

Shark Finning Exposed

By Thomas Ponce

Who's the real MONSTER?
“The Truth will Surface”



There are many dangers facing sharks but the largest threat to sharks is man and his selfish total disregard for the preservation of this species.



What is Shark Finning?

All across the world there are tens of millions of sharks that die a slow, torturous, unnecessary death year after year because of the shark finning industry. When sharks are finned the sharks are harvested in obscene numbers and once round up their fins are hacked off. Then their finless still living breathing bodies are thrown back into the ocean where they are left to starve, be eaten by other fish or drown to death. Shark fins are primarily being stolen in such large numbers because of the growing demand for shark fin soup, which is an Asian delicacy.

The constant inhumane finning of sharks is not only horrific in nature to the individual sharks themselves, but the constant slaughtering of various types of sharks is quickly driving many species to the brink of extinction.

Shark finning is one of the most shameful, cruelest examples man has displayed towards what they feel is nothing more than an inferior, dangerous, dispensable animal. Shark Finning is purely a way of making a profit with no regard for the lives being taken or the effects of their actions on the ecosystem.

WHAT IS SHARK FINNING?

The cruel and wasteful practice of shark finning is still legal in much of the world. The state of California is currently considering a ban on the sale, trade, and possession of shark fins in the state. The bill, Assembly Bill 376, passed the State Assembly by a vote of 60 to 8, and will soon be voted on by the State Senate. If passed, California would become the most prominent US state to show its support for shark conservation, joining Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington state, where similar legislation has already passed.

ENDANGERED RATE

AN ESTIMATED
32% OF OPEN OCEAN SHARKS
ARE THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION

SOME SHARK
POPULATIONS
HAVE DECREASED BY
99%
OVER THE LAST
50 YEARS

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

AN ESTIMATED
100
MILLION
SHARKS
ARE KILLED
EVERY YEAR

73
MILLION
OF WHICH ARE FOR
SHARK FIN SOUP
EQUIVALENT TO 1.73
MILLION TONS OF SHARK

WHAT IS FINNING?

SHARKS ARE CAPTURED AT SEA

AND ARE OFTEN STILL ALIVE WHEN
THEIR FINS ARE SLICED OFF

HAULED ON DECK

UP TO
98%
OF THE ANIMAL IS WASTED, SINCE THE
FINS ARE MORE VALUABLE THAN THE REST

THE BUSINESS OF SHARK FINS

FINS CAN SELL FOR AS MUCH AS

USD \$880
PER POUND

\$100

MAKING IT ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE
SEAFOOD PRODUCTS IN THE WORLD

A BOWL OF SHARK FIN SOUP CAN SELL
FOR AS MUCH AS \$100 USD PER BOWL

IN HONG KONG, 89% OF PEOPLE
SURVEYED HAVE EATEN SHARK FIN
SOUP AT A WEDDING BANQUET

145

COUNTRIES ENGAGE IN THE
TRADE OF SHARK PRODUCTS
BIGGEST CATCHERS
SPAIN
SINGAPORE
TAIWAN
INDONESIA
UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES
UNITED STATES

50 to 80% OF FINS COME
THROUGH HONG KONG

AS MANY AS
360 RESTAURANTS
STILL SERVE
SHARK FIN SOUP
IN CALIFORNIA

85%
OF THE US SHARK
FIN TRADE IS IN
CALIFORNIA

THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARKS

SHARKS ARE AT THE TOP OF
THE FOOD CHAIN, THEIR DEPLETION
CAN DRASTICALLY AFFECT THE
ENTIRE MARINE ECOSYSTEM

SHARKS ARE SLOW GROWING, LATE MATURING,
LONG-LIVED AND GIVE BIRTH TO FEW YOUNG, MAKING
THEM ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO OVERFISHING

\$2 MILLION DOLLARS
THE TOURISM VALUE EACH INDIVIDUAL
REEF SHARK CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A COASTAL
COMMUNITY OVER ITS LIFETIME

\$108 DOLLARS
THE VALUE OF A SHARK
KILLED FOR CONSUMPTION

80
Hg
MERCURY

CONTRARY TO THE MYTH THAT SHARK FINS
ARE NUTRITIONAL, SHARK FINS HAVE MERCURY
LEVELS UP TO **42X** HIGHER THAN THE SAFE LIMIT

There are many alternatives to using shark fins.

