

VINEYARDERS AGAINST SHARK TOURNAMENTS
P.O. BOX 1042
WEST TISBURY, MA 02575

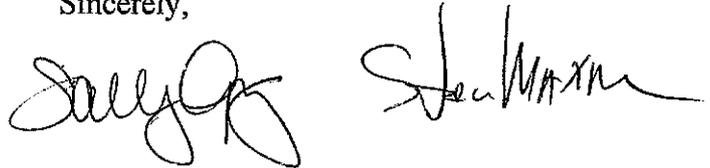
To: Chilmark Selectmen
From : Sally Apy/Steve Maxner
Re: Shark-Free Marina Initiative
Date: December 7, 2011

Dear Selectmen,

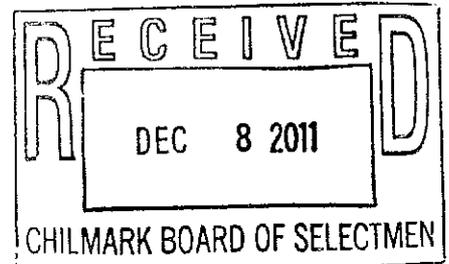
I am writing to request that you grant our organization, Vineyarders Against Shark Tournaments, the opportunity of speaking with you at a regularly scheduled selectmen's meeting in the near future. We would like to present "The Shark-Free Marina Initiative" for your consideration. Enclosed please find a brief description of this recent development in the worldwide effort to protect the rapidly declining shark populations. Our presentation will take no longer than ten minutes.

If you determine that you would like to learn more about this important environmental issue, please contact us regarding meeting times at the following numbers:
Sally Apy, 508-939-4064 or Steve Maxner, 508-696-7248.

Sincerely,



Sally Apy/Steve Maxner





THE
**SHARK-FREE MARINA
INITIATIVE**

September 6, 2011

Dear Mr. Hugh Upton

I am writing you today to ask for your support in an initiative aimed at conserving the world's shark populations.

The Florida 'Shark Free Marina Initiative' is a voluntary program for marinas to join that discourages an angler from bringing a dead shark back to their docks.

Not only will this prevent the needless killing of these ecologically and economically vital fish, but your marina will also receive recognition around the world as a partner in this growing initiative.

Sharks are currently being killed at an unsustainable rate. It is estimated that 70 million sharks are killed annually, primarily for their fins to be sold in the Asian market. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, roughly 200,000 of these sharks are killed by recreational anglers in the United States. Not an insignificant number by any means.

You can help reduce this number by joining the 'Shark Free Marina Initiative' and preventing dead sharks from being brought back to your docks.

Organized by the Pegasus Foundation, The Humane Society of the United States and my own Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, the 'Shark Free Marina Initiative' aims to reduce shark mortality worldwide by discouraging the landing of sharks, encouraging catch-and-release shark fishing and rewarding forward-thinking marinas that participate in this program.

There are two different levels of commitment that your marina may participate in. Both are free, without cost to you or your marina.

You can become a 'Shark Free Marina', that completely prohibits the landing of all sharks on your docks or you can become a 'Shark Friendly Marina', a facility that

(over, please)



2100 L Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20036

discourages the killing and landing of sharks and does not promote any activity that could harm sharks. In return for joining, your marina will be featured on our website: www.sharkfreemarinas.com/florida and you will receive free signage promoting your participation in this exciting program.

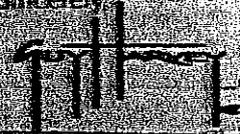
There is no state more important to the success of this initiative than Florida, the sport fishing capital of the world.

To date, 43 marinas in the state of Florida have registered as Founding Members of the 'Shark Free Marina Initiative' and I hope you will become one of our founding members. I have included an application for you should your marina decide to join this worthy cause or you can call 1-800-630-3486 toll free or register online at www.sharkfreemarinas.com/application.

Please review the enclosed DVD for more information on this program.

Thank you very much for your consideration. Together, we can help maintain a healthy marine ecosystem where sharks, and all marine life, flourish.

Sincerely,



We have Two Classifications

We'd like to register every marina as Shark-Free, however, some State laws or private companies have policies that do not allow for a complete ban on killing sharks. In these cases we offer the Shark-Friendly classification which discourages the intentional killing of sharks.

This allows for educational materials and participation in a conservation program by facilities which would otherwise not have access to our program.

What's the Difference Between Classifications?



A **Shark-Free Marina** does not allow sharks to be killed and landed from their facility.

This is a ZERO TAKE policy.



A **Shark Friendly Marina or Business** discourages killing or landing sharks.

They do not serve shark products or promote activities that intentionally harm sharks.

