



PROTOCOL FOR SHARK SPOTTERS FLAG SYSTEM

SUMMARY

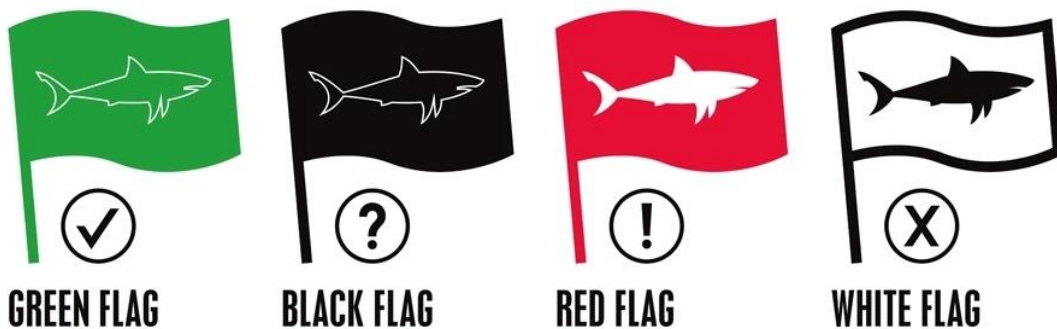
No flag = no spotter on duty.

White Flag (with a solid black shark) = shark in vicinity of water users (siren sounded) or after serious incident when beach is closed.

Red Flag (with solid white shark) = 1 hours after a sighting or if a shark is spotted but not near water users or if there is an increased risk of shark activity.

Black Flag (with shark outline) = poor spotting conditions in area where majority of water users are. No shark seen.

Green Flag (with shark outline) = good spotting conditions in area where majority of water users are. No shark seen.



PROTOCOL

If there are no flags flying associated with the Shark Spotting Programme it means that there are no shark spotters on duty. At Shark Spotter beaches the mountain spotter (lookout) will upon the start of his / her shift first assess the spotting conditions before raising any flags. The spotter will take into account the glare, cloud cover, water

clarity; swell and wind chop (all which affect the ability to detect sharks). Once the spotter has assessed his / her ability to spot for sharks they will request the spotter on the beach to raise the appropriate flag.

GREEN FLAG

The green flag signifies good spotting conditions. This will be raised when the spotters can see clearly in the area where the majority of water users are. Please note that if for example, it is low tide and the water is clear for the first 50 metres, but there are 60 surfers at approx. 100m where the water is milky or patchy, this will not qualify for a green flag.

BLACK FLAG

The black flag signifies poor spotting conditions. This flag will be raised by the spotters if they are not able to clearly see what is happening in the area used by water users. Factors affecting water visibility include: glare, cloud cover, water clarity; swell and wind chop. Please note that glare plays a significant role in reducing the spotters' ability to see clearly, particularly in early morning and late afternoon.

WHITE FLAG

The white flag (with a solid black shark) will be raised when a shark is seen in the vicinity of water users and is assessed to pose a potential threat to water users. The spotter will take into account the shark's distance from the water users, its swimming speed and direction of travel. The shark siren will also be sounded at this time. The white flag will remain raised for as long as the spotter has a visual of the shark in the area, whether this is a few minutes or a few hours.

Once the shark has left the area used by water users the white flag will remain raised for a short time while the spotter scans the area to ensure another shark has not entered and that the original shark does not return to the area.

Once the spotter is satisfied that the shark no longer poses a threat and there are no other visible potential dangers the white flag will be removed and the red flag will be raised.

The white flag will also be raised after a serious incident such as a shark bite, when the beach is closed.

RED FLAG

The red flag is used as a warning that a shark has recently been seen, that there is higher than usual shark activity or that there are known conditions for high shark activity.

The red flag will be flown every time after a shark has been seen, for one hour. Provided no other sighting is recorded during that time, after one hour the red flag will be taken down and either the green or black flag will be raised depending upon spotting conditions. If a second shark is seen within the hour following the first sighting, the red flag will remain flying for a further hour from the time the second shark left the area.

If a shark is spotted that is far from the area used by water users, and poses no potential threat to water users, instead of clearing the beach and putting up the white flag, the spotters will raise the red flag for one hour, but not clear the beach.

The shark sightings are monitored daily and trends and patterns can be identified. This allows for the early detection of sudden increases in shark activity. In the event that more than five shark sightings are made at a specific beach on one day, the red flag will be flown as a warning to water users that there is increased shark activity in the area. If shark activity at adjacent beaches is even higher than five shark sightings and the sharks are observed in hunting behavioural modes i.e. chasing schools of fish or seals, then the red flag will be strongly considered for adjacent beaches, especially if there is poor visibility. It's important to remember that this is a dynamic system and therefore each situation will be assessed in conjunction with managers, scientist and local authorities with the public's safety as the top priority.

Furthermore, the red flag will be flown when the conditions are conducive to increased shark activity, such as (but not limited to) cetacean strandings which are proven to attract sharks to the area, the presence of large schools of migratory fish e.g. yellowtail or white steenbras which attract large sharks.