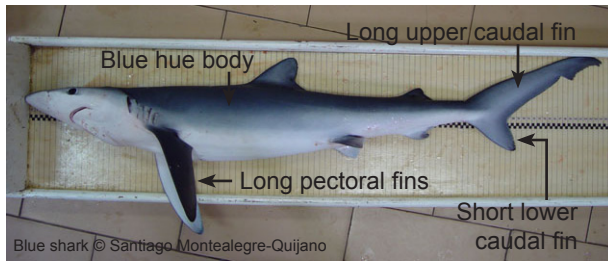


COMMONLY CAUGHT SHARKS



Blue Shark

Occurrence: Common

Max Size and Weight: 3.8 m/13ft - 550 lb./250 kg

Key Features: Long slender body and pectoral fins with dark/light blue coloring. Top of body is deep indigo blue with a white underside.

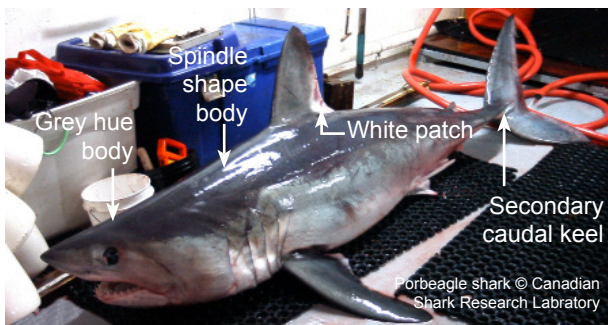


Shortfin Mako Shark

Occurrence: Common

Max Size and Weight: 3.9 m/13ft - 1200 lb./540kg

Key Features: Prominent primary keel just before the caudal fin and the presence of long, single-pointed curved teeth which stick out of the mouth.



Porbeagle Shark

Occurrence: Common

Max Size and Weight: 2.5 m/12ft - 300 lb./250kg

Key Features: Heavy grey/blue body with prominent primary caudal keel, plus a smaller secondary keel. Tricuspid teeth (1 central cusp and 2 smaller lateral cusps) that do not stick out of mouth when it is shut.

WHY CATCH AND RELEASE?

Sharks play an important role in regulating the ecological structure and function of the oceans, however many shark populations continue to decline due to intense fishing pressure, habitat degradation, and climate change.

Promoting best practices of catch and release shark fishing, like those provided here, helps maximize the post-release survival of sharks, supports sustainable fishing practices, and aids in the rebuilding of shark populations.



5251 Duke Street
Duke Tower, Suite 1202
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 1P3

Tel: (902) 482-1105

twimmer@wwfcanada.org

www.wwf.ca/conservation/species/sharks



Captain Art Gaetan
Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia
Tel: (902) 830-4115
art@bluesharkcharters.com
www.bluesharkcharters.com

Front cover: porbeagle shark © Brendal Davis

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SHARK FISHING

Best Catch, Handle and Release Practices



RECREATIONAL SHARK FISHING RULES

1. A shark license must be obtained to fish for sharks, for both general and derby fishing. There is no limit on the number of shark licenses issued each year.
2. Except for DFO-sanctioned derbies, there is mandatory catch and release requirements for all sharks caught in recreational fisheries in Canada.
3. All recreational shark fishermen, including derby participants, **must** submit logs of sharks caught.
4. Gear is restricted to rod and reel. There are no restrictions on hook type and size.



5. For shark derbies specifically:

a) No shark less than 8ft total length can be retained, except shortfin mako and thresher sharks, which must be at least 6ft total length.

b) There are no species restrictions, except for the SARA-listed great white sharks.

