10 May 2018

**Shark fishing is banned in the City of Cockburn: Reminder for fishers at Ammunition Jetty**

Complaints highlighting community concerns about shark fishing from the Ammunition Jetty at Woodman Point have prompted the City to remind fishers that some practices used to fish for large sharks are banned in Cockburn.

Shark fishing is prohibited in the City of Cockburn under Section 3.3 of its Local Laws, including the use or setting of buoyed lines using blood or any other lure for the purpose of attracting sharks.

Coogee Beach Surf Life Saving Club and local residents have contacted the City concerned an increase in shark fishing from the jetty, in particular setting balloon lines and dumping berley in waters close to where people regularly swim and recreate, could attract sharks closer to shore.

They have also expressed concern at cruelty to sharks once caught, with photos of people posing at Coogee Beach with the sharks as trophies in at least two news articles and social media posts plus anecdotal evidence of sharks found with their fins cut off.

Environment Manager Chris Beaton said the City had received online and written petitions calling for shark fishing to be banned.

“Shark fishing is already prohibited in the City and our rangers are enforcing this local law,” Mr Beaton said.

“We understand that some fishers at the Ammo Jetty are attaching balloons to their fishing lines so that the baited hooks are carried into deeper waters on currents or with offshore breezes.

“Some also use kayaks and canoes to dump berley, carcasses and other blood and guts further offshore to attract fish. This is a potentially dangerous practice and also pollutes the water.

“Berley that contains mammal or bird products cannot be used in WA waters. Mammal or bird products means blood, flesh, offal or skin from a mammal or bird.

“We also know balloon litter is commonly ingested by marine life, causing discomfort and ultimately death.

“Those who say they are fishing for other fish, and not sharks, are still employing methods that attract sharks, which is against our Local Law, and could still attract a fine.”

Mr Beaton said the City would erect signage at the jetty to inform users of the Local Law, rangers would conduct regular patrols of the area and along with joint patrols with the Fisheries Officers from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Shark fishing is also banned in the Town of Cottesloe and in February this year, Fisheries Minister Dave Kelly urged fishers to be mindful of the safety of other water users after three large Tiger sharks were found mutilated and dumped at beaches in North Fremantle.

According to Fisheries, Tiger sharks caught in Western Australia's West Coast and South Coast bioregions are totally protected if they have an inter-dorsal fin measurement of more than 700 millimetres (sharks measuring about 1.8m in length).

Taking totally protected fish, due to size limit rules, can potentially attract a fine of up to $5,000 and, if an offence is proven, an additional mandatory penalty equal to 10 times the prescribed value of the fish by weight or number would also apply.

Great White sharks are also totally protected, regardless of their size.

Fisheries advice suggests that if a protected shark is caught, fishers must immediately take steps to return the fish to its natural environment with the least possible injury to avoid facing a fine or possible court action.

The Local Law document can be accessed on the City’s website, with the shark fishing information on page 21, Section III, Division 2 (Prohibited Areas and Activities), point 3.3: <https://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/getattachment/91a3bb4a-4057-44a8-abf8-d63d711824e9/ecm_7251279_v1_city-of-cockburn-consolidated-local-laws-2000-as-amended-12-october-2017-pdf.aspx>

For more information, contact the Community Safety team on 08 9411 3444.

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