

PRACTICING SAFE CATCH AND RELEASE

THE FOLLOWING ARE RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR RELEASING SHARKS FROM A VESSEL

1. To maximize survival, **keep the shark in the water**. Use heavy fishing tackle to minimize fight time. This will increase its chances for survival after release.



2. Place a measuring device along the side of the vessel so the shark can be measured in the water.



3. Remove the hook using a dehooking device. If you cannot remove the hook, or if removing the hook would cause danger to yourself or the shark, cut the leader as close to the hook as safety permits to minimize any trailing gear, or cut the hook itself with bolt cutters.



4. Do not gaff a shark that you plan on releasing. Use the leader to hold the shark at boatside with its head oriented into the current.



5. When releasing the shark, allow water to flow over the gills by moving the shark forward in the water, or by positioning the shark so the current flows toward the head of the animal, until its energy returns.

ALL PROHIBITED SHARKS, INCLUDING DUSKY SHARKS, MUST BE RELEASED IN THE WATER WITH A MINIMUM OF HARM.

If You Don't Know, Let it Go
Release Ridgebacks

Photographs provided by NMFS and Mark Sampson

