

Friday, January 17, 2014

Australia's Plan to Kill Sharks

Australia's leaders want to kill big sharks near popular beaches.

Sharks may *look* scary, but they are not usually **dangerous** to people. Very few **species** of sharks ever attack humans. And most sharks prefer to eat other animals, such as seals. However, there have been *some* attacks on people. Sharks killed two surfers in the waters off Western Australia in late 2013. Now Australia's government wants to kill large sharks by those beaches.

The country's plan is to put **baited** hooks in the water by eight popular beaches. This would attract sharks to the area. Then the government would pay fishermen to kill sharks larger than 10 feet. Australian leader Kim Kames told *Time* that the plan would help protect "the divers, surfers, and swimmers who love to use the water."

However, many people are not happy about the plan. They say that it will kill great white sharks, which are **endangered**. Putting bait near beaches may even attract *more* sharks to the beaches. Plus, the baited hooks may kill whales, dolphins, and turtles. Scientists also say that sharks are important to the health of our oceans.

Thousands of Australians have protested the plan across the country. Paul de Gelder lost a leg and a hand in a 2009 shark attack in Australia. He called the government's idea "stupid." He told Fairfax Media, "They're not our sharks to kill."

By Russell Kahn (Russ)



People kill up to 100 million sharks every year.

FACT:

Workers recently put tags on 338 sharks in Western Australia. The tags tell computers where the sharks are. People can use Twitter to see if they are close!

ACT:

Shark attacks are very rare. But to be safer, swim in groups, take off shiny jewelry, and avoid swimming after sunset. And don't swim if you are bleeding.

VOCABULARY:

dangerous: harmful; hurtful

species: type of animal

endangered: in danger of being gone forever

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Perth,
Australia



Perth is the capital of Western Australia. Some people call it the "City of Light."