



Scottish Anglers Shark I.D.

in association with



Scottish Shark Tagging Programme




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Spurdog (Spiny Dogfish) Distribution: West & Northern Coast of Scotland. Length: 120cm Max. Landing limit 100cm. ID: Sharp Spines on both Dorsal fins, Green Eye. Tackle: 6-12lb class Bait: Mackerel & Whiting	Lesser Spotted Dogfish Distribution: All Coasts of Scotland. Length: 90cm. ID: rough skin with small dark spots. No nasal barbells. Tackle: 6-12lb class. Bait: Mackerel, Crab & Worm	Thornback Ray Distribution: South West & West Coast of Scotland. Length: 120cm. ID: The upper surface and tail are covered with numerous thorns. The colour varies from light brown to grey, variegated dark and light spots on the upper surface. Tackle: 12lb class. Bait: Mackerel & Squid
Tope Distribution: South West coast of Scotland. Length: 200cm. ID: Slender shark with a long snout. Its large mouth contains sharp triangular teeth. Dusky grey on top and blends to white underneath. Tackle: 12-20lb class. Bait: Mackerel & Whiting	Bullhuss (Greater Spotted Dogfish) Distribution: South West Coast of Scotland. Length: 182cm. ID: Pale upper body covered with a series of large black spots. Nasal flaps are separate and don't reach the mouth. Tackle: 6-12lb class. Bait: Mackerel, Whiting & Crab	Cuckoo Ray Distribution: South West & West Coast of Scotland. Length: 71cm. ID: Yellowish to drab brown with distinctive black and cream eye spots on each wing. Tackle: 6-12lb class. Bait: Mackerel & Squid
Starry Smoothound Distribution: South West coast of Scotland. Length: 140cm. ID: two high dorsal fins, ray like crushing teeth. May have white spots on grey-brown upper body. Tackle: 6-12lb class. Bait: Crab	Blackmouth Dogfish Distribution: Deep water of West Coast of Scotland. Length: 90cm. ID: The inside of the mouth is black, upper body is grey to dark brown with blotches and circular spots. Tackle: 12-20lb class. Bait: Mackerel & Crab	Spotted Ray Distribution: South West Coast of Scotland. Length: 75cm. ID: Brown with numerous brown spots that do not extend to tip of wing. A central row of thorns run from behind the eye to the dorsal fin. Tackle: 6-12lb class. Bait: Mackerel & Ragworm Cockles
Porbeagle Distribution: All coasts of Scotland. Length: 370cm max. Landing limit 201cm ID: stout with large black eyes. White patch at rear of dorsal fin 80lb class. Tackle: 80lb class. Bait: Mackerel & all Bony Fish	Common Skate Distribution: Deep water of West Coast of Scotland. Length: 285cm. ID: Elongated snout and a row of 12 - 20 thorns along the tail. Tackle: 50lb class. Bait: Mackerel, Coalle & Squid	Blonde Ray Distribution: South West & West Coast of Scotland. Length: 125cm. ID: Light brown with numerous brown spots that extend to tip of wing. A central row of thorns runs along the tail. Tackle: 6-12lb class. Bait: Mackerel & Squid




Loch Sunart and Loch Etive

11th, 12th & 13th November 2011



Give Fish A Chance (GFAC)

SSACN's GFAC sizes are a voluntary measure to help ensure the future of a species. Use the guidelines and you can be reasonably certain a fish has had a chance to breed.

Fish Species	GFAC(cms)	Fish Species	GFAC(cms)	Fish Species	GFAC(cms)
Bass	45	Herring	25	Ray - Eagle	70
Bib / Pout	20	Horse Mackerel	25	Ray - Spotted	55
Bream - Black	30	John Dory	35	Ray - Starry	40
Bream - Gilthead	40	Lemon Sole	30	Ray - Thornback	95
Bream - Ray's	40	Lesser Spotted Dogfish	60	Rockling 3 bearded	30
Bream - Red	25	Ling	90	Saithe	60
Brill	40	Mackerel	30	Smoothound	85
Cod	50	Megrim	28	Torsk / Tusk	50
Common Dab	25	Monkfish	150	Trigger Fish	20
Conger	75	Mullet - Grey (thin)	40	Turbot	40
Dover Sole	30	Mullet - Grey	40	Whiting	27
Flounder	30	Mullet - Red	24	Witch	28
Garfish	45	Mullet - Golden Grey	35	Wolf-fish	60
Gurnard - Streaked	20	Nursehound / Bull Huss	80	Wrasse - Ballan	20
Gurnard - Grey	25	Plaice	31	Wrasse - Cuckoo	16
Gurnard - Red	20	Pollack	55		
Gurnard - Tub	20	Poor Cod	23		
Haddock	40	Ray - Painted	70		
Hake	50	Ray - Blonde	100		
Halibut	110	Ray - Cuckoo	60		

