



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



General Fisheries Commission  
for the Mediterranean  
Commission générale des pêches  
pour la Méditerranée



# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR THE HANDLING OF SHARKS AND RAYS CAUGHT INCIDENTALLY IN MEDITERRANEAN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES

In collaboration with

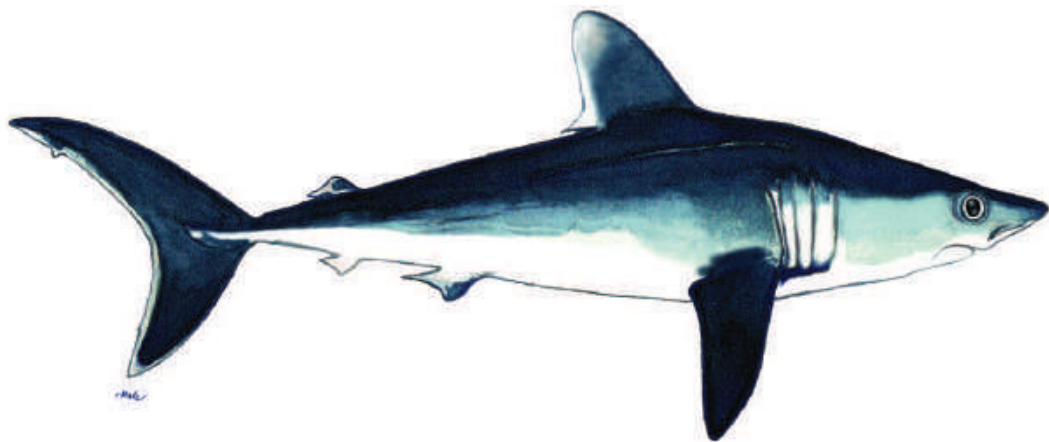


Financed by



# TECHNICAL SHEET N° 1 - SHARK AND RAY<sup>1</sup> SPECIES MOST AFFECTED BY MEDITERRANEAN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES (1/3)

<sup>1</sup>The illustrations are not drawn to scale



**Porbeagle**  
(*Lamna nasus*)

Dorsal fin level with the pectoral fins  
White patch at the rear of the dorsal fin  
Pointed snout



**Shortfin mako shark**  
(*Isurus oxyrinchus*)

Head longer than the pectoral fins  
Wide mouth  
Dorsal fin further back than the pectoral fins



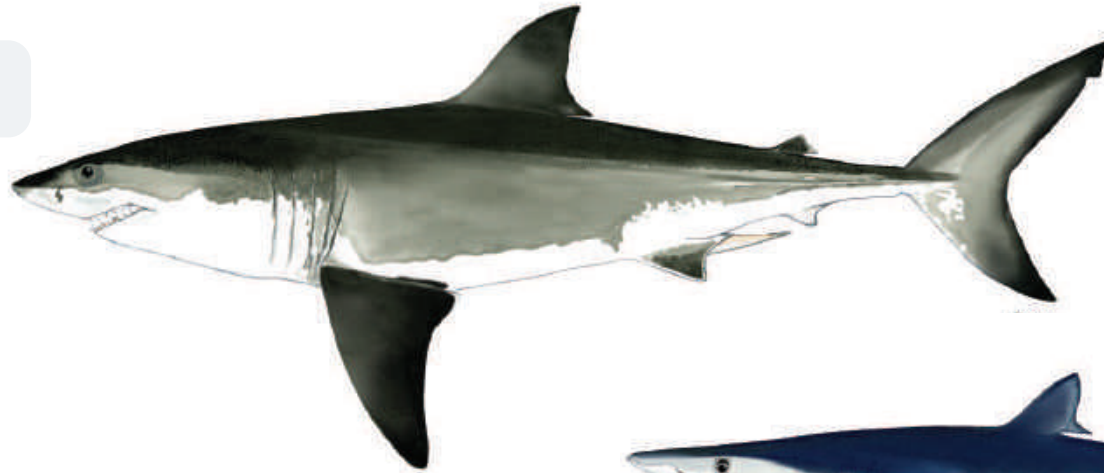
Protected species, fishing is prohibited in the Mediterranean Sea. The reporting of any incidental catch is mandatory (see Technical Sheet 6)

