

Western Australia's Shark Mitigation Strategy

Our goal

The safety of water users is a priority for the Western Australian Government.

While the risk of a shark attack is low, the State Government has implemented one of the strongest, evidence-based shark mitigation programs in the world, so that West Australians can continue to enjoy the beach and ocean with confidence.



Innovative and adaptive science-based approach

Our shark mitigation strategy offers a comprehensive approach with a range of tools and actions to help keep ocean users and our coastal communities as safe as possible.



Safeguarding the community

Enjoy the beach and ocean with confidence



- **Beach and aerial surveillance.** \$3.8 million funding each year to Surf Life Saving WA to provide:
 - Helicopter and beach patrols over metropolitan and South West beaches.
 - Jet skis and event support to assist evacuations when a shark is sighted.
 - Drones to monitor beaches and support events.
- **Personal shark deterrents for surfers and divers.** The State Government has introduced a world-first shark deterrent rebate providing Western Australians with a \$200 subsidy on scientifically proven personal shark deterrent devices.
- **Beach enclosures.** Beach enclosures provide a protected swimming area featuring a physical barrier to reduce the risk of a shark encounter and are designed to be non-lethal towards marine life. Five beach enclosures have been installed with the assistance of the State Government and are currently in place.
- **Surfing WA partnership.** A shark mitigation partnership with Surfing WA provides funding for jet skis and drones for event patrols, as well as free first-aid training that is tailored specifically for surfers.

Rapid and effective response

Operational responses that are quick and effective



- **Shark Response Unit.** A specialised Shark Response Unit (SRU) has been developed within the State Government to respond to shark incidents and work with other first responders to improve warning notifications and responses, so they are continually improved.
- **Beach Emergency Number (BEN) signs.** BEN signs are being installed at key coastal locations to provide specific location information to help improve emergency response times.
- **Legislative ban on shark cage diving** for tourism and other activities which may change the behaviour of sharks.
- **Whale carcass management.** Collaboration across government departments and land managers to tow carcasses that are adrift, when conditions are suitable, and a program to trial additional towing options. Where possible, small whale carcasses will be towed, when removal by land is not practical.

Science and research

Improving our understanding of white shark movements and behaviour in WA waters

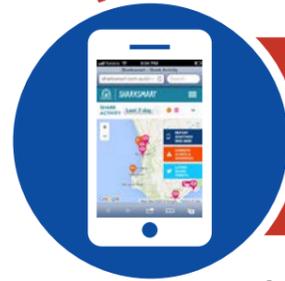


- **Extended shark monitoring network.** Our world-class shark monitoring network provides near real-time alerts of tagged sharks when they swim within 400-500 metres of a shark monitoring receiver. The network was extended to Esperance in 2017 and the Capes in 2018.
- **Shark tagging.** Increased shark tagging to make the most of our shark monitoring network as a public safety and notification tool.
- **Independent review panel.** An independent panel will assess and publicly advise on shark mitigation proposals, including new technologies, research gaps and opportunities.
- **Scientific non-lethal SMART drumline trial.** A 15-month non-lethal trial of SMART drumlines, based in Gracetown, will be independently evaluated by the WA Chief Scientist to determine the effectiveness of this non-lethal technology as a shark hazard mitigation measure. The 15-month trial will cost approximately \$3.84 million.
- **Science-based approach.**
 - A seven-year shark monitoring research program on movements of white sharks off the Western Australian coast.
 - \$1.9 million spent on innovative applied research projects overseen by the Chief Scientist, and reported publicly.
 - Correlation study between environmental factors and shark bites to inform our safety advice.
 - A study of white shark population numbers in WA.

Our focus areas

Sharing information

Delivering accurate and consistent near real-time information to water users on shark mitigation



- **SharkSmart website** provides the latest research, and safety information relating to sharks and includes a real-time shark activity map highlighting the latest sightings and tagged shark detections.
- A new **SharkSmart WA app** has been launched so water users can easily check for the latest shark warning and safety information at their local beach.
- **Integrated shark notification and response system** provides near 'real-time' information on shark sightings and tagged shark detections to land managers and the public, to assist people in making informed decisions about their water use.
- **Sea Sense campaign** to help water users 'Switch on their Sea Sense' to ensure they have a safer, more enjoyable beach experience. The campaign provides information on WA's shark hazard mitigation strategies, tips for water users to stay safe, as well as how to check for the latest shark information and how to report sightings.

Outcome

A safer, more informed beach community

SWITCH ON YOUR SEA SENSE



Further information on Western Australia's shark mitigation strategy and research can be found at sharksmart.com.au

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