SSACN recommend you do not take any Spurdog, Common Skate or Undulated Ray, irrespective of size.

Dear Participant....

Welcome to the Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Networks 2011 Spurdog Tagathon ... welcome back to all those seasoned Tagathon anglers and to the number of new faces joining us this year to help tag as many fish as possible in the name of conservation. This information pack will provide you with all the information you require to have a great weekend in the Loch Sunart and Loch Etive areas of the West of Scotland.

The tagging events run by SSACN are designed to ...

- 1 To gather research data on the numbers, types, growth rates and movements of inshore Scottish Sharks
- 2 Increase public awareness of the need to protect the sharks and show the social and economic benefits of conservation minded angling to coastal communities, tourism officials and politicians.
- 3 Bring together conservation minded anglers to share a story or two and show a united voice for conservation the fish stocks and the sport we love.
- 4 Promote responsible practice and to have some fun.

Once you have collected your participants pack you simply go fishing tag as many fish as you can and hand in your record cards at the end of each day ... it's as simple as that ... just following the fish handling and tagging guidelines in the guide and remember to fish safely with respect to the environment, the fish, fellow anglers and the public.

Have a great weekend!!!

The Tagathon Team.








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Small Shark Handling Code of Best Practice



This code of best practice has been prepared to assist anglers catch and return small sharks in a way that best ensures they survive the process. It applies most particularly to Spurdog, (Maximum landing limit 100cm), Starry Smoothhound, Bull Huss and Small Spotted Catshark (doggie or LSD) The majority of small shark angling is carried out from boats and this code of conduct is written taking this into account but we would ask shore anglers to specifically look at section 12.

1) Introduction

Whilst small sharks may look big and tough creatures they are actually quite delicate especially when out of the water. This code has been written so that you can enjoy fishing for small sharks but most importantly cause the minimum of damage to any you are lucky enough to encounter. Releasing any shark without taking it out of the water is the preferred option. It is worth remembering that the sharp spines on spurdog are used by the fish as defensive weapon and these can easily pierce a wellington boot. In one instance the spine caused a wound on an angler that required 18 stitches so extreme care is required when handling them. The skin on small sharks can leave painful long lasting burns to exposed areas so ensure you hold the fish with two hands A gut hooked fish is usually down to bad angling practice and should be avoided by striking early.

2) Be prepared

It is essential that you are prepared for any eventuality when landing any shark It sounds obvious, but the time taken to find buried tools in tackle boxes or under a pile of clothing means the fish is under stress for longer than necessary. This means having T bars, pliers, wire cutters, tagging kits, weighing slings (if applicable), cameras etc. at hand. Time is the vital factor that may dictate whether the fish will survive the capture and subsequent release

3) Hook sizes

The use of bronze finished hooks is the singularly most important factor in the release of deep-hooked sharks as any hook that has to be left in a fish will dissolve rapidly. A size 4/0, is recommended, for most species either barb-less or with the barb crushed to facilitate the unhooking process As lip hooking significantly reduces the likelihood of a hook being left in the fish the use of circle hooks should also be considered.

4) Traces

The use of the right trace is important. Losing a fish because of an inappropriate trace increases the likelihood of fish mortality due to trailing line. The trace for a spurdog should be at least one metre of 40 kg nylon with a biting length of 200mms of 25 kg wire; a small length of wire is essential for spurdog but 25 kg mono will suffice for the Huss, rays, and smooth hound.

5) When to strike

It is essential to strike early to avoid a deep hooked fish. A gut hooked fish is usually down to bad angling practice, it is better to miss the bite than gut hook the fish.

