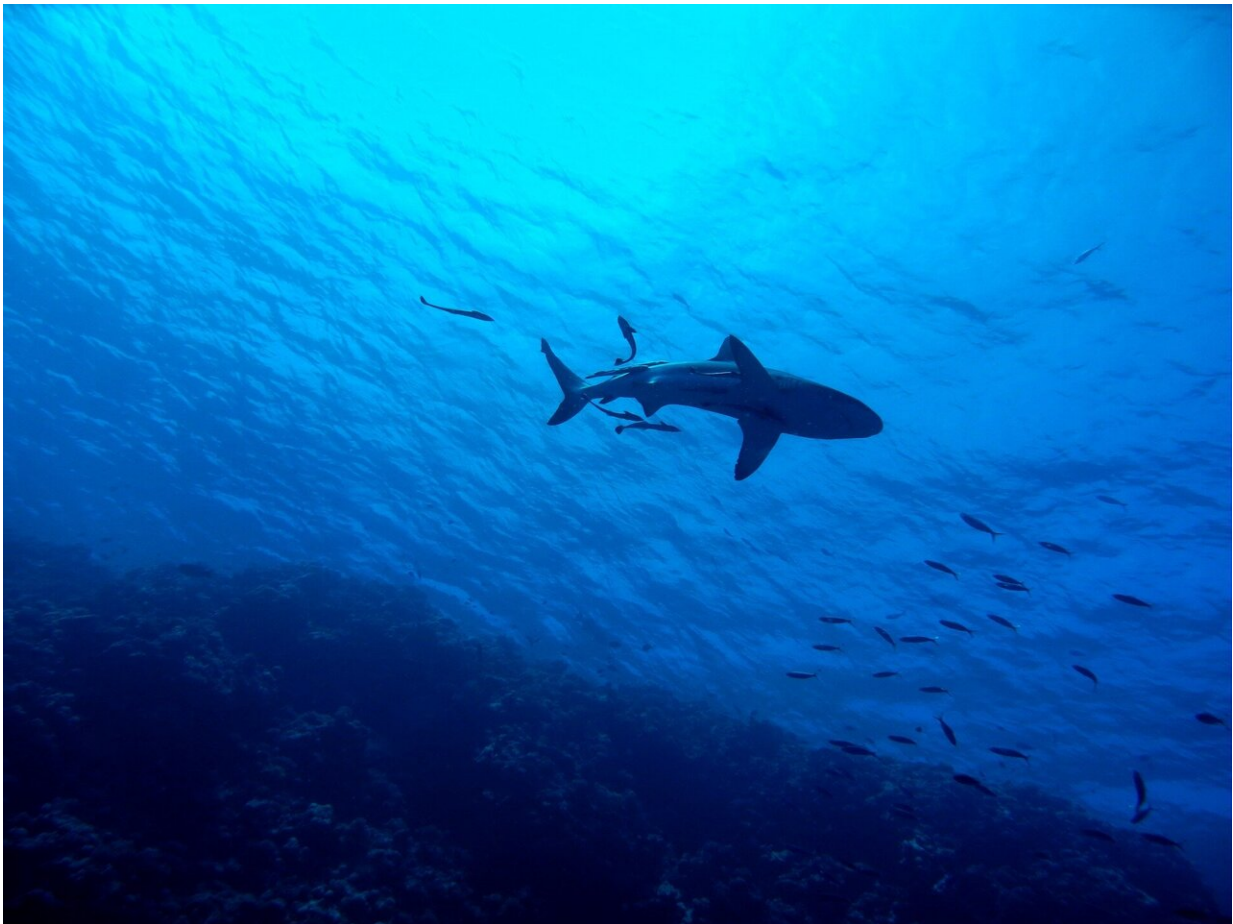


Rezone marine parks to better conserve sharks

December 3 2019



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A lack of habitat protection is hindering our ability to manage the

conservation of endangered open-ocean sharks in Australian waters, according to new research by The University of Western Australia.

The research, published in *Global Ecology and Conservation*, found that making minor changes to marine parks could make a big difference to [mako sharks](#) and many other open-ocean shark [species](#).

Lead author Charlotte Birkmanis, a [marine biologist](#) and Ph.D. candidate from UWA's Oceans Institute and School of Biological Sciences, said sharks were the peak predators of the world's oceans.

"Sharks are essential to the health of our oceans and to the fisheries that billions of people worldwide depend on," Ms Birkmanis said.

"Sharks are also valuable to tourism, with shark diving alone bringing in \$25.5 million in Australia annually."

By analyzing commercial fisheries' catch data and environmental parameters, the study found shark hotspots around Australia for seven species of open-ocean sharks.

"The research shows that we are only protecting one percent of these hotspots in our marine park network and all of these areas are exposed to fishing pressure," Ms Birkmanis said.

"The study highlights that if we rezone our existing marine parks to reduce fishing in these hotspots we could give makos and other species a haven in Australian waters.

"The endangered mako shark has been shown to repeatedly return to certain habitats for extended periods and by protecting these hotspots we can give these species a safe haven in Australian waters."

More information: Charlotte A. Birkmanis et al. Shark conservation hindered by lack of habitat protection, *Global Ecology and Conservation* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.gecco.2019.e00862](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2019.e00862)

Provided by University of Western Australia

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