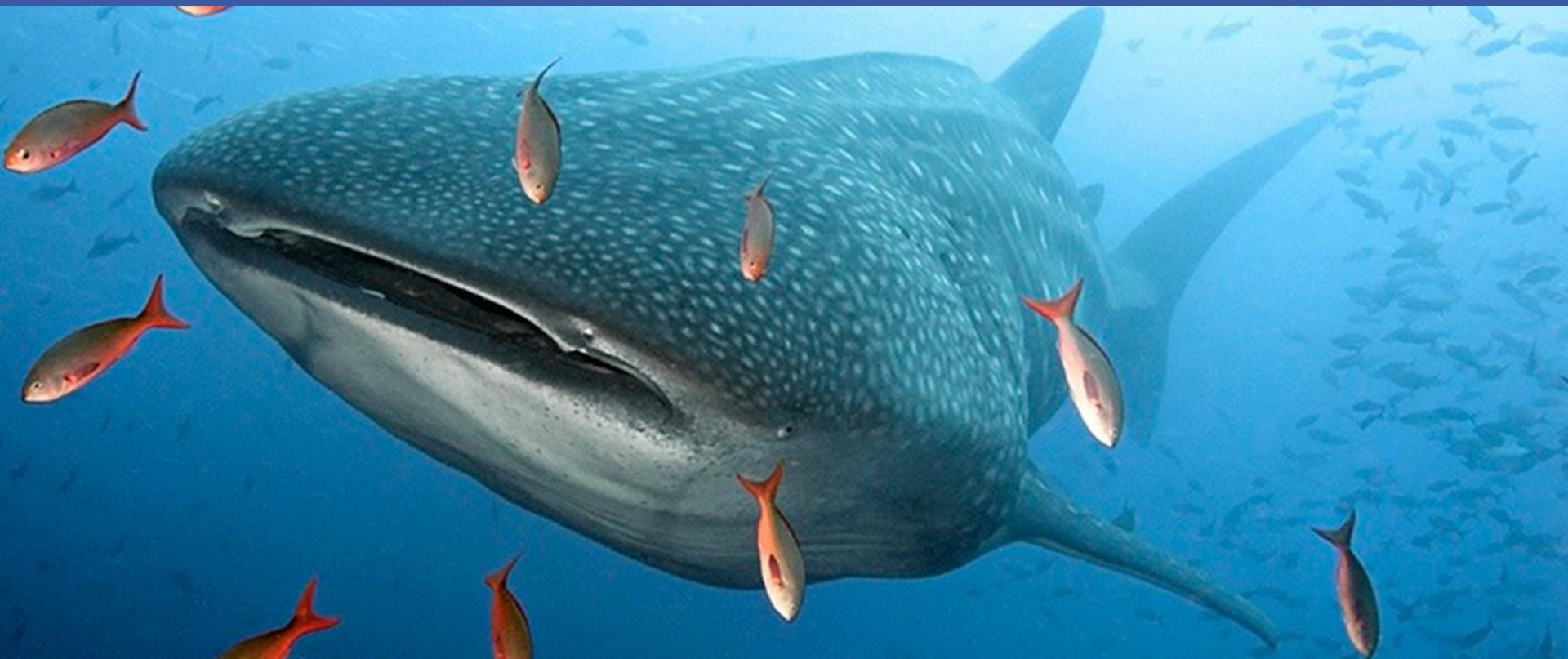
People have to be willing to raise their awareness and realize that there is no true medicinal purpose nor is there a legitimate cultural reason for the continued use of shark fins in our products.

Sharks and our ecosystem

Sharks have been around for over 400 million years and play a crucial role in our ecosystem. If sharks went extinct the ocean world as we know it could be completely destroyed. Without the oceans top predator, the sharks prey for example fish, seals, dolphins, sea lions, etc. would multiply. If the sharks prey were to multiply it would destroy the very delicate food chain. Sharks eat a large amount of sick and weak fish, because they are an easy kill, this type of feeding keeps the population healthier. Another factor to consider is that sharks keep the prey fish populations in control because just as extinction effects the balance of the ecosystem so does overpopulation.



Sharks are considered to be a “keystone” predator, they are at the top of their food chain and without them the food chain would inevitably collapse. If sharks were eliminated the effects would also be felt by human beings in that some of the main fish fished for commercial sale would not be available. Many aquatic plants would also be under stress with the elimination of sharks and the world’s amazing beautiful coral reefs would become overrun with algae, because the Tuna that were gone now from the elimination of the sharks were not there to clean the reefs. It’s a domino effect. When one brick falls everything next to it falls too.