# TECHNICAL SHEET N° 1 - SHARK AND RAY SPECIES MOST AFFECTED BY MEDITERRANEAN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES (2/3)



**Great white shark**  
(*Carcharodon carcharias*)

- Wide mouth
- Long gill slits
- Large dorsal fin
- Long caudal keel



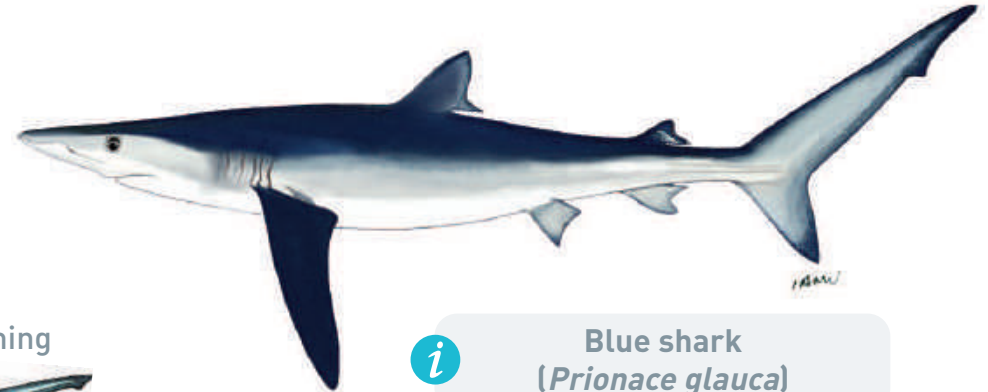
**Common thresher**  
(*Alopias vulpinus*)

- Conical snout
- Small eyes
- White belly
- Dark brown and slate gray back becoming slate gray to dark blue on the flanks



**Blue shark**  
(*Prionace glauca*)

- Very slender body shape
- Dark blue back and white belly
- Long and pointed pectoral fins



Protected species, fishing is prohibited in the Mediterranean Sea. The reporting of any incidental catch is mandatory (see Technical Sheet 6)



Fishing of this species is allowed in the Mediterranean Sea, but the reporting of any catch is mandatory (see Technical Sheet 6)

# TECHNICAL SHEET N° 1 - SHARK AND RAY SPECIES MOST AFFECTED BY MEDITERRANEAN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES (3/3)

