning is defined for the purpose of this NPOA as the removal of the fins from a shark (Order Selachii) and the disposal of the remainder of the shark at sea. As such, removal of the fins from a shark where the trunk is also retained for processing is not defined as 'shark finning'.

HOW DO I HAVE MY SAY?

More information and the full text of the draft NPOA-Sharks is available at www.mpi.govt.nz

You can make a submission on the draft NPOA-Sharks by emailing NPOA-Sharks@mpi.govt.nz or to: Fisheries Management, Ministry for Primary Industries, PO Box 2526, Wellington 6140.