

Shark sightings and reporting

Sharks are an important part of our marine ecosystem, and it is important to know what to do when you see one.

How do I find out if there has been a shark sighting?

A shark patrol service is provided by the South Australian Government with fixed winged aircraft monitoring beaches from North Haven to Rapid Bay from 9.45 am to 7.30 pm every day during the summer period, traditionally from December until April. During this time, aircraft also patrol beaches between Victor Harbor and Goolwa on weekends, school holidays and public holidays.

If a shark poses a potential risk to a member of the public, the aircraft will circle the area, sound a siren and advise SA Police. Surf Life Savers will also sound a siren, put up a red and white flag and advise swimmers to evacuate the water immediately.

Always look out for these signs and obey warnings and instructions quickly. Surf Life Saving SA also operate helicopter patrols along Adelaide beaches that spots sharks, rips and other dangers.

Find out about reported shark sightings:

- [SA Police News](#)
- Follow on Twitter [@SAPoliceNews](#) [@SurfLifeSA](#) [@SA_PIRSA](#)
- [PIRSA Shark sightings log](#)

How do I report a shark sighting?

Water users are urged to report shark sightings as soon as possible. Shark sightings, where the shark poses an immediate danger to human life, should be reported immediately to SA Police by dialing 000. Sightings of large sharks that do not pose a threat to human life can be reported on:

- [SA Recreational Fishing Guide](#) app
- 24-hour Fishwatch hotline on 1800 065 522
- Shark Sighting Report [Online form](#)

What information should I provide when reporting a shark?

- Location and number of sharks
- How close the shark is to the shore
- How close the shark is to swimmers or other people
- The species of the shark (if known) or a description of the shark and approximate size
- Any other details that may be relevant

Are sharks sightings near metropolitan beaches increasing?

Sharks are a natural and important part of a healthy marine ecosystem, are highly mobile, and frequent all South Australian coastal and shelf waters. It is not uncommon for sharks to be sighted all year round, although they tend to be seen more frequently in the warmer months. Increased media attention, surveillance and more people using the water have contributed to the impression that shark numbers are on the rise.

Are all sharks dangerous?

More than 160 species of sharks inhabit Australian waters, with around 30 different species of sharks frequenting South Australia. While many shark species are capable of injuring humans, the majority are not aggressive under most circumstances. There are five species of shark in South Australian waters that are considered potentially dangerous:

- [White shark](#)
- [Thresher shark](#)
- [Shortfin mako](#)
- [Bronze whaler](#)
- [Dusky shark](#)

What should I do if I encounter a shark?

If you encounter a shark, the most important thing is not to interact with it. If you are in a small boat or paddle craft, or you are swimming, please consider your immediate safety and if you have any concerns leave the area. If it is safe to do so, return to shore, otherwise seek the assistance of a nearby fishing vessel.

For swimmers, divers and surfers, don't swim where there is a possible attraction or food source for sharks, such as areas where seals, dolphins or schools of fish aggregate. Other advice includes:

- Do not swim alone and stay close to the shore
- Avoid the water at dawn, dusk or at night, when some species of shark are known to come inshore to feed
- If you notice schooling fish or other wildlife start to behave erratically, leave the water
- If a shark is sighted in the area, leave the water as quickly and calmly as possible

Are there any beach enclosures in South Australia?

There are a few swimming enclosures along regional beaches in South Australia. These include:

- Wallaroo Bay
- Moonta Jetty
- Port Lincoln Jetty

Can a white shark be killed if they injure people?

The white shark is a protected species and it is an offence to harm, harass, or interfere with it in any way. In the case of a shark-related injury, or where there is a potential risk to life, the State Government is guided by the Shark Incident Response Plan to determine what course of action to take.

This Plan involves a variety of government departments and organisations who contribute to determining the most appropriate course of action to take, with destruction of the white shark being a last resort.