



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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LISTING OF THREE SHARKS UNDER NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT LAW

Environment Minister Peter Garrett today announced that the listing of three shark species as migratory species under the national environment law would be very unlikely to affect catch and release fishing.

Mr Garrett said under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* the Government was obligated to list the porbeagle, longfin mako and shortfin mako sharks once the species was listed on Appendix II to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

“The national environment law – the *EPBC Act* - makes it clear that where a species is listed on the CMS Australia must include them in our national list of migratory species.

“While the EPBC Act is currently the subject of a review, it currently provides no flexibility for domestic judgments about whether a species listed on the CMS should or shouldn’t be listed under the Act.

“However, the Government is conscious that listing these species as migratory under the EPBC Act could have significant implications for recreational fishers in Commonwealth marine areas where the mako are targeted for catch and release fishing.

“As catch and release activities, when carried out properly, are not likely to have a significant impact on populations of these shark species they equally are unlikely to be subject to enforcement action.”

Mr Garrett said the Government recognised that globally many populations of mako sharks were depleted, however there was no evidence suggesting that Australian populations are similarly threatened.

“We will therefore be working with fishery managers to improve data on mako and porbeagle sharks in Australian waters in order that we can ensure that we make future decisions about these species based on the best available science.”

The Minister said the listing of the species was expected to occur on 29 January 2010.

Commercial take of mako and porbeagle sharks will only be permitted where fishers are acting in line with arrangements accredited under the EPBC Act. The Government is reviewing existing accreditations to ensure they remain adequate in light of the listing of mako and porbeagle sharks.

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