Registration Requirements

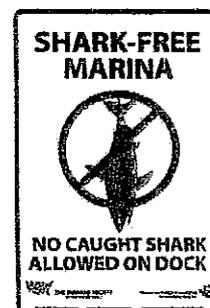
- ✓ You are the owner or manager of a marina with access to an ocean outlet
- ✓ You are prepared to mount our sign in a visible place withing the facility
- ✓ You will monitor your clients fishing activities and will **ban or discourage killing sharks** from your facility
- ✓ Your restaurant or business does not serve or carry shark products

Tournament and product policy

- ✓ A member marina may only hold shark fishing tournaments if they are **catch and release**
- ✓ A member marina **does not allow shark carcasses** to be displayed for any purpose
- ✓ A member business **does not serve or carry shark products**

Marinas and businesses who support this initiative will receive

- ✓ 2 marine grade aluminum dock signs (businesses receive window treatments)
- ✓ Advertising space on this website and the right to use our logo
- ✓ Access to educational literature



Marinas in the USA & Caribbean will receive 2 dock signs



We look forward to welcoming you to
The Florida Shark-Free Marina Initiative.



21001 Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20036

Mr. Hugh Upton
Port of Call Yacht Club LLC
PO Box 881
Astor, FL 32102-0881



VINEYARDERS AGAINST SHARK TOURNAMENTS

October 24, 2011

Gail M. Barmakian
Chairperson, Town of Oak Bluffs Selectmen
Town Hall
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Dear Madame Chairperson,

We are writing with regard to the Annual Oak Bluff's Monster Shark Tournament. Our grassroots group called Vineyarders Against Shark Tournaments (VAST) is in agreement with the position of The Shark-free Marina Initiative that states:

“ Sharks are being killed at an unsustainable rate. It is estimated that 70 million sharks are killed annually, primarily for their fins to be sold in the Asian market. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, roughly 200,000 of these sharks are killed by recreational anglers in the United States. Not an insignificant number by any means.

The “Jaws” myths are fantasies created by Hollywood designed to scare us. Sharks should not scare us. Sharks are guardians of the ocean. But they are being hunted, hunted to the very brink of extinction and our oceans are suffering.

Everything has balance. The ocean is a fragile ecosystem. Without sharks the balance is lost. Without sharks our ocean food chain collapses. A world without sharks is a frightening thought. It is both tragic and regrettable that over 100,000 sharks are killed every day. That's a lot of sharks! Gone! That's real and that's not a myth, and it's totally unsustainable! Our world needs sharks. Killing sharks is not cool. It isn't sport and it certainly is not part of a mindful culture. Killing sharks is killing the ocean.”

VAST is working to save our oceans. Our focus is to stop the Annual Oak Bluff's Monster Shark Tournament. The logic is simple; without sharks, smaller fish take over the ecosystem causing habitat destruction and eventual catastrophic damage to the global ocean network. In our view, the Monster Shark Tournament unnecessarily contributes to the declining shark population. We have enclosed numerous resources and scientific references which relate to this decline.. We are hopeful you will review these materials as you consider the future of the Monster Shark Tournament in Oak Bluffs.

Help us protect the guardians of the ocean. This is our world and our world needs sharks.

Vineyarders Against Shark Tournaments

Steve Maxner

Joyce Maxner

Steve and Joyce Maxner

P, O. Box 1042

West Tisbury, MA 02575

508-696-7248

cc. Oak Bluffs Selectmen
Oak Bluffs Chamber of Commerce
Oak Bluffs Town Clerk
Oak Bluffs Parks and Recreation Department

VINEYARDERS AGAINST THE SHARK TOURNAMENT

A POSITION PAPER ON THE ANNUAL OAK BLUFFS MONSTER SHARK TOURNAMENT

INTRODUCTION:

Sharks are being killed at an unsustainable rate. It is estimated that 70 million sharks are killed annually, primarily for their fins to be sold in the Asian market. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, roughly 200,000 of these sharks are killed by recreational anglers in the United States. Not an insignificant number by any means.

The “Jaws” myths are fantasies created by Hollywood designed to scare us. Sharks should not scare us. Sharks are guardians of the ocean. But they are being hunted, hunted to the very brink of extinction and our oceans are suffering.

Everything has balance. The ocean is a fragile ecosystem. Without sharks the balance is lost. Without sharks our ocean food chain collapses. A world without sharks is a frightening thought. It is both tragic and regrettable that over 100,000 sharks are killed every day. That’s a lot of sharks! Gone! That’s real and that’s not a myth, and it’s totally unsustainable! Our world needs sharks. Killing sharks is not cool. It isn’t sport and it certainly is not part of a mindful culture. Killing sharks is killing the ocean.