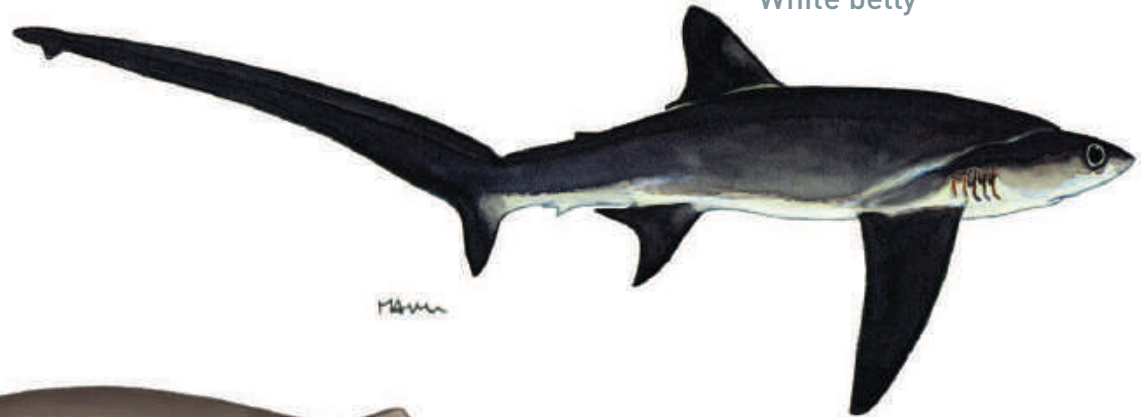


**Pelagic stingray**  
(*Pteroplatytrygon violacea*)

Rounded snout  
Back without spines  
Pelvic fins protruding from the disc

**Bigeye thresher**  
(*Alopias superciliosus*)

Deep frontal furrow  
Purple gray back  
Big eyes  
White belly



**Bluntnose sixgill shark**  
(*Hexanchus griseus*)

Small fluorescent green eyes  
Six gill slits  
Dorsal fin close to the tail



# TECHNICAL SHEET N° 2 - PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHEN RELEASING SHARKS AND RAYS CAUGHT IN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES

ALWAYS WATCH OUT FOR BITES, BLOWS AND STINGS!



HAVE THE CORRECT EQUIPMENT:

