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Dear fishers,

As part of a study of freshwater and estuarine sharks around the Northern Territory (NT), who better to ask for information than the fishers who frequent these waters? Currently, researchers from Charles Darwin University, the Australian Institute of Marine Science and NT Fisheries are trying to assess the abundance and distribution of the relatively common bull and pigeye sharks, as well as the supposedly rare freshwater sharks, and their potential interaction with fishermen.

Little is known about the freshwater and estuarine sharks of the Northern Territory (NT). To better understand these species we ask if you could answer a short questionnaire on whether you have caught sharks while fishing in these areas, and which species you may have caught. The questionnaire is very short and easy, and should take less than five minutes to complete.

The questionnaire can be filled in online, or printed out and returned to NT Fisheries by post or fax (08 8999 2002). The web address is: <http://www.cdu.edu.au/ser/questionnaire>. All of the questions are related to fishing in freshwater and estuarine areas around the NT. Please answer all questions and provide specific information where requested. We emphasise that it is vital to answer all the questions, as even not catching sharks is valid and important information. We have also supplied a simple identification guide for the three sharks of interest and an overview presentation of the project. More information can be found at the following website: <http://www.cdu.edu.au/ser/FreshwaterEstuarinesharks.htm>.

Although bull and pigeye sharks are relatively common, little is known about their distribution and abundance in NT water. The spartooth and northern river sharks (*Glyphis* spp.), are currently listed as critically endangered, although their true numbers are unknown. What is known is that they have been found in rivers and open water along the NT coastline, and the two species and bull sharks are similar in appearance. Small specimens around 60 – 80 cm are found in brackish waters in the upper reaches of tidal rivers but larger ones of up to 3m in estuaries and coastal regions. They were originally named because of the shape of their teeth in the bottom jaw that can be seen even when the mouth is closed (for images please see the Identification guide provided).

We would greatly appreciate your assistance in this research and offer you the opportunity, as local fishers, to take part in fisheries research that may be valuable in the future to both management and conservation of our rivers and shark populations.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and support in our research.

Yours sincerely,



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