The mission statement of Vineyarders Against the Shark Tournament reads:

Shark populations worldwide are in grave peril. In 2009, the International Union of Conservation of Nature classified 32% of the 64 species of open ocean (pelagic) sharks as being in danger of extinction. The spectacle of the annual Oak Bluffs Monster Shark Tournament unnecessarily contributes to the declining shark population and is an assault on the natural world. This institutionalized display of cruelty and disregard for the clear conservation imperative undermines the character and spirit of our Island community. The single mission of our grassroots organization is to protect the lives of sharks that would otherwise be killed and publicly displayed each summer on the Oak Bluffs harbor front.

Our objective is to stop the annual Oak Bluff’s Monster Shark Tournament. The logic is simple; without sharks, smaller fish take over the ecosystem causing habitat destruction and eventual catastrophic damage to the global ocean system. Help us protect the guardians of the ocean. This is our world and our world needs sharks.

HISTORY/LITERATURE REVIEW:

The July 28, 2011 Martha's Vineyard Times reported that the 25th Oak Bluff's Monster Shark Tournament created a circus like atmosphere at Oak Bluffs harbor. According to the editor, Nelson Sigelman, large crowds sat along the sea wall and floated in the harbor under sunny skies to see the large sharks brought to the weigh-in dock.

Mr. Sigelman further reports that Steven James, president of the Boston Big Game Club, sponsor of the tournament said, a total of 104 boats registered for the event and thirteen sharks were weighed in. The largest shark was a 630 pound thresher that set a new state record. A 495 pound porbeagle also set a new state record.

The Times writes that local honors went to Steve Jordon of Edgartown on board See Saw, winner of the release award for 65 releases. If each of the 104 boats caught half the number of sharks as Mr. Jordon, one could extrapolate from this years tournament data that each of the 104 boats would potentially catch approximately 30 sharks, for a total of 3,120 sharks caught. Using the Dalhousie University 20% mortality rate data for sharks caught by recreational fishermen, one could argue conservatively, that over 600 sharks were killed in the Oak Bluffs Tournament this year alone.

"Consider the economic impact of those thirteen fish on the economy of Oak Bluffs," Mr. James said in an email to the Times. "If there was \$2 million brought into Oak Bluffs over the duration of the event, that makes each fish worth about \$154K making them some of the most valuable fish in any of the worlds oceans." He called that figure conservative.

The Town of Oak Bluffs has historically justified its support for the Monster Shark Tournament by citing the positive financial impact the event has on the local economy. Additionally, town selectmen have seemingly accepted the scientific judgment of marine biologist Dr. Greg Skomel, who currently works for the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries. Dr. Skomal has publicly stated that, in his opinion, the shark tournament has no significant impact on overall shark populations and offers a unique opportunity of collecting valuable scientific data via blood sampling and various other testing protocols that advance shark research objectives.

It is certainly hard to refute the selectmen's claim that the shark tournament is an important boost to the summertime Oak Bluffs economy. This is undoubtedly true. The actual dollar amount of this "boost" to the business community is however difficult, if not impossible, to quantify. Mr. James' pronouncement that the tournament brought in at least 2 million dollars this year is an undocumented estimate at best.

Discovering scientific data that dispute Dr. Skomals' findings are however, abundantly available. In her recent book Demon Fish, Juliet Eilperin tells a much different story than the one presented to the Oak Bluffs selectmen by Dr. Skomal.

For example, Dalhousie University's Dr. Boris Worm has published a number of studies that suggest sharks have declined much faster than others have thought. Dr. Neil Hammerschlag uses every forum he can to question the activities of recreational shark fishermen and crusades against them on his web site www.neilhammer.com. This web site features a section on how recreational shark fishing is taking its toll and details efforts needed to protect ever decreasing shark populations.

Ms. Eilperin, in her important and timely book, discusses the work of another marine biologist, Dr. Demian Chapman, a former researcher for the PEW Institute for Ocean Science. In April 2002, Dr. Chapman documented more than forty litters of hammerhead sharks that had been killed through recreational fishing. Some carried as many as twenty pups each. The toll such fishing takes on a population, he says, cannot be overestimated. "By killing forty pregnant females, you're killing eight hundred animals or more." According to Eilperin, Tim O'Hare, mate on "Mark the Shark" Quartiano's Miami shark fishing tour boat Striker-1, states "people call us slaughterers, murderers. We're just not hypocrites. Most of these fish, if you catch and release them, they're going to die." The September 25, 2011 Boston Globe reported that a dead nine foot long blue shark had washed ashore in Nahant, Massachusetts over the weekend. New England Aquarium spokesman Tony La Casse said the adult male shark had a small cut on its lower jaw where it might have been hooked. An aquarium biologist says many sharks can die after being hooked because of shock from a long fight. He says the shark probably died miles from the coast and was swept ashore.