6) Releasing at the side of the boat

- This is the preferred method The recommended option is to release the fish in the water with a long handled "T" bar. This is far better for the fish and easiest option for the angler. Insert the slit on the bar round the bend of the hook with one hand and pull the line down with the other. Use the weight of the fish to pull out the hook. A barb-less hook or crushed barb makes this a simple task. As sharks have a long gestation period then there is a good chance any large female you encounter will be pregnant so extra care must be taken to avoid the fish aborting through stress. Small sharks are not an aggressive or vicious despite the look of their teeth or spines - simply treat with caution. Do not attempt to handle by trying to wrap the head and tail in a single grip as is commonly done with the LSD.

7) To leave the hook in or not?

There are occasions, all though this is often down to inexperience or bad angling practice when, the spurdog swallows everything and the hook is out of sight or in the protruding stomach. The best option for the welfare of the fish is to cut the line as close to the hook as possible. The sharks will lose the hook eventually (providing it is not stainless steel) and will swallow the stomach as this method is used by sharks, as a defence mechanism to get rid of unwanted stomach contents. If you can see the hook in the wall of the mouth then it may be preferable to land the fish to safely remove the hook.

8) Bringing the fish on board

If you need to land the fish then the safety of both the fish and the angler is paramount. Remember sharks have no ribcage and the water pressure keeps all the vital organs in place. Dragging a fish backwards or holding it by the tail can easily rupture the internal organs. It may swim off fine but die a few days later. To remove the fish from the water hold the dorsal fin and tail and lift the fish horizontally, alternatively a pectoral fin may be used, however, where possible, the abdomen should be supported to the highest degree possible. When you cannot reach the fish, a large, landing net should be used, taking care to lower the fish gently onto the deck or land. A wet cloth or towel soaked in sea water should be placed over the head ensuring the eyes are fully covered; this usually pacifies small sharks and makes the removal of the hook with a disgorger or long nosed pliers an easier and safer procedure. Avoid holding sharks in a death grip from behind the head as the fingers and thumb can crush the gill structures. A gentle grip either on the snout (neoprene gloves give an excellent grip) or behind the gill area will do the trick. A foot placed either side of the body can help minimise squirming while unhooking. Where an angler is fishing alone it is recommended that all fish are released in the water, either by using a T bar or cutting the line close to the fish. In no circumstances is the use of a gaff recommended. It is not necessary and seriously damages fish.

9) Weighing a fish.

If the sharks are to be weighed, the preferred method is by the use of a suitably sized weighing sling laid out beforehand. The fish should be placed in this sling immediately it is unhooked, ensuring that unsupported movement is restricted. Ensure that the fish is placed evenly within the sling before lifting

10) Photographing the fish

When photographing and returning the fish remember to keep the fish horizontal, with the abdomen supported by the arms and the tail grasped firmly.

11) Releasing the fish.

When releasing the fish, hold the head of the fish into the tide for a short period to get oxygen back into its gills, once the fish kicks that is a good indication that it has recovered enough to be released.

12) Shore anglers

Where sharks are targeted from the shore, the general comments on unhooking, fish handling and photography still apply. Extra care must be taken when fishing for sharks from the shore for both the safety of the angler and for the well being of the fish. A shore angler needs to work out well in advance, how he is physically going to deal with a fish that is likely to be in excess of 10 pounds. The time taken to drag the fish to a suitable and safe platform could be the crucial for the tope's survival. It is not acceptable to drag the fish vertically (either head or tail first) up rocks or a pier for reasons outlined in section 8 which suggests; it is essential you try and bring the fish in horizontally, with arms supporting the abdomen if possible. Failure to do this can easily rupture the internal organs. The tope may swim off fine but die a few days later.

13) Conclusion

Sharks are a powerful, active fish and their teeth are as sharp as razor blades and will instantly bite a finger to the bone and their spines can cause severe damage to the angler. The best practice for angler and fish is to remove the hook whilst the fish is still in the water, but if you have to land the fish then the safety of the angler and fish is paramount and care must be taken at all times. Enjoy the fishing but please remember respect must be given to these magnificent sharks at all times. By following this code, you will help preserve the stocks of these magnificent fighting fish for generations to come.

This code of conduct was produced by the : Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network (www.ssacn.org). It may be freely distributed with the normal acknowledgements.