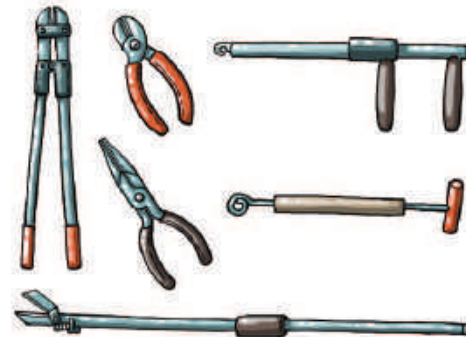
Hook remover

Pincers / Bolt cutters

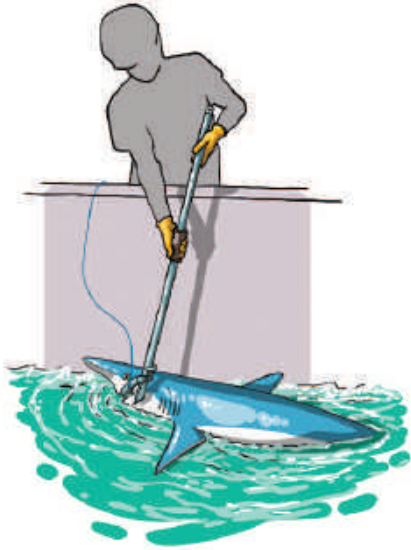
Long-handled pruning shears

Gloves

Protective glasses



# TECHNICAL SHEET N° 3 - RELEASING SHARKS CAUGHT IN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES



1

## Removing the hook from the shark

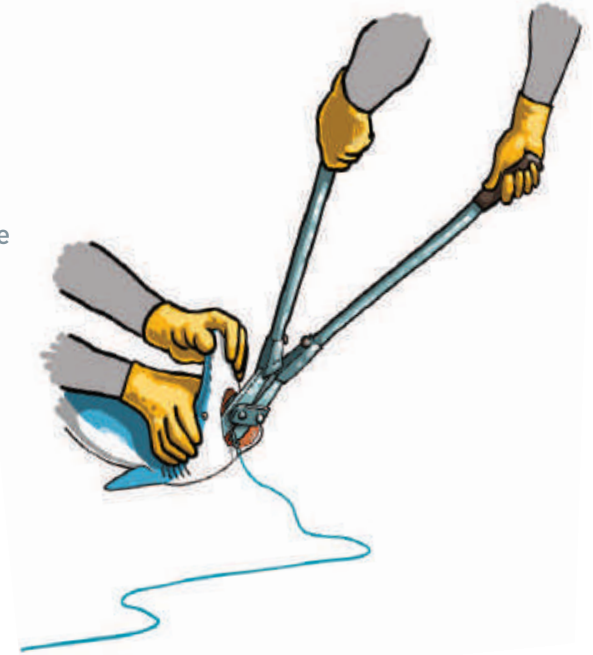
If the shark is in the water

Cut the line as close as possible to the shark's mouth

If the shark is on board

Cut the hook if possible or cut the line as close as possible to the hook ring

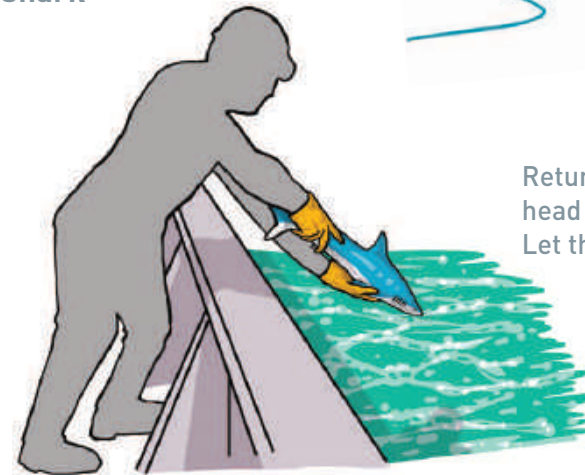
*N.B. In order to release the shark as quickly as possible, it is best not to bring it on board.*



2

## Releasing the shark

Handle the shark holding a pectoral fin with one hand and the tail with the other.



Return the shark to the water, head first, without throwing it. Let the animal slide.

# TECHNICAL SHEET N° 4 - RELEASING RAYS CAUGHT IN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES

## Removing the hook from the ray

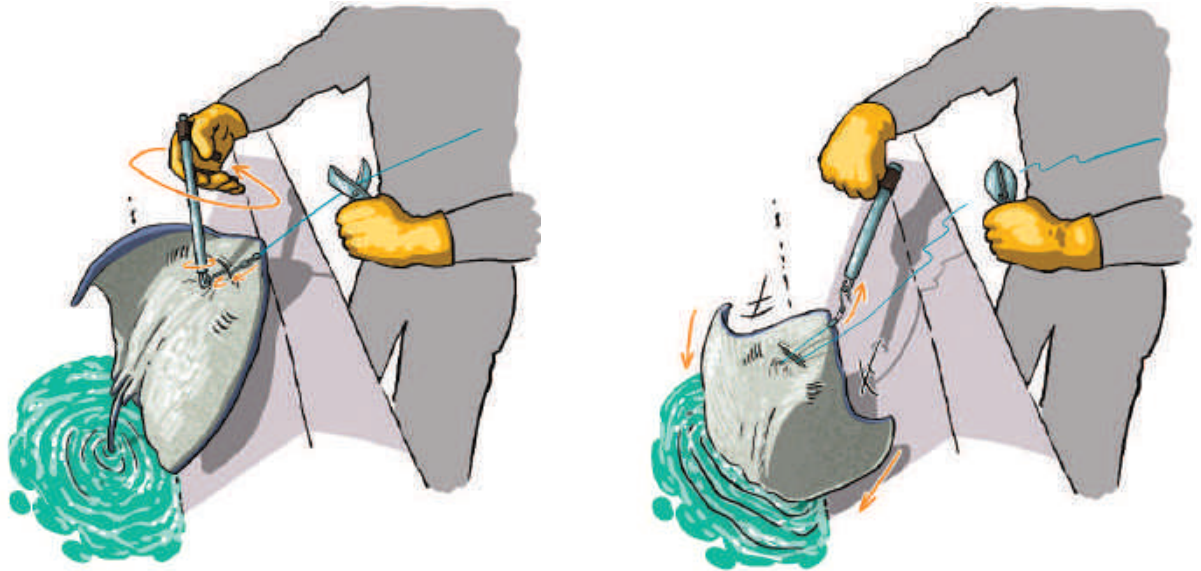
Rays rarely survive after release due to jaw damage. Although these animals are potentially dangerous, there are simple handling procedures that increase their chances of survival after release.

