Hefty fine for killing great white shark in Australia

February 13 2014

Great whites sharks are a protected species in Australia and it is illegal to catch, keep, buy, sell, possess or harm them

An Australian man has been fined Aus$18,000 (US$16,000) for killing a juvenile great white shark by ramming it with his boat then beating it to death with a metal pole, officials said Thursday.

Great whites are a protected species in Australia and it is illegal to catch, keep, buy, sell, possess or harm them.

The New South Wales Department of Primary Industries took action against the man, identified in media reports as Justin Clark, 40, after witnesses told fisheries officers he used his boat to herd the shark into shallow water in Sussex Inlet, south of Sydney, in January 2012.

Wollongong Local Court heard that he deliberately used his boat to ram the shark several times, with its main injuries caused by the propeller.

A rope was tied to the shark's tail and it was towed back to a boat ramp, where the department said it was beaten to death with a metal pole.

Clark was fined a total of Aus$18,103, with Department of Primary Industries director of fisheries compliance Glenn Tritton saying it was a warning to others.

"This conviction sends a strong message that harming of our threatened species will not be tolerated—everyone needs to know the rules and ignorance is no excuse," he said.

"Great white sharks are found along the NSW coastline and as apex predators at the top of the food chain, they play an important role in marine ecosystems."

Sharks are common in Australian waters, although they rarely prove fatal to humans, with only one of the average 15 attacks a year typically resulting in death.

In recent weeks, thousands of people have rallied around the country in protest at a controversial shark culling policy in Western Australia.

It allows sharks longer than three metres (10 feet) caught on bait lines off popular west coast beaches to be killed after six fatal attacks in the past two years.

The policy is designed to reduce risks to water users but has angered conservationists, who claim it flies in the face of international obligations to protect the great white.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Hefty fine for killing great white shark in Australia (2014, February 13) retrieved 24 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2014-02-hefty-fine-great-white-shark.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.