All this destruction and chaos because we stepped into the sharks world and overfished, hunted and brutally killed the oceans top predator. Why do we do these things? The answer is mind boggling to me, it's out of the desire to make a profit , out of fear or just for the sheer fun of it. Our Earth's oceans have already suffered for years from the abuses mankind has laid upon it. We've poisoned and polluted it's waters with oil and waste, over fished and hunted it's animal life, and taken away it's natural living spaces with our sheer presence. Now due to shark finning we will be eliminating a species that more or less has been a balancing factor in the ocean. Without sharks to keep it in balance it will only become worse.

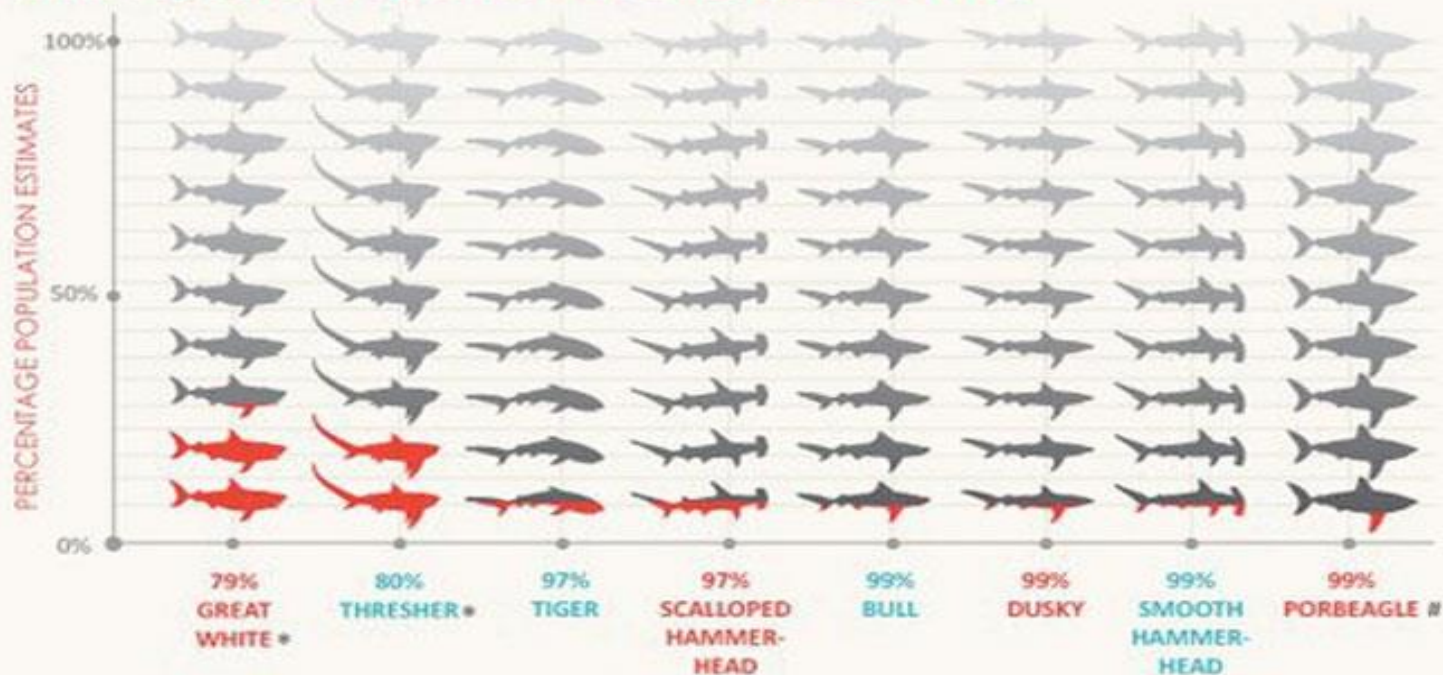


This chart shows the decline in various shark species since 1970. This decline is due greatly to the demand for shark fins for shark fin soup. This is a disgusting disgraceful fact.

SHARK EXTINCTION

THE SHOCKING TRUTH

Shark Species Population Decline Since 1970's



There is help out there. These organizations have dedicated themselves to educating people around the world about sharks. These groups are working together to expose the cruelty being done to sharks, educate the people of the world and ultimately save the sharks.



