



Bullshark, *Carcharhinus leucas*

What you need to know about bull sharks and dangerous aquatic organisms

The Gold Coast's beautiful lakes, rivers and canals are some of our city's greatest assets.

They enhance our lifestyle, provide great views and are a playground for fishing, paddling, sailing and boating.

They are also home to a variety of plants, animals and micro-organisms so it's important to know that some of these are potentially dangerous.

These include stingrays, jellyfish, catfish, stonefish, sharks, algae and other micro-organisms.

These can be found in salt, brackish and freshwater including our lakes and canals.

Anyone who enjoys recreational activities on the water should act responsibly and needs to be aware that they may encounter potentially dangerous species.

Be aware of bull sharks

How to minimise the risk of an encounter with a shark:

- Don't swim in canals, lakes or near estuary mouths.
- Observe all signs and safety warnings.
- Leave the water immediately if a shark is sighted.
- Don't swim or surf after dusk, at night, before dawn, or in murky waters. Never swim alone.
- Avoid swimming near schools of fish.
- Don't swim with animals such as your dog.

Be aware of stingrays

Stingrays settle into the sand and are easy to step on, even in clear water. Avoid stepping on top of a ray as you will provoke a reaction.

Avoid swimming near jetties and piers where stingrays gather. They're not naturally aggressive but may strike at you with an instinctive tail flick.

If you're snorkelling or diving, stay clear of the sandy bed. If a ray feels threatened it may react by striking with its tail barb.

Avoid swimming over a moving stingray.



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Be aware of dangerous micro-organisms including algae

Pay attention to advisory signs about dangerous micro-organisms such as blue-green algae that are generally found in warm, fairly still water, such as lakes.

Most are harmless but potentially dangerous species can be present at any time so it's best to swim only in designated areas.



© Queensland Museum

Be aware of stonefish and catfish

Stonefish and catfish are also potentially dangerous.

Watch where you are walking in the water as they can be very hard to see. Avoid handling them and note it's often safer to cut the line or use long pliers to remove hooks.



Be aware of jellyfish

Many jellyfish are capable of delivering a painful or potentially dangerous sting so watch for warning signs, avoid known jellyfish areas and avoid contact with them, even if they're out of the water.



For information

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