

Shark experts question 'humane culling' claims

January 7 2014

A leading marine scientist has questioned the credibility of claims that sharks can be killed humanely.

Victoria University marine scientist Dr Carol Scarpaci said the culling of the Great White Shark and other large [sharks](#) - championed by the Western Australian Premier Colin Barnett - was "plain wrong".

"The claim that sharks will be humanely destroyed appears questionable given that the scientific literature indicates sharks caught by hook and line demonstrate capture stress," Dr Scarpaci said.

Capture stress is indicated by [biochemical changes](#) in the shark's blood stream.

"Is it simply a phobia of sharks that justifies squashing state and federal protection of these species and taking a big step backwards in wildlife management?" she said.

Dr Scarpaci wrote to Premier Barnett this morning outlining her concerns. She also said the non-selective nature of the proposed culling methods meant other protected species such as dolphins could become bycatch. She said the impact of the proposed cull outweighed the risk posed to humans.

"The chance of being killed by a shark is comparable to being struck by lightning," Dr Scarpaci said. "Surely money would be better spent on

research to better understand shark habits or in developing sustainable shark tourism".

Great white sharks are protected in Australia by fisheries legislation and are listed under international treaty (CITES), in their native habitat.

Dr Scarpaci is a world-renowned expert on marine animal behaviour with more than 25 research papers in international journals. She regularly presents to the IWC (whale watching subcommittee) and researches effective management strategies in marine tourism.

Provided by Victoria University

Citation: Shark experts question 'humane culling' claims (2014, January 7) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-01-shark-experts-humane-culling.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.