I'd like to share a story about my vacation to Venice Beach, which is also known as Shark Tooth Beach. This was the trip I had been waiting for ever since I had seen this location on the Discovery Channel over a year ago. Having the opportunity to find fossilized shark teeth that have been in the waters for over millions of years was something I was ecstatic about! It was a perfect day to go sifting for shark teeth. I walked into the water up to my knees, sifter in hand, and began sifting. I dug my scooper into the sand, beneath the water, and pulled up many small teeth.

I found great white teeth, bull shark teeth, tiger shark teeth and a few I was unsure about, it was amazing. Then it happened. I hit the jackpot! I discovered in my scoop the largest tooth I had ever seen. It was four inches long and black in color. Its edges were serrated and you could still see the gum line. The great white teeth I found paled in comparison to this massive tooth. It was a Megalodon tooth!

My dream had come true, I had found one! This was the best birthday present I could have ever gotten, or so I thought.

After sifting for teeth we went to a pier to watch the sunset. While walking on the pier with my family we came across a fisherman fishing off the pier. The fisherman pulled a Bonnet Head Shark in on his fishing line. He pulled him out of the water and laid him on the pier ready to gut and pack in ice to take home for dinner. I couldn't believe what I was seeing, it was a baby. I told my Mom and Dad that I had to do something. I pleaded with the man to set him free for about 20 minutes with the shark flapping and gasping for air on the deck. It was a horrible sight. The fisherman just kept saying it was his dinner and he was keeping it. I offered to buy him dinner if he released him, I explained that he was a living creature with a family and feelings and deserved to live. He was refusing to set him free. Soon after a few other onlookers heard my pleas and came around to see what all the commotion was about. They too listened to me as I explained to all of them how important sharks are to us all and to our ecosystem. After what seemed like an eternity, the fisherman finally conceded and told me that I could set him free. I couldn't believe it, I did it! I immediately walked over and picked up the shark, I swear the shark looked at me with gratitude. He was alive because I spoke up for him and he knew it. I saw the understanding in his eyes. I said a few words and told him to live free as I threw him gently back into the water.

As I watched him swim away I realized even more what I had always believed, one person can make a difference. Yes it was only one shark that I physically saved that day (and I'm sure he was grateful), but think of all the other people who heard about their struggles and maybe learned something. If even one of those people changes their view on sharks and decides to do something about it than that's one more person who the sharks have on their side and that's one more than yesterday! We all can turn things around for the sharks if we pitch in together and try.

That day changed me forever and now I fight for sharks rights. I have always been an active animal activist and a vegetarian. I had run many fundraisers for farm animals and spaying and neutering your pets, and signed petitions against animal cruelty and protested at various sites where cruelty had been taking place, but until that day I hadn't really concentrated my efforts on sharks. I started doing some research and I watched a documentary called Sharkwater and it gave me insight into the plight of the shark. It showed me the horrors they faced due to the finning industry. They were being killed in huge quantities for their fins and were becoming extremely close to extinction. It was a horrible discovery and one that moved me to act and speak up for the sharks.

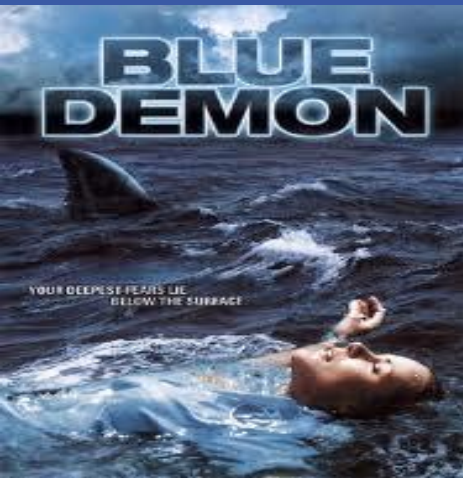
From that moment on I have dedicated myself to making as many people aware of what's going on with sharks as I can. I joined a shark protection group called Fin Free and am now the Regional Coordinator for the state of Florida. My hope is that through educating people on the cruel and inhumane acts being done to sharks and by explaining the importance of sharks to the ocean ecosystem, as well as our own environment that I can make a difference in helping to preserve this beautiful species. I have started working with an attorney and am learning about lobbying. I hope to one day soon be speaking at Congress on behalf of sharks and lobbying to bring change to the finning laws in our country.

December 16, 2011 the ocean gave me two gifts, a Megalodon tooth and an appreciation and love of sharks. In return, I gave it back one of its own and a voice that could be heard and would never be silenced.