Dr. Alison Kock, another noted contemporary shark expert, pursues studies aimed at shifting popular sentiment and bringing an end to shark fishing, warning that shark researchers cannot afford to remain silent while shark populations decline.

It is clear that the Town of Oak Bluffs is motivated to continue the Monster Shark Tournament ostensibly for the monetary rewards associated with the event. It is also clear that town government officials have justified their support for the tournament based upon the advice and recommendations of only one marine biologist while ignoring or being unaware of the findings and opinions of the many other notable shark scientists throughout the world whose studies reflect different conclusions than those offered by Dr. Skomal.

tournament. This violent disrespect and desecration of a species is something we as Islanders should be ashamed of and not tolerate. By continuing the tournament, we teach our children to disrespect the natural world and instead honor the spectacle of killing and publicly displaying sharks for the sake of financial gain..

Surely there are other ways for the Town of Oak Bluffs to generate the income that would be lost upon ending the Monster Shark Tournament. Possibilities include; music festivals, sailing regatta's, national dog show, shark cage dives, shark watching, concert series, etc. It seems incumbent on town leaders to consider alternatives to the shark tournament in light of current shark conservation realities. It is clearly in the long-term interest of the town to be known as a shark friendly and conservation oriented harbor. Ultimately, the question is simple and direct. Do we want increased beer, ice cream, t-shirt, restaurant, hotel and bar revenues at the expense of contributing to the extinction of the guardians of the ocean?

In his last book, Ray Anderson, CEO of Interface, the world's largest modular carpet manufacturing firm wrote: "we are all part of the continuum of humanity and the web of life in general. We will have lived our brief span and either helped or hurt that continuum, that web and the earth that sustains all life. Which will it be? It's your call."

FOOTNOTES-

1. The Shark-Free Marina Initiative, 2100 L Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036
Call 1-800-630-3486
2. Steve Campagna, Blue Shark Survivorship Data, Dalhousie University
3. M. V. Times, July 28, 2011, Nelson Sigelman
4. Juliet Eilperin, Demon Fish, 2011, Random House, Inc. New York, Chapter 3,
www.demonfishbook.com
5. National Marine Fisheries Service, Shark Update Bulletin, July 31 2011
6. Captain Greg Nisito, The Ultimate Guide to Fishes of the New England Coast,
2010, Steven Lewers and Associates, 603 – 654 – 748, P.O. Box 60, Wilton, NH,
03086

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES-

1. Robert E. Hueter PhD., Director, Center for Shark Research, Mote Marine
Laboratory, 1600 Ken Thompson Parkway, Sarasota, Florida 34236, USA,
rjueter@mote.org, tel. 941-388-1827
2. Neil Hammerschlag, PhD., The Shark Safe Project, www.neilhamer.com
3. Boris Worm, PhD., Ransom A Myers, PhD., Dalhousie University, Halifax,
Canada
4. Demian D Chapman, PhD., *Endangered Species Research* 9, no. 3 (2009)
pp. 221-228
5. Julia K Baum and Ransom A Myers, “Shifting Baselines and the Decline of
Pelagic Sharks in The Gulf of Mexico, *Ecology Letters* 7 (2004), pp. 135-145
6. Sharon B. Young, “Status of Sharks in the United States”, with annotated
bibliography, syoung@hsus.org (see attachment A)
7. Greg Skomal, PhD, *The Shark Handbook*, Kennebunkport, Maine: Cidermill
Press, 2008.
8. Juliet Eilperin, Demon Fish, 2011, Random House, Inc., New York, New York.

Status of Sharks in the United States

Prepared by Sharon B. Young, Marine Issues Field Director

Troubled Waters

Worldwide, shark populations are in grave peril. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) regularly updates a listing of species of concern. In 2009, the IUCN Shark Specialist group classified 32% of the 64 species of open ocean (pelagic) sharks as being in danger of extinction, primarily as a result of over-fishing. Over one fifth of the more than 500 species of sharks and rays evaluated by the IUCN were considered threatened with extinction. In the Atlantic, only 3 of the 11 most frequently caught species, were considered at a lower risk of extinction. White tip sharks are considered critically endangered. Porbeagle sharks are endangered and the once common skate, which was listed as endangered in 2000 by the IUCN was downgraded to critically endangered only 6 years later in 2006.

Shark populations in the U.S. face significant threats, generally from overexploitation by commercial fisheries. They are uniquely vulnerable among fish because their life histories more closely resemble whales than fish. Sharks are long lived. Like whales, they are slow to reproduce and have very few young. Most are highly migratory. Sharks caught on one side of the ocean are often from the same population as those being exploited on the other side of the ocean basin. This can create conservation crises. Porbeagle sharks are the target of commercial shark fisheries in other countries and are also caught incidentally by U.S. fishermen. Even though the U.S. government has acknowledged that they have lost up to 90% of their breeding population, and has added them to a "Species of Concern" list, it gives them no special protection.

