

Angelsharks in Wales: they need your help!

We need information from fishers to help us understand where Angelsharks are found in Welsh waters to better conserve this Critically Endangered species. Angelsharks are also known as monkfish, monk or angel fish!

Do not target

Angelsharks are heavily protected in Welsh waters and it is illegal to target this species

Follow guidelines

If you accidentally catch an Angelshark when fishing, follow the guidelines overleaf to release it in the best condition

Report your sighting

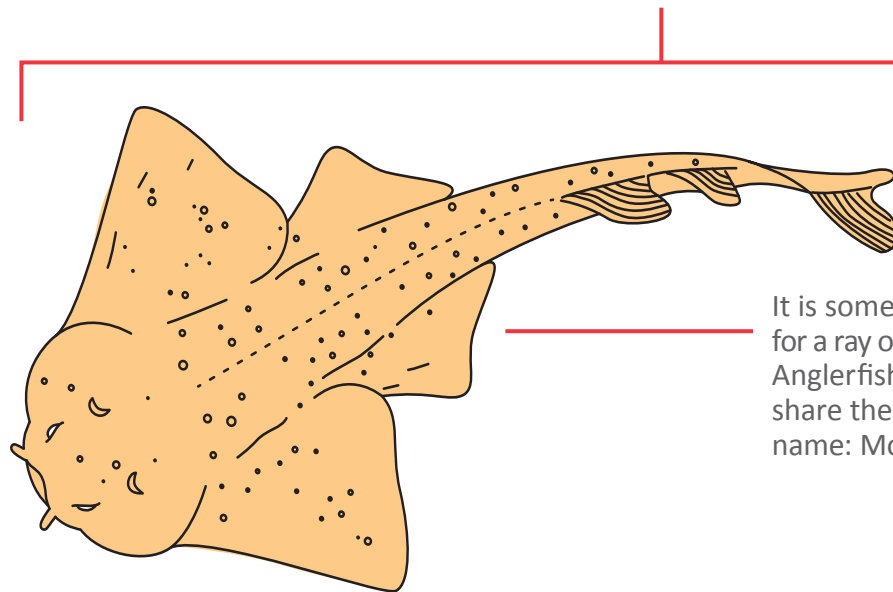
Report your Angelshark sighting to angelsharknetwork.com/#map or to tom@llynangling.net and help conserve this species



What is an Angelshark?

The Angelshark (*Squatina squatina*) is a large flat-bodied shark that can reach 2.4m long.

It feeds on a range of fish, crustaceans and molluscs and has an important role in maintaining a balanced marine ecosystem.



It is sometimes mistaken for a ray or mis-recorded as Anglerfish as both species share the same common name: Monkfish or Monk.

Angelsharks in Wales: why is reporting important?

Angelsharks were once widespread throughout the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea. Following decades of decline, they have **disappeared from much of the former range**. However, accidental captures of Angelsharks in Wales show that the species is still present here. Urgent action is needed to better understand **how many Angelsharks use Welsh waters and where they are found**.

How are Angelsharks protected in Wales?

- It is Prohibited to intentionally disturb, target, injure or kill Angelsharks within 12nm of Welsh and English coastlines (Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)
- For commercial fishers, it is Prohibited to target, retain, tranship or land Angelsharks for all EU and third country vessels in EU waters. All discards >50 kg must be logged. (Council Regulation (EU) No. 2017/127)

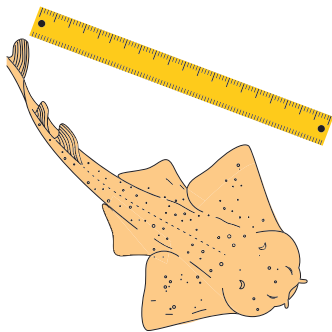


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Best-practice guide to safely release Angelsharks if accidentally caught

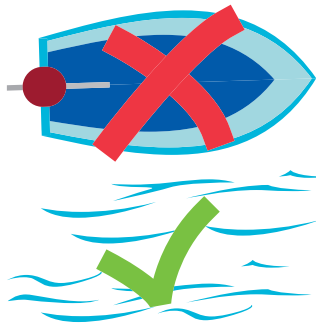
Although Angelsharks should not be targeted, this guidance has been developed with fishers to reduce mortality if they are **accidentally caught**.

