

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium team successfully remove gang hooks from the eye of a Critically Endangered Grey Nurse Shark in the wild**



*RAW video can be found [here](#)  
TCV video can be found [here](#)  
High res images can be found [here](#)  
Social video can be found [here](#)*

**SYDNEY, Tuesday 18th February 2020:** A Critically Endangered Grey Nurse Shark in Bushrangers Bay, near Shellharbour now has full use of both eyes thanks to a successful rescue that removed the gang hooks caught between her eye and jaw.

The team at SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium were advised by a member of the public who spotted the juvenile, female shark in the bay. If left alone this could have caused a nasty infection or worse, the shark could have been further entangled in other debris.

After locating the shark during an initial inspection of Bushrangers Bay, a dive team of five from the Aquarium returned to the site last week to conduct the rescue. Despite difficult conditions, the team eventually managed to herd the shark into a custom made sock and it took the Aquarium's resident vet, Dr Michael Cannon just one minute to remove the hooks.

Rob Townsend, Marine Scientist at SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium commented, "It is always heartbreaking to hear of animals in distress, particularly when dealing with the young female of a Critically Endangered species. Predators such as Grey Nurse Sharks rely heavily on their vision so to be able to save the sight of this animal was really rewarding for all involved.

"After the rescue, we administered antibiotics and vitamins before she swam off beautifully and healthily into the ocean.

"Gang hooks are a common tackle used by fishermen and sadly can have devastating impacts on wildlife. Our advice is to avoid using stainless steel tackle and use barbless circle hooks instead," added Rob.

In October 2019, SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium were granted a permit by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to undertake rescues of Grey Nurse Sharks in specified waters of NSW. DPI have since helped collaborate on two successful rescues.



Department of  
Primary Industries



Dr Trevor Daly, DPI Senior Fisheries Manager - Threatened Species, says, “We were delighted by the outcome of the rescue operation led by the team at SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium. It’s been very rewarding to again work in collaboration with the Aquarium’s professional and well organised team.

“Grey Nurse Sharks are Critically Endangered on the East Coast of Australia so it was great to see the hooks removed and the shark released back into the wild in the hope that it will breed and support the recovery of the species,” added Dr Daly.

If you spot an injured or struggling shark in the wild, please contact the DPI Fisheries or SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium on 0409 109 198 or visit: <https://www.sydneyaquarium.com.au/report-an-animal-rescue/>

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#### **About Merlin Entertainments**

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in location-based, family entertainment. As Europe’s Number 1 and the world’s second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin now operates 130 attractions, 20 hotels and 6 holiday villages in 25 countries and across 4 continents. Merlin’s purpose is to deliver memorable experiences to its 67 million guests around the world, through its iconic brands and multiple attraction formats, and the commitment and passion of its c28,000 employees (peak season).

#### **About DPI**

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) works to increase the value of primary industries and drive economic growth across NSW.

DPI Fisheries supports economic growth and sustainable access to aquatic resources through commercial and recreational fisheries management, research, aquaculture development, threatened species and habitat protection and rehabilitation, regulation and compliance.