Sharks are targeted by commercial longline, driftnet and purse seine fisheries. Shark meat is eaten in restaurants worldwide and, in the Far East, shark fins are popular for soup and other dishes. There is also an incidental bycatch of sharks by fisheries targeting other fish species. Most of these sharks are discarded as waste. Sharks in U.S. waters are also caught by recreational fishermen and in a growing number of shark tournaments. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), which manages most shark species, has stated that in the eastern Gulf of Mexico alone, shark tournament fishing has grown from half a dozen tournaments in 1973 to as many as 70 today. The greatest conservation concerns face species for which there is a large commercial market. This includes large pelagic sharks such as mako sharks and small sharks such as skates and dogfish.

The Status of Sharks

Many shark species are distributed worldwide, but their status and conservation measures may differ in different locales. Although the United States has not granted protected status to most shark species, international bodies have expressed concern for a number of species found in U.S. waters. A 2003 study by Dalhousie University, published in the journal *Science*, estimated that all recorded shark species in the Northwest Atlantic, with the exception of makos, declined by more than 50% in the past eight to 15 years. Some species, such as hammerheads and thresher sharks had declined by as much as 80%. The Pew Charitable Trust's Global Shark Assessment predicts collapse and extinction of several species of sharks if current levels of fishing mortality remain the same. Study after study indicates that we should be very

concerned about the fate of sharks, which play an important role in coastal food webs. Despite concern by prestigious international bodies, there are active commercial and recreational shark fisheries in the U.S., and there is resistance to more restrictive management.

East Coast Sharks

At least ~~seventy three~~ species of sharks inhabit the waters of the U.S. east coast, including the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The NMFS places sharks in one of five categories for purposes of managing fisheries that may interact with them. Large coastal sharks, which are the frequent targets of fisheries, are generally considered overfished by NMFS. This category has eleven species including sandbar, blacktip, bull, nurse, tiger and hammerhead sharks. Recent reports by the NMFS show quotas for this group being exceeded in many years. A second category, pelagic sharks, included species such as thresher, mako, porbeagle, and blue sharks. All sharks in this category are considered "fully fished" and some have been deemed subject to overfishing. The category of small coastal sharks is also considered "fully fished," with little ability to withstand additional fishing effort. This category contains four species, including bonnethead, blacknose and sharpnose sharks. This category too, often exceeds quotas in the Gulf of Mexico. A fourth category is called "prohibited species." All nineteen sharks in this category are considered so imperiled that it is illegal for fishermen to possess them. They include whale sharks, basking sharks, sand tiger sharks, dusky sharks and others. The last major category of sharks on the East coast is deepwater and other sharks. This category includes 33 poorly understood species such as lantern sharks and gulper sharks.

West Coast Sharks

Less is known about these sharks than those on the U.S. east coast. However, there are conservation concerns for most of the sharks targeted by commercial fisheries. According to the NMFS, the shark species most commonly targeted by commercial fisheries are various thresher sharks, shortfin mako sharks and blue sharks. In the north Pacific, spiny dogfish are the most commonly targeted species. In the western Pacific, around the Hawaiian Islands and the territories of Guam, Midway and other atolls; tiger, sandbar and Galapagos sharks, which are coastal in nature, may be caught by fisheries that primarily target other fish species such as tuna and billfish. Many of the shark species targeted by fisheries are considered overfished and may be declining.

Summary

A 2004 meeting of IUCN specialists, focused on the status of sharks in North and Central American waters, concluded that fishery restrictions had helped improve the status some species of sharks in U.S. waters such as black-tipped sharks. Others, such as sand tiger sharks, which may produce only two young every two years, continue to decline despite protection. The report highlighted the continued vulnerability of sharks to overfishing. Expert panels convened by Pew Trust also recommended stronger conservation for Atlantic sharks. In 2009, the IUCN Shark Specialist Group found that the status of many sharks continues to deteriorate. They recommended increasing protection of commonly caught sharks such as thresher and mako sharks, which they consider vulnerable to extinction. Although commercial fisheries are the primary threat to sharks, pressure from recreational and tournament fishing adds unnecessarily to the peril facing a number of these large sharks.

Annotated Bibliography of References Used in “Status of Sharks in the U.S.”

AFS 2005. American Fisheries Society Policy Statement #31b. Management of Sharks and Their Relatives (*Elasmobranchii*). Available at: http://www.fisheries.org/html/policy_statements/ps_31b.html
This statement recommends stricter management, additional scientific data collection for shark conservation and the live release of caught sharks and rays.

