

# The Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW

## “Promoting Sustainable Fishing”

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### GREY NURSE SHARKS, GREEN MYTHS AND COURT CASES

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) has appealed to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) a decision by the Australian Government to allow export permit status for the Ocean Trap and Line Fishery. This is mainly a NSW Commercial Fishery. The appeal is based on the threat to the Grey Nurse Shark (GNS) from this fishery, however the recreational fishing sector has been dragged into the NCC argument and from all accounts this was intentional

It seems the NCC was not happy with the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) intention to maintain the status quo within the States Critical Habitat Zones. These zones have a 200m anchoring and bait fishing exclusion zone at twelve GNS Critical Habitat Zones along the NSW coast. The NCC want a 1500m (or more) no-fishing zone. These sharks can travel up to 800km in a couple of weeks in any direction to feed and spawn.

Last week, DPI Minister Ian Macdonald announced that NSW Fisheries will be joining the legal appeals process as recreational fishing was now included with commercial fishing interests. He then went on to advise an update on how the DPI Grey Nurse Shark Artificial Breeding program was progressing. When asked the question about the Recreational Fishing Trust (RFT) providing some financial assistance towards legal representation, he advised he would not object providing the Trust fully supported such a request.

The RFA of NSW fully supports funding from the Trust, the Minister, NSW Fisheries and RECFISH in this current legal action which was instigated by the NCC.

RECFISH Committee Member and Chairman of the RFA of NSW, Malcolm Poole claimed today “that this was a significant step forward for RECFISH Australia and the Minister to debunk some of the myths promoted by the NCC that surround the Grey Nurse in NSW”. Mr Poole went on to say that “the NCC is trying every conceivable trick to drag recreational anglers into this fight that was supposedly focusing on the commercial trap and line fishery and their interactions with the shark population”.

A Sydney Morning Herald article on 6<sup>th</sup> October last year stated: “The NSW Minister for Natural Resources, Ian Macdonald, defended the Government's efforts to protect the shark and the artificial breeding program. ‘We believe the population has stabilised,’ Mr Macdonald said”.

Mr Poole commented further saying, “that the estimated legal fees to mount such a challenge protecting the interests of recreational fishers will not be cheap”. If anglers wished to assist with donations towards a GNS appeal fighting fund, then please contact the RECFISH Administration Manager, via phone/fax (07) 3356 1111, or PO Box 187 Grange Qld 4051 or via email [admin@recfish.com.au](mailto:admin@recfish.com.au) .

The RFA of NSW is fully supportive of more scientific research to appropriately determine the correct methodology to model and confirm the actual population of Grey Nurse Sharks along the east coast of Australia with the last significant count being in 2003. Since then sightings and photographs taken clearly indicate the GNS population appears to be better condition than that promoted by the NCC and more research is needed.

***The RFA of NSW- “PROMOTING SAFE AND ENJOYABLE FISHING”***  
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