

ANGELSHARKS IN WALES NEED YOUR HELP!

Have you seen this shark in Welsh waters?
Information needed to better understand
this Critically Endangered species

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 these guidelines to release it in the best condition

Report your sighting

To help conserve this species report your Angelshark sighting to: www.angelsarkproject.com/map or email angelsarks@zsl.org

WHAT IS AN ANGELSHARK?

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



It is sometimes mistaken for a ray or mis recorded as an anglerfish. Anglerfish and Angelshark share the same common name in some fishing communities: Monkfish or Monk.

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

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).

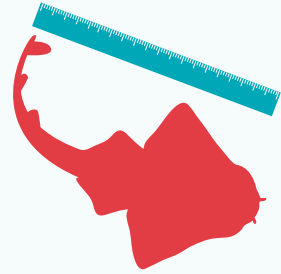
For commercial fishers, it is Prohibited to target, retain, tranship or land Angelsharks for all EU and third country vessels in EU waters. All discards >50 kg must be logged. (Council Regulation (EU) No. 2017/127).

BEST-PRACTICE GUIDE TO SAFELY RELEASE ANGELSHARKS IF ACCIDENTALLY CAUGHT

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



Unhooking



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

This helps us to understand population structure

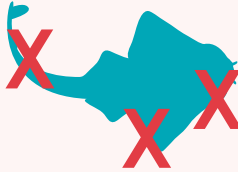


Unhook the Angelshark in the water on the side of the boat. If you have to cut the leader, cut it as close to the hook as possible.

Water supports the internal organs.

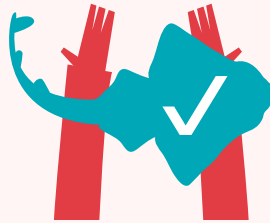
Handling

(ONLY if necessary)

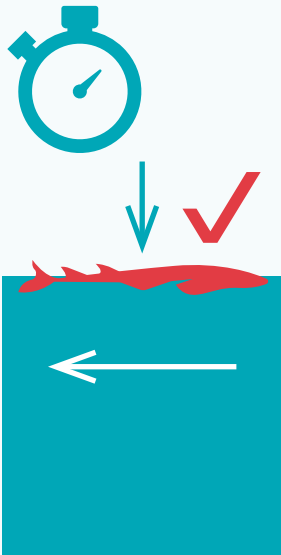


Never hold the shark just by its tail, its fins or by the gills; you need to support the underside of the shark.

To support the internal organs and reduce chance of injury.



Releasing

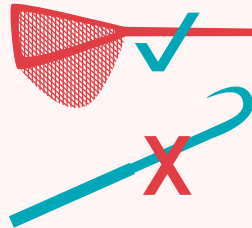


Release the shark as soon as possible after unhooking. Lower it into the water facing the tide or waves.

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

Landing aboard the boat

(ONLY if necessary)

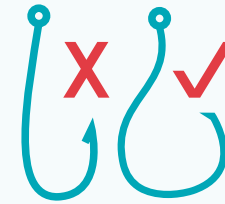


All interaction with sharks should be minimised. If you need to land aboard the boat to unhook safely, use a large landing net. Never use a gaff.

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.



Advice on fishing tackle

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.



Taking genetic samples

Contact angelsharks@zsl.org to be part of this work

Rub 3 genetic scrubs onto the Angelshark's skin. Seal in the provided genetic pack.

To collect genetic data to understand how the population is connected.

Reporting

Report your accidental capture on angelsharknetwork.com/#map or to angelsharks@zsl.org

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