Baum, J.K. and R. Meyers. 2004. Shifting baselines and the decline of pelagic sharks in the Gulf of Mexico. *Ecology Letters*. 2004:7. 135-145. *This is a peer-reviewed publication that finds that oceanic whitetip and silky sharks in the Gulf have declined by over 90% and states that, overall, sharks in the Gulf have declined considerably, which has adversely impacted the pelagic ecosystem.*

Campana, S., L. Marks, W. Joyce and N. Kohler. 2006. Effects of recreational and commercial fishing on blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*) in Atlantic Canada, with inferences on the North Atlantic Population. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*. 63. 670-682. *This peer-reviewed article documents an ocean-wide distribution and ocean-wide effects. It documents increased landings in recreational fisheries at a time the stock was documented to be declining and states that derby fishing and commercial fishing are taking from the same population, with derby fishing providing less reliable biological data because fishermen are targeting only the largest animals.*

IUCN 2004. More sharks on the Red List. Press Release. Available at: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/news/sharks.htm>. *This is an announcement of an update of shark status that documents continued declines in sharks and undertakes uplisting of several species.*

IUCN 2007. More Oceanic Sharks Added to the IUCN Redlist. Available at: <http://www.iucn.pk/more-oceanic-sharks-added-to-the-iucn-red-list.htm>. *An announcement of the recent finding that mako sharks and all thresher sharks are threatened with extinction.*

IUCN 2009. Third of open ocean sharks threatened with extinction. Press Release 25 June 2009. Available at: <http://www.iucn.org/?3362/Third-of-open-ocean-sharks-threatened-with-extinction>. *This documents continued declines and recommendations for additional protection.*

NMFS 2002. Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation for Highly Migratory Species. *This is a status evaluation in which the NMFS states that it has not determined the status of most sharks in the U.S. Though it promises shark status updates for all species by the end of 2002, evaluation are still incomplete. At least two additional amendments to shark management plans have happened since, each of which has reinforced a deteriorating status for many species. For example, makos are now considered subject to overfishing and likely to be overfished, though they were not so judged in 2002 and porbeagles are now considered a “species of concern.”*

NMFS 2006. Porbeagle Sharks Listed as Species of Concern. Federal Register October 17, 2006. 71 FR 61022.

NMFS 2008 and 2009. Annual Shark Landings Reports. Available at:
http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/hmsdocument_files/sharks.htm#Landings. *This documents fisheries exceeding annual quotas for a number of shark species/complexes.*

Pew Global Shark Assessment. Pew Institute for Ocean Science. Available at:
http://www.pewoceanscience.org/projects/Pew_Global_Shar/intro.php?IC+56. *This is a short summary of their project headed by scientists from Dalhousie University, that documents declining populations, particularly in the Gulf of Mexico.*

Pew Charitable Trust 2008. The Risk of Over-Exploitation for Data-Poor Pelagic Atlantic Sharks. Available at:
http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Protecting_ocean_life/ICCAT_sharks_catch_limits09_08.pdf *This report by an international expert panel, including scientists from the NMFS, recommends a number of conservation measures including making oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, silky, mako and some threshers "no take" species and recommends updated assessments for blue sharks and shortfin mako sharks.*

Pew Charitable Trust 2010. Shark Conservation. Available at:
http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_detail.aspx?id=140. *This summarizes the conservation crises facing sharks in various parts of the world, including in the Atlantic, and provides links to a number of Lenfest publications on sharks and shark conservation.*

servation at the New England Aquarium. "It's pretty much the way he spent the last ten years of his life."

Benchley died with this work unfinished. Even after a decade of advocacy, he had just begun to erase what seems like an indelible mark on the public consciousness. And even decades after the release of his book, plenty of people devote their careers to keeping the *Jaws* myth alive. As long as the myth persists, shark hunters will have many reasons to go about ridding the sea of them. How can you fault someone for wiping out a killer?

 3

A DEMON FISH

In terms of the numbers of sharks we've killed, nobody comes close to us. We've caught just about everything there is left to catch. Sharks are fascinating, but we're trophy hunters. I get paid to kill fish. Some people don't like it, but too bad.

—Mark "the Shark" Quartiano,
Miami fishing tour boat operator

The massive scalloped hammerhead, swaying over the deck of *Striker-1*, brings Rosie O'Donnell to an abrupt halt in the middle of Biscayne Bay.

Driving a motorboat with a gaggle of female friends, the well-known comedian pulls up next to Mark Quartiano's fifty-foot Harteras and begins peppering him with questions. Pointing to the now-lifeless body, she asks, "Is that for real?"

