



Photo: Mike Bhana.

Requirements for returning sharks to the sea (Schedule 6)

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 disposal reports under disposal 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 disposal reports under disposal 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 disposal reports under disposal 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 disposal reports under disposal code "M" and will be counted against ACE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fact sheet 1 – Conservation and management of New Zealand sharks

Fact sheet 2 – Landing sharks with fins attached

Fact sheet 3 – Landing shark fins subject to a ratio

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

The content of this Fact Sheet is information only. The requirements are set out in the Fisheries (Commercial Fishing) Regulations 2001 and the *Fisheries (Shark Fin to Greenweight Ratios) Circular 2014*. The Ministry for Primary Industries does not accept any responsibility or liability for any error of fact or opinion, nor any consequences of any decision based on this information.

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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