If the hook is lodged in the corner of the mouth



Cut the hook if possible or cut the line as close as possible to the hook ring.

If the ray is deep-hooked



Tie the end of line to a fixed point so as to have both hands free. Use a hook remover or a pair of pliers to grab hold of the tip of the hook and then rotate it in order to extract it. Cut the line to allow the ray to drop back into the water.

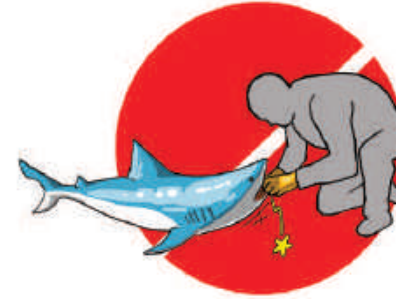
# TECHNICAL SHEET N° 5 - "DO NOTS" WHEN RELEASING SHARKS AND RAYS CAUGHT IN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES



**Do not lift** the shark by the tail or by the head



**Do not carry** the shark by its gill slits



**Do not put** your hands in the shark's mouth to remove the hook



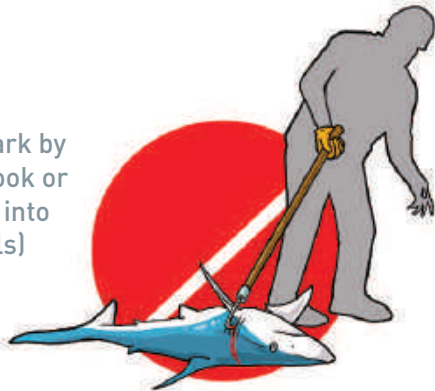
**Do not incise** the flesh or cut the jaw of the ray to remove the hook



**Do not cause** any trauma that might damage the shark's internal organs (for example, do not put pieces of wood into its mouth or cut its flesh)



**Do not carry** the shark by inserting the boathook or other sharp objects into its body (jaws or gills)



**Do not expose** the shark to the sun



## TECHNICAL SHEET N° 6 - REPORTING INCIDENTAL CATCH

FOR THE CATCH OF ANY SHARK SPECIES MARKED  OR  IN TECHNICAL SHEET 1, RECORD THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THE LOGBOOK:



*Date*

*GPS Position*

*Geographical subregion*



*Type of vessel (Fleet segment)*

*Fishing gear*



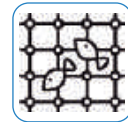
*Species caught*

*Total number of specimens caught*

*Number of specimens released alive*

*Number of dead specimens*

*Number of specimens in unknown status*



**And if possible...**

*Take photos of the shark(s)*

The information above is extremely important! Please submit it, as soon as possible, to the relevant national authorities. If in doubt, ask for their help.

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR THE HANDLING OF SHARKS AND RAYS CAUGHT INCIDENTALLY IN MEDITERRANEAN PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERIES

This guide was developed within the framework of a project which aimed to mitigate the negative interactions between endangered marine species and fishing activities. This project was implemented by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) and by the Secretariat of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), in collaboration with the Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (SPA/RAC). The main objective of the project was to enhance the conservation of endangered marine species (cetaceans, sea turtles and seabirds, etc.) by promoting responsible fishing practices in the Mediterranean.

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## Illustrations

Manuela D'Antoni, Organisation des Nations unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture, illustrations scientifiques originales reproduites avec permission (Fiche technique 1), François Dolambi (Fiches techniques 2-5), Alberto Gennari (Fiche technique 6)

## Graphic design

Stile Libero Communication Monaco

## Main bibliographic references

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UNEP/MAP-SPA/RAC, 2012. Annex III to the Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean: List of species whose exploitation is regulated, SPA/RAC Ed., Tunis. [http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/annex/annex\\_3\\_en\\_2013.pdf](http://www.rac-spa.org/sites/default/files/annex/annex_3_en_2013.pdf). Consulted on 29 March 2018

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