

SHARKS! ATTACKED.

Over **80%** of pelagic oceanic shark species are threatened or near threatened with extinction¹. These are the species that are targeted by the shark's fin trade².

Demand for shark's fin soup is driving the destruction of shark populations throughout the world.



Historically a Chinese delicacy reserved for the Emperor and his guests, consumption has increased in parallel with the growing prosperity in China and other Asian communities, and has become a must-have at many weddings, business dinners and upscale banquets. That adds up to a lot of shark's fin soup and a lot of sharks being killed for it.

455M
years old

Sharks have existed since before the dinosaurs and have survived five mass extinction events. Once kings of natural selection, sharks are now facing extinction from our demand for their fins.

Apex predators help maintain important ecological balance. Sharks help keep other fish populations in check, ensuring that prey populations do not grow uncontrollably¹¹.

It is not the fishermen who earn the large profits, but the middle men and the retailers who make the "killing".

Fins are often sliced off of sharks while they are alive and then they are tossed back into the ocean to drown.

26-73M

number of sharks killed each year for their fins².



99%

decrease in some shark populations over last 50 years^{3,4}.

79



BMAA

Fins are worth up to **US\$181** per lb¹⁰

Contrary to myth, shark fins have negligible nutritional value and in fact have been found to have alarming concentrations of BMAA, a neurotoxin linked to increased risk of Alzheimer's and other degenerative brain diseases. 79% of shark fins tested in a recent study contained high levels of this dangerous toxin⁸.

Where sharks are eliminated, the marine ecosystem is often altered and compromised⁵.

Longlines used in shark fishing operations are the most significant cause of declining shark populations worldwide⁶.

3%

of sharks body weight are the high value fins²⁰, while the rest of the shark is of relatively little value and often discarded

US\$1.9M

Value of a live shark as an ecotourism attraction in Palau¹².

145

Countries engaged in the shark's fin industry²¹.

Biggest fishers: Indonesia, India, Spain, Taiwan, Argentina, Mexico, Pakistan, United States, Japan, and Malaysia⁹.

Sharks need local and international legal protections. Our communities can help end demand by saying I'm FINished with FINS!

I'm FINished
WITH FINS

www.sharksavers.org



SHARK SAVERS

Created and designed by:
Big Red Button

SOURCES:

1 - Dulvy et al. 2008, 2 - Clark et al. 2006, 3 - Ferretti et al. 2008, 4 - Baum et al. 2003, 5 - Myers et al. 2007, 6 - Gilman et al. 2008, 7 - Sansom et al. 1996, 8 - Mondo et al. 2012, 9 - Lack and Sant 2011, 10 - Clarke 2004, 11 - Bascompote et al. 2005, 12 - Vianna et al. 2012, 13 - FWRI 2011, 14 - Baum and Myers 2004, 15 - Frisk et al. 2005, 16 - Cailliet et al. 2005, 17 - Bonfil 2000, 18 - Myers et al. 2007, 19 - Ferretti et al. 2010, 20 - Biery and Pauly 2012, 21 - Hong Kong CSD 2000-8, 22 - Monterey Bay Aquarium 2011

what are the causes? demand for shark's fin soup & bycatch

Many of the 1.3 billion people of China are enjoying more prosperity. Shark's fin soup has become popular, even obligatory, at banquets, business dinners, and weddings. That adds up to a lot of shark's fin soup, and millions of sharks are being killed for it.

The fins from between 26 million and 73 million sharks move through the Hong Kong shark fin markets alone each year². These sharks are generally not caught for their meat, but for their valuable fins, and the most prized shark fins can cost hundreds of dollars per kilo. Shark meat, in contrast, is one of the lowest value seafood products, often selling for less than bait fish¹³.

Across the oceans, many shark populations have already declined by 90% or more in just the last 20 years¹⁴. This problem is made worse because sharks reproduce very slowly, taking years to reach sexual maturity and producing few young¹⁵. Many species will not be able to keep up with the demands of the shark fin trade¹⁶, which is why we need to keep sharks in the oceans and out of our soup bowls.

With the high demand for shark fins, unintentionally caught sharks are no longer released alive, but are often finned first and their bodies discarded⁶. Longlines, gillnets and trawls are the primary gear used in shark fisheries¹⁷.

effects on marine life

The loss of an apex predator can cause unpredictable consequences creating havoc in an ecosystem¹¹. While some species may temporarily benefit, in the long term the whole system suffers.

In the Caribbean Sea on reefs where sharks were fished out, groupers initially flourished. These groupers preyed heavily on parrotfish and other herbivores that kept the reefs free of algae. As these fish declined, the reefs became covered in algae and died, and ultimately all fish species suffered.

Many scientific studies demonstrate that the depletion of shark populations results in the loss of commercially important fish species across the food chain, including key species such as tuna and other fish that maintain the health of coral reefs¹⁹. The ocean ecosystem is a complex and intricate food web. The shark species that are targeted for their fins play significant roles as apex predators. These sharks are considered by scientists to be 'keystone' species, meaning that removing them may cause the whole web to collapse. For this reason, the prospect of removing these sharks may mean the end of the line for many more species.

what can be done?

We can do our part by not eating shark's fin soup and encouraging our family and friends not to eat it. The taste of shark's fin soup comes from chicken broth, not shark. Contrary to common beliefs, shark's fin is not healthy. If we still want to enjoy shark's fin soup, natural alternatives are available, which are less expensive, and many people have trouble telling the difference from the real thing.

Balance and moderation are valued tenets of the traditional Chinese way of life. We can all take pride and honor in restoring the balance in our ecosystem by choosing not to eat shark's fin soup.

A recent study by the Monterey Bay Aquarium found that more than 75% of people surveyed support a ban of the shark fin trade²².

*The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) is an organization that conducts assessments of plant and animal species that are at risk of extinction. It regularly publishes the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.