Mark "the Shark" Quartiano, who has operated a fishing charter here in Miami since 1976, is pleased with the attention. He works hard, seven days a week, and it's strangers' fascination with sharks that keeps his operation humming.

While the captain assures O'Donnell that the nearly nine-foot fish is genuine, one of the Texans who's spent the morning fishing with Quartiano has a question of his own. Dustin Self is a twenty-six-year-old roughneck who works on an oil rig for a living, but he's savvy enough to spot the celebrity who's just pulled up. "Are you Rosie O'Donnell?" he shouts.

She is, and it turns out O'Donnell's son, Blake, is a shark aficionado who has spied *Striker-1* before. The family has a vacation home

on Star Island, the exclusive Miami enclave where the pop singer Gloria Estefan and the NBA star Shaquille O'Neal also own manses, and Blake O'Donnell has pointed out Quartiano's boat as it's cruised past their home on multiple occasions. In the past, O'Donnell told her son the vessel couldn't possibly hunt sharks, but she's happy to stand corrected. "My son's going to flip out!" she exclaims, before hurrying back to the island.

Within minutes, O'Donnell has returned on a gleaming dark red Jet Ski with Blake in tow. She is unabashed in her admiration of the hulking mass hanging by a rope, its black eyes on opposite ends of its rectangular head now glassy.

"We can't believe it!" she tells the Texas family, as she and Blake stroke the creature. "Oh my God. He feels like rubber."

O'Donnell wants to know who caught the shark—it is Self's girlfriend, Stephanie Perez, a recent Texas Woman's University graduate who's about to pursue her master's degree in speech therapy. This brings another flurry of praise from O'Donnell. "And you're the one who caught it," she marvels. "Girl power!"

Women are showing up more often on *Striker-1* nowadays. Shark fishing used to be an almost exclusively male sport, and Quartiano traditionally hosted bachelor's parties on his boat along with the usual businessmen's outing. Now he's booking bachelorettes as well, giving them equal billing on his Web site.

The captain—who has a deeply tanned, weathered face and the sort of blond-streaked hair that seems almost required for men and women alike in Miami—has no problem with this demographic shift. He is focused on maintaining as robust a clientele as possible, especially in the midst of a major economic downturn. "I'd rather have a woman than a man in the chair, because they listen to everything you say," he says, referring to the fishing chair off the stern where clients reel in their prize catches.

Quartiano can no longer count on Fortune 500 companies such as Coca-Cola, IBM, and Microsoft holding lavish conventions in Miami where gagles of executives were anxious to head out for an afternoon of fishing. And on top of that, it's harder to find sharks. "I spend

all day long trying to catch a shark, when twenty years ago, forget it. Ten minutes," he reminisces as he pilots the boat away from the Miami Marriott, where his ship departs. "It's a grind. It isn't easy."

"But you love it, right?" pipes up Perez's father.

"It's a lot of pressure, when you think about it," Quartiano muses, his eyes scanning the ocean's surface. "It's no fun fishing for somebody else. I've got to catch you a fish, and I've got two hours to catch it. Isn't that right?"

Perez's father has no rejoinder; the entire group is quiet. They've come out here expecting to see a big shark, and they'll go away disappointed if they don't.

Perez is a perfect example of the newer clients Quartiano's started serving: it was her idea to book a charter this morning, bringing along her parents, boyfriend, brother, and brother's friend for the ride. The men spend a while catching shark bait, including bonito, kingfish, and barracuda, but when it becomes clear a shark is on the line, she's the one who settles into the fishing chair for a half-hour tug-of-war.

Initially, Perez has trouble heeding Quartiano's advice. He tells her to try reeling in the shark only when it's not tugging at the line to avoid exhaustion, but the twenty-three-year-old has difficulty timing her efforts. ("I used to think girls could follow instructions," he says good-naturedly at one point, sotto voce.) But with her mother's encouragement—"Remember, honey, you just graduated from college; you can follow instructions"—Perez gets into the rhythm. As she toils away, her parents start debating whether she could ever mount a shark trophy in their house, located in the Houston suburbs.

"No animals in my house," her mother, Norma Perez, says, shaking her head side to side.

Quartiano is too superstitious to let the comment pass. "Let's catch him first, then you can talk about where you can put him."

Finally, the shark relents. Quartiano and his mate, Jeff Fasshauer, scramble to pull the hammerhead on board. Deeply tangled in the fishing line, with a huge hole in its side, the animal is essentially dead.

After all the debate on board, Perez isn't actually interested in making a wall mount out of her catch: "Probably pictures are enough for

me.” And she remains agnostic about whether shark fishing is good or bad. “I know this sounds harsh, but I guess it depends on how many sharks there are. If they’re endangered, you shouldn’t do it, but if they’re bountiful . . .” Her voice trails off. “I’m really kind of indifferent on it, because I don’t know enough to say anything.”

