



The Facts About Shark Finning

Shark fin soup has been a delicacy in the far east, especially China, for centuries however due to the increased economic prosperity of the region shark fin soup is no longer reserved for only the richest. This increase in popularity of the soup among the middle class is putting global shark populations under immense and unsustainable pressure.

With a bowl of shark fin soup costing anything up to \$300 it has become a very lucrative fishing industry where high profits can be made, usually by middlemen, in a short space of time. This has led to indiscriminate and unrelenting catching of sharks the world over, many often caught illegally, to feed this relentless demand and the chance to make some easy profits.

There is now a further incentive to catch sharks as shark cartilage products are now being mass marketed, mistakenly rumoured to be able to provide a cure for cancer, yet scientific evidence shows nothing to support this sales myth.

- Sharks often have their fins sliced off while still alive
- Their finless bodies are thrown back into the sea to sink to the bottom
- Unable to swim the shark bleeds, is eaten alive or suffocates to death
- Up to 100 million sharks are killed by man each year and this figure does not account for unreported killings
- Sharks breed late in life, have few offspring and many are being killed before they have a chance to reproduce further reducing future populations
- Some shark populations have now declined by up to 90%
- As apex predators, removing them from the ecosystem has serious knock-on effects
- The EU still has some of the weakest laws in the world regarding shark finning but are now acting to change this and close a dangerous loophole
- The EU presently takes about 100,000 tonnes of sharks and their related species annually
- The EU provides about 25% of the fins brought into Hong Kong presently
- The main centre for the shark fin trade is Hong Kong with an estimated 80% of all fins going through there at some point
- The largest of the sharks, the whale shark, often has its fins removed only to serve as a decoration at shark fin soup restaurants in Asia
- The shark fin is tasteless and so the soup is flavoured with either chicken or pork stock to give it flavour
- Shark can be found for sale under the deceptive name of Rock Salmon in some places, particularly in the UK to an unsuspecting public
- Shark fins have no nutritional value, merely a prestige value



Conservation through education and action.



What you can do

- Refuse to purchase any shark based products such as fins, teeth, cartilage or cartilage powder, sharkskin products or shark meat
- If you see shark fin soup on the menu in a restaurant where you may be eating express your concerns to the restaurant manager
- Inform and educate family and friends about the practice of shark finning
- Write to your local public representative to ask them what they're doing to stop the practice of shark finning
- Create local media awareness about the plight of sharks
- Do not participate in any form of shark 'sport' fishing



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