



LET'S TALK SHARKS!

Use this guide as a resource for effective communication. Our aim is to be consistent, by using our experience, knowledge and expertise to strategically share factual information about sharks and conservation that will inspire audiences to take action!

ABC APPROACH

Many people will lead conversations about sharks and rays with talking points they have heard over and over. However, these may not be the talking points we want to reinforce or focus on. Consider this method to redirect difficult conversations to be more factual, productive and engaging.

Acknowledge the question or concern

Bridge by guiding the conversation to a more comfortable topic

Communicate your key message



Try it: Role play turning difficult conversations to your advantage with your colleagues.

SHARKS UNDER HUMAN CARE

Some Common Questions...

Are the divers afraid of the sharks?



- Divers are trained on best practices for our specific sharks.
- Most sharks tend to ignore divers or move to avoid them.
- Safety protocols are followed whenever humans must interact directly with the sharks.

Why don't the sharks eat the other fish?



- Regular feedings happen much more often than in the ocean.
- Sharks are opportunistic feeders, not voracious predators. They tend not to waste energy on healthy fish. The easier the meal, the better!

2024 ARCS* FOR SHARKS
identified and catalogued

150+

Elasmobranch Studies
from 66 organizations

*AZA's Annual Report on Conservation and Science

AZA SHARK RESEARCH & CONSERVATION

In 2024, 66 AZA-accredited facilities reported spending over \$5 million on shark and ray research and conservation!

As a **SAFE Shark and Ray partner**, you are contributing to important research to better understand the biology and natural history of the animals in your care, influencing conservation policy, delivering consistent and vital messaging for sharks, and supporting direct conservation action for species in critical need.

THREATS: SHARK FISHERIES

FACTS

The global shark and ray meat trade is valued at **\$2.6 billion annually**. It's larger in volume and value than the global fin trade.

90%

of species assessed by the IUCN are impacted solely by overfishing

26%

of species are intentionally targeted

99%

of incidental catches are retained and often consumed, marketed or traded

Overfishing is the key driver of shark, ray and chimaera declines.

AVOID COMMUNICATION "TRAPS"

The **Speaking up for the Ocean Toolkit** uses social science to identify, and avoid, ineffective "traps" when speaking to audiences about shark and ray conservation.

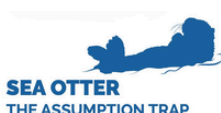
DOWNLOAD



OCTOPUS
THE REPETITION TRAP

TRAP
Don't mimic by repeating harmful claims.

FIX
Stick with your key message.



SEA OTTER
THE ASSUMPTION TRAP

TRAP
Challenge your assumptions about language.

FIX
Use words that people know and share your understanding of.



SEA CUCUMBER
THE PASSIVE TRAP

TRAP
Don't leave out the cause or make things seem inevitable.

FIX
Use active language to inspire people.



FLATFISH
EUPHEMISM OR SANITISING TRAP

TRAP
Don't hide the problem.

FIX
Highlight the damage, so people know what the problem is.

THE PORTUGUESE MAN O WAR
THE THREAT TRAP

TRAP
Don't overdo the threat.

FIX
Make change seem possible by pointing to past successes.



HUMAN-SHARK INTERACTIONS

Our divers have positive interactions with sharks and rays daily!

However in the wild, negative human/wildlife conflicts are increasing. As populations grow, habitat availability declines and more and more humans enter traditional wildlife spaces, including the ocean. Effective management protects people and communities, while building trust and avoiding retaliation against wildlife.

As shark tourism is on the rise, we must properly manage these positive human/shark experiences for human and shark safety.

CONSERVATION SOLUTIONS

The toolkit (above) tells us that we should never present a problem without a solution.

It can be tempting to present single "silver bullet" solutions to complex problems. But in reality there are many pieces that make up the big picture.

Each solution on its own has strengths and limitations. Together, they will enable shark and ray populations to rebuild and recover.

Key Actions for Sharks:

-  **Fisheries Management**
-  **Marine Protected Areas and Shark Sanctuaries**
-  **Education & Awareness**
-  **Re-Introductions (ReShark)**
-  **Consumer Actions (e.g. cosmetics, sustainable seafood, policy support)**
-  **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Protections**