



# Fish Name Fact File No 2

## Gummy Sharks and Flake

The FRDC Fish Names Committee is responsible for the maintenance and ongoing development of the Australian Fish Names Standard (AS 5300). The FNC makes decisions on the Standard Fish Names to be used for all species traded in Australia. Decisions made by the FNC are based on the fish name protocols that give guidance to names, and stakeholder feedback.

Most FNC decisions are straightforward and/or non-contentious but, in some cases, the background to the name selection and the FNC reasons need to be fully articulated.

This is one of a series of fact sheets about fish species that the FNC has considered and that need further explanation. The fact sheet provides the background as to how the name was selected and why it was approved.

### Background to FNC Decision

In 2013, the Fish Names Committee (FNC) considered an application from the Southern Shark Industry Alliance to assign the Standard Fish Name 'Flake' to *Mustelus antarcticus*. Prior to this, the FNC had recognised that the name Flake was problematic as it was being applied to various species without consistency. Consumers had no idea what species any use of the term Flake referred to.

Gummy Shark (*Mustelus antarcticus*) had been known as Flake in the southern states since the 1920's, particularly in the fish-and-chips sector, but the name Flake was not quarantined for this one species and, over recent years, confusion reigned.

When ordering Flake, most consumers reportedly expected to receive Gummy Shark, but because the name was not a Standard Fish Name, other inferior quality and cheaper shark (and other) species such as some subtropical shark species were being marketed as Flake.

The 2013 application sought to quarantine the name Flake for the flesh of the Gummy Shark species *Mustelus antarcticus*. However, there was never any intention to rename the fish species Gummy Shark as Flake.

FNC also had to consider that the Standard Fish Name of Gummy Shark was already assigned to *Mustelus antarcticus* and the group name GUMMY SHARKS to all *Mustelus* species.

FNC was also aware that two *Mustelus* species (*M. antarcticus* (Gummy Shark) and *M. lenticulatus* (known as 'Rig' in New Zealand) have historically been sold in the fish-and-chips sector and are considered indistinguishable as a food product.

FNC therefore recommended that:

1. The name FLAKE should be reserved for the flesh of the two commonly marketed *Mustelus* species (i.e., Gummy Shark, *M. antarcticus* and the imported Rig, *M. lenticulatus*).
2. The new Standard Fish Name Rig should be added to the AFNS for *Mustelus lenticulatus*.

## Affected Species

Approved Standard Fish Name	FLAKE (group name)	GUMMY SHARKS (group name)	Gummy Shark	Rig
Family	Triakidae	Triakidae	Triakidae	Triakidae
Scientific Name	<i>Mustelus antarcticus</i> & <i>Mustelus lenticulatus</i>	<i>Mustelus</i> spp	<i>Mustelus antarcticus</i>	<i>Mustelus lenticulatus</i>
Authority			Günther, 1870	Phillipps, 1932
CAAB Code	37 017907	37 017901	37 017001	37 017750
FNC Application Number	<a href="#">App 211</a>			<a href="#">App 212</a>
Date of FNC Decision	13/3/2014			20/11/2014
Redundant names or names NOT to be used		Australian smooth hound, flake, grey gummy shark, gummy, shark, smooth dog-shark, sweet William, white-spotted gummy shark	Southern Gummy Shark	
Notes	The name Flake applies to the flesh of the animal only. The species will still be known as Gummy Shark or Rig			

## Further Discussion and Clarification

- The group name GUMMY SHARKS can be used for any of the *Mustelus* species, which includes Gummy Shark (*M. antarcticus*) and Rig (*M. lenticulatus*).
- The individual species names of Gummy Shark for *Mustelus antarcticus* and Rig for *Mustelus lenticulatus* can be used.
- The name FLAKE is the approved Standard Fish Name for the flesh of EITHER of the two species Gummy Shark (*Mustelus antarcticus*) and Rig (*Mustelus lenticulatus*).
- Group names are usually listed in their plural form (e.g., GUMMY SHARKS not GUMMY SHARK) but it is not appropriate to list 'FLAKES' because the term 'FLAKE' refers to the flesh product of the animal not the animal itself.
- Amongst the thousands of names on the AFNS, usage of the name 'Flake' is unique and the decision of the FNC to assign a Standard Name to a fish product rather than the fish itself is considered a once-off solution to a unique situation.

## Status of the Australian Fish Names Standard

Usage of the names included in the Australian Fish Names Standard is strongly encouraged but not currently mandatory.

Usage of the Australian Fish Names Standard is listed as an Advisory Note in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 2.2.3 - Fish and Fish Products (see <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2011C00569>).