



Fins Naturally Attached Possession and Landing rules in Western Australian Shark Fisheries:

Fins Naturally Attached arrangements are in place for commercial fishers in Western Australia.

What is Fins Naturally Attached?

Fins naturally attached (FNA) is the requirement for all sharks to be landed with fins on.

- Sharks can still be trunked provided fins remain attached to the trunk; and
- A 'half cut' can be applied to the fin, to allow for folding against the trunk.

On 1 February 2023, FNA was introduced in Western Australia (WA) requiring all commercial fishers to possess and land sharks whole or trunked (gutted with head removed), with fins naturally attached.

Why was Fins Naturally Attached introduced?

In 2000, WA was one of the first Australian jurisdictions to prohibit the practice of shark finning. This was achieved by introducing legislation that required commercial fishers to bring the entire shark trunk and fins (cut off) back to land together.

With an increasing number of shark species listed in international agreements, there was a need for improved traceability in the context of protected species and the trade of shark product.

FNA is currently best practice in shark fisheries management and is a mandatory requirement in the third Marine Stewardship Council standard.

Adopting management measures that support long-term sustainable and acceptable fishing practices help support social licence in the commercial fishing industry.

Western Australia's protected and commercially important shark species

In WA, all shark species are commercially protected and can only be targeted and retained in WA's two Temperate Shark Fisheries; the West Coast Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fishery and the Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fishery.

More than 50 species of shark comprise the State's Temperate Shark Resource, of which many are protected under Australian legislation and listed internationally in threatened species agreements.

Commercial fishers in the Temperate Shark Fisheries mainly target four shark species; whiskery shark (*Furgaleus macki*), gummy shark (*Mustelus antarcticus*), dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*) and sandbar shark (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*).

The FNA policy facilitates identification of target and non-target (protected) shark species at the point of landing to ensure accurate reporting of species.

Fins Naturally Attached requirements in Western Australia's Temperate Shark Fisheries

Under WA's new FNA policy, commercial fishers can only possess and land whole or trunked (gutted with head removed) sharks, with fins naturally attached (exemptions for pelvic, anal, and part of caudal fins – see below).

To facilitate processing and storage, fishers can partially cut the fins, including for the purposes of draining blood to avoid ammonisation, and fold them around the trunk.

However, fins should be attached to a substantial part of the shark, allowing the shark to be easily identified to the species level.

Before sharks are brought back to land, commercial fishers are prohibited from:

- a. Removing any fin from a shark other than pelvic fins, anal fins, or part of the caudal fin (species restrictions apply);
- b. Removing any fin from a shark and re-attaching it by any other means; and
- c. Filleting sharks.

Removal of pelvic and anal fins (including claspers) from all shark species.

Commercial fishers are permitted to remove the pelvic and anal fins (including claspers) of all shark species, to preserve shark product quality and minimise product discard.

Due to the biological features of the anal fins and claspers, commercial fishers are not required to retain pelvic fins, anal fins, or claspers until point of landing.

Removal of part of the caudal fin from shark species, other than hammerhead shark species.

Commercial fishers are permitted to remove part of the upper lobe (top) of the caudal (tail) fin in any species of shark other than species of hammerhead sharks (Family Sphyrnidae).

Removal of part of the caudal fin must follow the conditions that:

- a. the part of the caudal fin removed is above the sub-terminal notch; or
- b. the part of the caudal fin removed is the tip of the tail only; and
- c. the remainder of the caudal lobe remains naturally attached to the body.

Commercial fishers are not permitted to remove any part of the caudal fin from any species of protected shark or species in the Family Sphyrnidae, where fins must be naturally attached.

Where can I find out more?

More information on the application of fins naturally attached can be found in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) ['A guide to landing shark species with Fins Naturally Attached'](#).

A ['field identification guide to Western Australian sharks and shark-like rays'](#), can be found on DPIRD's website.



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