6. Derby participants and recreational fishermen may develop a tagging program in collaboration with scientists.



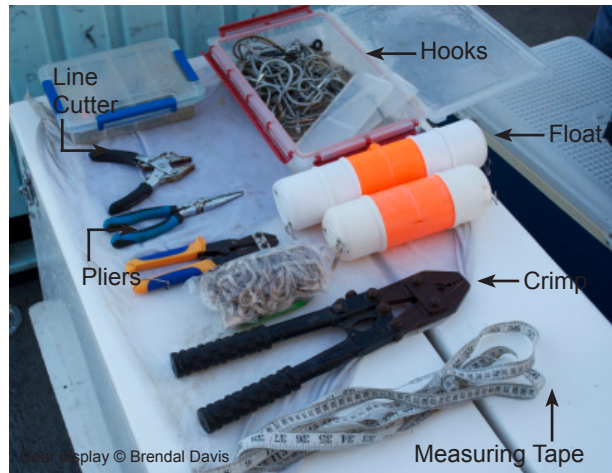
Shortfin mako shark © Jarrett Corke

BEST CATCH, HANDLE AND RELEASE PRACTICES FOR SHARK FISHING

STEP 1: BE PREPARED

Knowing that your fishing day may include catching a shark, there are several necessary tools that should be on board the vessel.

- Dehooking devices, such as bolt or plier cutters
- Gloves for safe handling of the shark
- Tagging gear if practiced
- Measuring tape
- Spare gear (monofilament, hooks, tools, etc.)



STEP 2: GEAR TYPE

1. Use non-stainless barbless hooks. These hooks make hook removal much easier, and if left in, will corrode and often fall out on their own.
2. Use rod and reel with a minimum of 80lb test line monofilament or a 80lb test braided line. If possible, use 300 lb. test swivels. This allows the shark to swim when caught, preventing entanglement if the shark rolls.
3. Do not use balloons for tracking fish movement. Balloons mimic jellyfish and can be eaten by other marine species (e.g., turtles). Floats are a good alternative.

STEP 3: FISHING TECHNIQUE

In order to reduce injury and exhaustion to the shark, use the following steps:

1. Observe the float(s) at all times, so that the hook may be set quickly.
2. Plan your release strategy as soon as the hook is set, and make sure tools are accessible and ready.
3. Regardless of hook type, set the hook as quickly as possible so that the shark gets caught in the corner of the mouth, and not in the gut.



4. Limit fight time as much as possible, regardless of hook type, size, and gear. If possible, follow the shark and gain the line as much as possible to reduce exhaustion of the shark.

STEP 4: AT VESSEL-HANDLE/RELEASE

In order to enhance post release survival of the shark at vessel, use the following steps:

1. Bring the shark to the boat as close as possible. Minimize physical handling. **DO NOT** use a gaff to bring the shark closer, as this may severely injure it.
2. If possible, remove the hook with a dehooking tool. If the shark has swallowed the hook or has been foul hooked (i.e., any place but the jaw), cut the leader as close to the hook as possible.
3. **DO NOT** hold the shark by its gills. This may cause serious injury or lead to death.

4. If collecting data, identify markings, sex, size, location, gear used, and condition on release. Also, and if possible, take fork length (FL) and total length (TL) measurements.

5. If the shark is exhausted, due to extended fight time, revive the shark. To revive the shark, place a cable behind its pectoral fins, put the boat in idle and swim the shark for a minimum of 15 mins, until the caudal is moving well on its own. Take care to avoid the gills when putting on and removing the cable.



STEP 5: ONBOARD-HANDLE/RELEASE

If you aim to bring the shark onboard, use the following steps to enhance post-release survival:

1. Once the shark is next to the boat, pull the shark up and on the boat horizontally, so as to not tear any ligaments, tendons, or damage organs.



2. Lay the shark on its side in a soft, shady, and wet area. The liver will settle and the shark usually becomes more relaxed. **DO NOT** squeeze, kick, kneel on or hold the shark tightly.

3. Out of the water, sharks organs are very sensitive and can easily become injured. A wet towel may also be used to calm the shark down by covering its eyes.



4. Handle the shark by grabbing its head, midsection and tail, as this causes minimal injury. The belly and teeth should always face away from the handler.



5. Limit air exposure to three minutes (i.e., shark completely removed from water); any longer, and the gills may become damaged. If exposure will be longer, ventilate the shark's gills by putting a hose of running salt water in its mouth.

6. If the shark is not moving, make sure to revive the shark prior to release (see Step 4, number 5).

7. If collecting data, identify markings, sex, size, location, gear used, and condition on release. Also, and if possible, take fork length (FL) and total length (TL) measurements.