

# First shark killed in Australia cull

January 26 2014

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Deadly attacks are rare in Australia, with only one in every 15 incidents a year typically proving fatal

The first shark caught under a controversial new Australian culling policy aimed at reducing fatal attacks was shot dead Sunday after being snared, angering conservationists.

The three-metre (10-foot) creature, reported to be a female [tiger shark](#), was caught on bait lines set off Australia's west coast in the past 24 hours under a policy approved by the national government.

A fisherman contracted to patrol the lines found the shark snared off Meelup Beach early Sunday and, according to media reports, shot it in the head four times at close range.

Western Australia state premier Colin Barnett was heckled by a protester at a public function after the kill was made public but was unapologetic about the plan, which has been met with criticism and demonstrations.

"I get no pleasure out of seeing sharks killed but I have an overriding responsibility to protect the people of Western Australia," Barnett told reporters.

"When you have sharks that are three, four, five metres long of known aggressive varieties, swimming in the water very close to beachgoers, that is an imminent danger."

Under the plan, approved by Canberra last week under an exemption to national environmental protection laws, baited drum lines with hooks can be set one kilometre (0.62 miles) off busy Western Australian beaches until April 30.

It follows six fatal maulings off the [west coast](#) in the past two years, leading local marine experts to declare it the deadliest [shark attack](#) area in the world.

Any shark longer than three metres snagged by the lines and deemed to be a threat—including great white, bull and tiger sharks—will be humanely destroyed.

Activists slammed the first killing Sunday, with the Conservation Council warning of a "pretty significant public backlash".

"This is just going to increase the level of public opposition to the shark

cull when people see images and hear stories of these sharks being culled," said council director Piers Verstegen.

"It is certainly a sad day for our marine life and for thousands of people in WA opposed to killing endangered sharks," he added.

While [sharks](#) are common in Australian waters, deadly attacks are rare, with only one of the average 15 incidents a year typically proving fatal.

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