

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

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Topic: White sharks
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Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: I understand that, Mr Richardson. I am interested in whether exceptional circumstances would essentially, for want of a better term, be a loophole for killing white sharks. Could you justify that?

Mr Richardson: I do not think it would be characterised as a loophole. Certainly for white sharks globally, there are a number of signatory countries where there is a level of take to protect beachgoers, including in Australia.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Can you give us more information, perhaps on notice, as to examples overseas and whether there is any quantification of what that might be.

Mr Richardson: Sure.

Answer:

There are at least three other Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species that implement bather protection programmes.

South Africa has a bather protection programme in place along the KwaZulu-Natal coastline. It currently has 37 beaches equipped with a combination of shark nets and drumlines to provide bather protection against sharks, including white sharks. Between 2010 – 2014, the programme caught 26 white sharks, with seven of those released alive.

In New Zealand, Dunedin has three beaches protected by two shark nets each set permanently between December and February. The nets were first installed in 1969 after four shark attacks (three fatal) between 1964 and 1968. The nets caught 14 white sharks between 1973-74 and 1975-76, but there are no reports that any white sharks have been captured since.

In Recife in Brazil there have been approximately 56 shark attacks resulting in 21 fatalities between 1992 and 2012. In 2004, 20 drum-lines and two longlines with 100 hooks each were deployed. Each week, all lines are set at dusk and retrieved at dawn for a four day period that encompasses the weekend. The programme catches sharks, tagging them with tracking devices, and releasing them far from shore. No sharks are intentionally “culled” (captured and killed) in the process.