



Shark Conservation



Sharks are front and centre when it comes to SEA LIFE! We recognise that these apex predators are key for a healthy ocean and SEA LIFE supports sharks worldwide through our breeding programmes, rescue initiatives and research.

Blacktip reef shark breeding programme - Europe

- SEA LIFE coordinates the European black tip reef shark (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*) breeding program (studbook), currently monitoring 304 black tip reef sharks across 63 European aquariums for the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA).
- From 2015-2019, 53 black tip reef shark pups have been born in European SEA LIFE centres.
- Our SEA LIFE centre in Oberhausen, Germany, is Europe's leader in the husbandry and care of the species.
- SEA LIFE centres are building a strong, genetically healthy aquarium population to help safeguard the future of wild populations and are also contributing to research into the reproductive biology and life history of the species.
- SEA LIFE regularly breeds 20+ species of shark and ray every year. In 2019 we successfully bred four species that are Critically Endangered.

Grey nurse / Sand tiger shark rescues – SEA LIFE Sydney, Australia

- Our SEA LIFE aquariums in Australia are part of a project to identify and rescue critically endangered grey nurse sharks (*Carcharias taurus* - also known as sand tiger sharks) that have been hooked or tangled by commercial and recreational fishing gear.
- The project aims at improving recreational angler relations with the wider community by building capacity for sea life rescue in Sydney Harbour and the surrounding area.
- The team from Sydney, which includes experienced divers, have to date successfully de-hooked or disentangled five sharks from marine debris.
- The individual sharks can be identified by their unique spots, so we can continue to monitor their movements.



Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) program for Sharks & Rays - USA

- The SAFE Program brings together groups of AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) members with field-based partners to enhance conservation success for threatened species. The SAFE mission is to combine the power of zoo and aquarium visitors with the collective expertise of AZA members and partners to prevent animal extinction.
- SEA LIFE has taken an active role in the SAFE Sharks and Rays project since the beginning.
- The first projects aim to help the animals in our collection and support research and conservation in the wild.
- Globally, SEA LIFE is participating in the International Elasmobranch Census, which provides researchers and conservationists with an opportunity to gain knowledge from the animals in our care.
- SEA LIFE Michigan Curator Kelli Cadenas has been a leader on the SAFE Animal Care Manual Project since 2018, which is working to create species specific animal care manuals that will be available both to institutions working with these animals every day, but also to researchers working with them in the wild.

Sawfish – Australia and Asia

- Sawfishes, also known as carpenter sharks, are a family of shark like rays characterized by a long, narrow, flattened rostrum, or nose extension, lined with sharp transverse teeth, arranged in a way that resembles a saw.
- SEA LIFE Sydney and SEA LIFE Bangkok are working with the SEA LIFE Trust and Sharks and Rays Australia to promote the conservation of the critically endangered sawfish, *Pristis pristis*.
- Northern Australia is the last global stronghold for four of the five species of sawfish whose populations have been decimated by coastal habitat destruction, illegal fishing for their rostrums and entanglement.
- Two satellite tags were deployed in 2019 with more planned in 2020 and a suite of excellent education and interpretation materials have been produced to help record their distribution and support their conservation.

