

# Saving Our Uniquely Australian Sharks and Rays

Information Kit

Individuals



Whitefin swellshark (*Cephaloscyllium albiginnum*).  
Image: MarineThemes.

## WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Australia is a global shark and ray “hotspot” with around one-quarter of the world’s shark and ray species calling our waters home. A total of 322 species are found in Australian waters, half of which are endemic – that is, they’re found nowhere else in the world<sup>1</sup>.

Sharks tend to get the most attention but did you know that most of our ‘true-blue’ endemic Aussies are actually rays? Nearly three quarters (69%) of rays are unique to Australian waters compared to less than half (39%) of shark species<sup>1</sup>. Endemic species like the southern fiddler ray and the Australian blacktip shark can be found in coastal shallows where we dive and snorkel, but the majority of our endemic species are found in the deep, dark waters ranging from 100 meters to over a kilometre below the waves!

Australia is recognised as global hotspot of extinction risk for some of the world’s most unique, and threatened sharks and rays<sup>2</sup>. The biggest threat to our endemic Aussie sharks and rays is trawling on or near the sea floor, causing them to be swept up in giant scoop nets. Another big threat are longlines that have hundreds or thousands of baited hooks stretching out for more than a kilometre on or near the seafloor. Those killed, including the critically endangered whitefin swellshark, can end up on our plates as the humble piece of flake from the local fish and chip shop.

Fortunately, Australia is also recognised as one of the few countries in the world best equipped to protect and save many of our threatened endemic species – but only if we act now. So how can we save our true-blue Aussie sharks and rays?

## WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

- Introduce the Australian community to our unique, weird and wonderful sharks and rays – an opportunity to discover and explore the wonders living beneath the waves at unfathomable depths.
- Empower individuals to make informed and sustainable choices when consuming seafood using the GoodFish Sustainable Seafood Guide.
- Using people power to drive protection of these species that will improve the sustainability of Australia’s fisheries, and our ocean’s health. This can include protecting critical habitats from exploitation and listing species for protection under national environmental law.
- Build a community of Shark Champions, to speak for those that can’t.

1. Last PR, Stevens JD (2009) ‘Sharks and Rays of Australia.’ CSIRO Publishing: Australia.  
2. Stein RW et al. (2018) ‘Global priorities for conserving the evolutionary history of sharks, rays and chimaeras’ *Nature Ecology & Evolution* 2, 288–298. doi:10.1038/s41559-017-0448-4

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Sign the **petition** and ask the Australian Government to better protect our endemic sharks and rays in Australia's largest fishery
2. Take the pledge to **#GiveFlakeABreak** and choose a sustainable alternative to shark meat using the GoodFish app.
3. Spread the shark love, and encourage others to **#GiveFlakeABreak** so that we can give our Aussie sharks and rays a chance to recover.



[sharkchampions.org.au](http://sharkchampions.org.au)

## TO FIND OUT MORE

[GoodFish.org.au](http://GoodFish.org.au)

[amcs.org.au](http://amcs.org.au)

# Awesome! I pledge to #GiveFlakeABreak

Sign the pledge to #GiveFlakeABreak and choose sustainable alternatives.

It's **E.E.Easy** - **E**xplore your sustainable options using the GoodFish app, **E**nquire with your fishmonger about alternative seafood options – "What species of flathead is this and where does it come from?", and **E**njoy truly sustainable seafood knowing you're supporting healthy oceans, the local fish and chip shop, and the fisher who's doing a great job so we can fish for the future.

By pledging to #GiveFlakeABreak, you're joining over 50,000 Shark Champions who are already using their voice to both protect Australia's threatened sharks and have a direct impact on how Australia fishes.