1. Unhooking



Record the size and sex of the Angelshark. Male sharks have two claspers (long appendages) behind the pelvic fin.

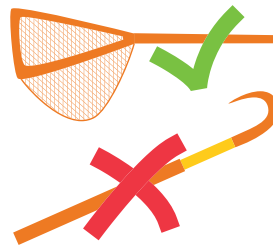
This information helps us to understand population structure



Unhook the Angelshark in the water (on the side of the boat or in knee-depth water on the coast). If you have to cut the leader, cut it as close to the hook as possible.

Water supports its internal organs.

2. In-boarding on a boat (ONLY if necessary)

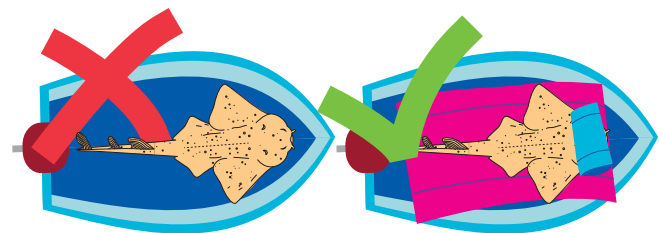


All interaction with Angelsharks should be minimised. If you need to in-board the Angelshark to unhook it safely, use a large landing net to bring it onto the boat. Never use a gaff.

To support the internal organs and reduce chance of injury.

Place it on a cool, wet, soft surface (e.g. a wet towel). Place a towel soaked in seawater over the eyes.

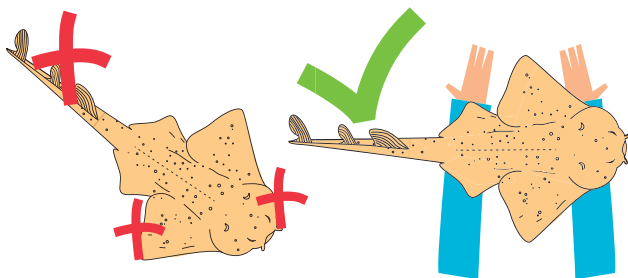
To keep it calm and stop thrashing.



3. Handling (ONLY if necessary)

Never hold the Angelshark just by its tail, its fins or by the gills; you need to support the underside of the shark.

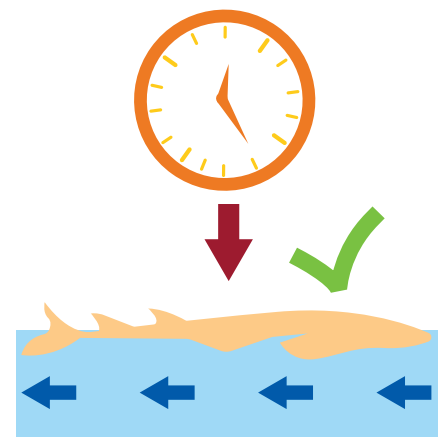
To support the internal organs and reduce chance of injury.



4. Releasing

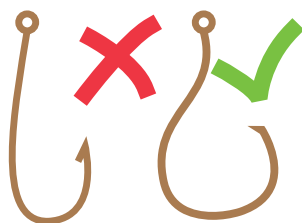
Release the Angelshark as soon as possible after unhooking. Lower it into the water facing the tide or waves.

Forces oxygen through its gills so that it can quickly swim away.



Advice on fishing tackle

Please use the following gear to reduce injury to sharks if accidentally caught



Always use barbless brass hooks (or another hook with the barb flattened down)

To reduce the chance of gut hooking so that it is easier to unhook the shark.

Use a strong line.

To reduce the likelihood of the line snapping and the shark trailing gear.



5. Reporting



Report your accidental capture on angelsharknetwork.com/#maps or to tom@llynangling.net

We will use this information to better understand and conserve Angelsharks.