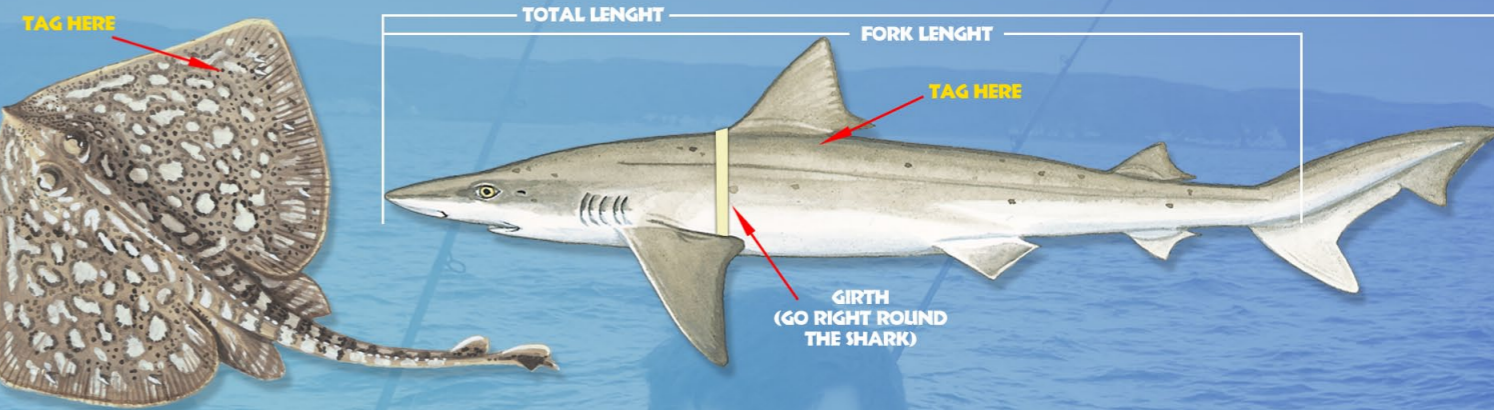
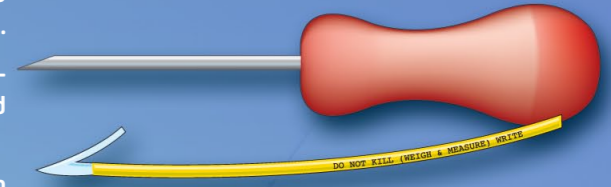
Plastic Dart Tagging Guidelines



Inserting the Tag...

Do not be over anxious. By taking the time to tag the fish will ensure safe anchorage of the tag in the correct placement...

- ✓ **Loading the Cannula:** Place the blunt end of the tag inside the pointed end of the cannula and line the tag up so only the anchor barb is showing.
- ✓ **Inserting the Cannula:** Push cannula firmly through the skin until the anchor barb just disappears under the skin, either side of the dorsal fin and below the dorsal line at a 45° angle.
- ✓ **Removing the Cannula:** Give the cannula a slight twist and remove from fish. Tug the tag slightly to set the barb.



We have increased the number of species the SSTP will be collecting data for; so please tag the following species: Tope, Smoothound, Spurdog, Rays and Bull Huss.

Please remember we are recording numbers of all shark caught, including LSD's (LSD's are NOT to be tagged - just quantities recorded)

If any fish is below the minimum tagging size then please do not tag them, just record the details on the card provided.

Please do not attempt to weigh any fish unless you have a suitable weighing sling. We can work out the sizes of the fish using length to weight formulas.

Minimum Tagging Sizes ...

Tope.....	Length 90cm (10.0lbs)
Spurdog.....	Length 90cm (7.25lbs)
Bull Huss.....	Length 90cm (7lbs)
Smoothound.....	Length 90cm (6.5lbs)
Rays.....	Wingspan 50cm (5.25lbs)

don't forget our next events...



Skate Tagathon
13th - 15th April 2012
Crinan Area,
West Scotland

Spurdog Tagathon
2nd-4th November 2012
Loch Sunart & Loch Etive
West Scotland



The 'Big One'... Sharkatag 4!!
15th - 17th June 2012
Solway & Luce Bay Area
South West Scotland