

Shark science and fisheries: lesson 3
of 3

Write a policy brief

Advise the government on
protecting sharks

A whale shark. Photo: MCP volunteers



What is a policy brief?

A short document, often just one or two pages, that tells decision-makers about a problem and recommends what to do, based on evidence.

Ministers and officials are busy. A good brief is clear, short and honest about uncertainty.



The Philippines already protects some species



Whale sharks

Catching, selling and trading them has been banned since 1998.



Manta rays

Protected under the same order.



International trade

Many shark species are listed under CITES, which controls trade in their fins and meat.

How we know: BFAR Fisheries Administrative Order 193 (1998). CITES.



Policy options

Catch limits

Set a maximum catch for each species or area.

Retention bans

Release any shark caught, alive.

Protected species lists

Add more threatened species.

Better gear

Circle hooks and escape panels reduce bycatch.

Market checks

DNA tests on fins and meat to catch illegal trade.

Ecotourism

Earn more from living sharks, as in Donsol.



Write your brief

1. Title: say the issue in a few words.
2. The problem: two or three sentences with the key evidence and numbers.
3. Options: two or three, with pros and cons.
4. Recommendation: which option and why, and how to measure success.
5. Keep it to one page.



Peer review

1. Swap briefs with another group.
2. Use the rubric: is the evidence accurate and sourced? Is the recommendation clear and realistic?
3. Give one strength and one suggestion.
4. Revise.



Talk about it

Which recommendation would be hardest to enforce? Why?

Who would support or oppose your recommendation?

How would you know in five years whether it worked?

Well done! You have finished the Shark science and fisheries lessons.



Photos and sources

Photos: whale shark by MCP volunteers. Manta by MCP. All illustrations drawn for this lesson by Marine Conservation Philippines.

Sources:

- BFAR Fisheries Administrative Order 193 (1998).
- Worm, B. and others (2024). Science.
- CITES.

Full links are in the teacher reading. Free to use and share for education. Made by Marine Conservation Philippines. More free lessons: marineconservationphilippines.org/resources/teachers-resources/