**This is a picture of the Bonnet Head Shark that I saved at Venice Beach.
The other picture is of a Megalodon Tooth I found in the water at the
beach. FYI- a Megalodon is a huge shark that lived over 28 to 1.5 million
years ago. Amazing that something so large lived in the waters of our
world!**



These movies about killer sharks have been drilled into our heads by Hollywood . We have been trained to think that sharks are mindless, vengeful killing machines. Even kids are being encouraged to kill out of fear and for fun.





**Nothing Could Be Farther
From The Truth!**

Sharks are not here on this earth to hunt down and eat humans. If we enter their home, which is the ocean, we are invading their home and entering their food chain. They are also curious as to what we are. Are we predator or prey? Can we be eaten? Are we a big seal? But I do not believe that a shark wakes up and says to himself, hmm, I think I'll have human today. Most shark attacks happen over mistaken identity or just being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Like I said we are entering their world and should treat the ocean as such.



Some interesting “Did You Know?” facts on sharks

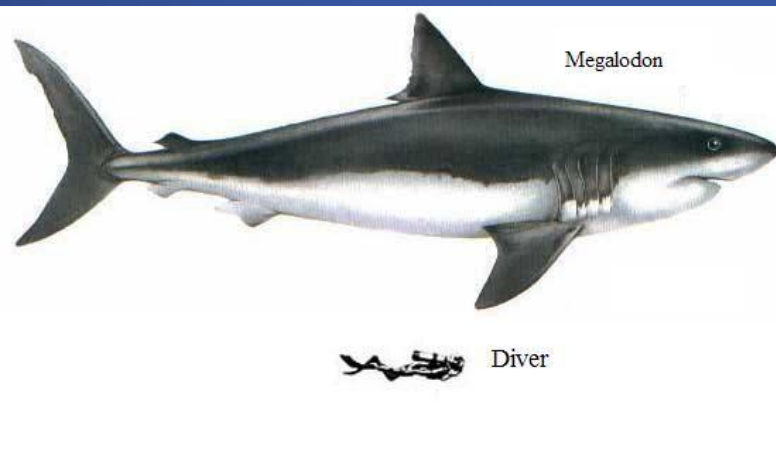
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There are over 500 different species of sharks ranging in size from as small as a few inches to a massive size like the Whale Shark.



Megalodon, meaning giant tooth was an ancient shark that may still be alive today. It would have been 50-100 ft. long. This is at least three times as long as a Great White Shark. The Megalodon's diet would probably consist or consists of whales. The megalodon could open its mouth six feet wide and seven feet tall. This massive beast could have swallowed a Great White Shark whole! They had teeth that were as large as a human hand, triangular and serrated. The teeth have been found in Europe, India, Oceania, North America and South America.

These facts were taken directly from Wikipedia



***A shark can hear a fish in the water from more than a mile away. Sharks can smell one drop of blood in a million drops of water. *On some islands, villagers believed that sharks were spirits of their ancestors. *Eating Shark flesh is forbidden in both the Solomon and Fiji islands. *The chance of being killed by a shark is one in 300 million. The chance of being killed by airplane parts falling from the sky is one in 10 million. *Like many mammals, including humans, sharks have a large heart with four separate chambers. *The Megamouth shark is the rarest of the shark species. It was discovered in 1976. *Blue Sharks are the fastest sharks, reaching speeds of 43 mph, but only in short bursts. Their normal speed is 7 mph. *Experts believe that the whale shark may be capable of living up to 150 years, making it one of the longest-living creatures on Earth.*The smallest species in the shark kingdom is the dwarf shark, which averages at 4 inches long.*A shark's skeleton is made of rubbery cartilage, like the tip of our noses. *The jaws of bigger sharks are about twice as powerful as the jaws of a lion. *The hammerhead shark has the best sense of smelling.**

These facts were taken directly from www.sharkfacts.org

These majestic creatures deserve our respect and need our protection.



It's time to put an end to the needless killing of sharks in our world. We as a community can start in our own state of Florida by contacting our representatives and telling them that we want to be a Fin Free state. We can explain to them the importance of sharks in our world and the effects they have on our ecosystem. We need to demand, politely that the sale distribution and trade of shark fin products is not something that we want to see continue in our state, and that we are calling for a ban on such activities.

I have attached a petition that you can get your friends and neighbors to sign and can be submitted to our legislators. There is also a website that you can go to to find your representative's phone numbers, email address and postal address along with other information about lobbying for change in your community.

www.lobbyforanimals.org

Please make those calls ,write those letters and get those signatures
We can make a difference in our world that will benefit both our lives
as well as the innocent victims, the sharks.