Perez will walk away from the boat without her big fish—which is, in fact, classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature—but it’s enough to convince O’Donnell she should take her son Blake shark fishing aboard *Striker-1*. As the two should take her son Blake shark fishing aboard *Striker-1*. As the two of them zoom away on their Jet Ski, Quartiano notes with satisfaction, “I don’t think she’s Greenpeace, right? That’s a future customer.” The shark has done the captain’s advertising for him. “People ask me why I hang them up,” he says. “That’s why I hang them up. If you let them go, you don’t have anything. You almost don’t have a story.”

If you’re looking for a twenty-first-century incarnation of Captain Quint from *Jaws*, Quartiano comes pretty close. While he’s a friendlier, more service-oriented version, the Florida charter-boat captain has built his entire professional reputation on his ability to slay the scariest sharks in the sea. The shift in public attitudes toward sharks, driven in large part by the success of *Jaws*, has helped propel an entire commercial industry in the United States that spans from the dock to the drugstore.

Quartiano used to hunt sharks for his own amusement off Miami Beach, but he’s spent most of his career ensuring other anglers can tell their own big-fish stories. He started out working as a police officer and then became a firefighter, at which point he managed to work four days a week and fish the other three days. Once he cobbled together enough sponsors to support himself by fishing full-time, he made the switch, and at this point he’s the only charter operator who still targets sharks. By his own estimate, he has killed at least 100,000 sharks over the course of his career: as he likes to joke, he’s outlasted his competitors, as well as the scores of sharks he’s hauled on board over the years.

Quartiano models himself in part after the shark hunters who used to fish off Long Island in the 1950s and 1960s—when there were still plenty of sharks around to catch—though he’s quick to add that he manages to accomplish the same feats in a much less forgiving environment. After William E. Young toured the globe in the early twentieth century in search of sharks, men like the late Frank Mundus grabbed the spotlight. Mundus earned the nickname Monster Man for the sharks he caught off Montauk, and claimed he was the inspiration for Captain Quint, even though Benchley said he based the character on more than one person. Mundus caught two massive great whites in the course of his forty-year career, but embraced conservation after years of fishing, retired to Hawaii in 1991, and largely gave up shark hunting. Quartiano, however, has yet to temper his pursuit.

Quartiano prides himself on finding new species to kill in order to satisfy his customer, like the thresher sharks he’s managed to cull from a nearby area where they gather to give birth to their young. He no longer is allowed to catch threshers under state law, which complicates this task. While he’s careful to adhere to state and federal rules, he thinks people apply a double standard when it comes to shark fishing. “You get people who don’t like to hurt animals but they’re mostly hypocrites,” Quartiano once told a local magazine. “They want to release everything, meanwhile they go home and eat big juicy steaks.”

Quartiano cannot be called a hypocrite: he lets people know exactly where he stands. He parks his boat right outside one of Miami’s big South Beach hotels, perched next to a black-and-white sandwich-board sign that extols the virtues of “Mark the Shark’s Monster Fishing Charters.” (These claims to fame apparently include “awarded #1 charter boat in the world” and “as seen on every major t.v. show,” both of which seem like a slight stretch.) The tiny beach-comber shop he runs is yards away, and its walls are lined with at least a hundred shark jaws. “This is nothing, I’ve got a warehouse full of them,” he explains as I marvel at the dry, jagged teeth looming above me.

Mark the Shark looks the part: he wears sunny yellow fisherman’s overalls that are both practical and symbolic, evoking America’s fish-

ing past, along with various items of clothing that tout his many sponsors. For example, his T-shirt's slogan, "Just Stuff It," is a subtle advertisement for Gray Taxidermy, which helps immortalize his clients' catches. Ironically, taxidermists don't even use the shark's carcass anymore to make a mount. An angler comes in, tells the shop the species and size of the shark that's perished, and the staff takes down a Plexiglas model that matches. It's cheaper and more efficient, though it means losing some authenticity in the process. Some trophies still feature a shark's actual jaws, but that's the only physical remnant of the animal that has been dragged up from the ocean's depths. The carcass is discarded; the shark has died for no ostensible purpose.

While Quartiano and I are discussing the fine details of taxidermy, we're idling in his office waiting for customers to show up that were expected shortly after dawn. A British stag party was slated to arrive at 7:00 a.m. to start fishing; now it's more than two hours later and they're still lounging, hungover, in their Ritz-Carlton hotel rooms. We've been informed that they won't arrive until 11:30; there is no choice but to accede to their wishes. Quartiano charges a party of six \$1,200 for a daylong ride, and so long as they've paid their money, he does what they want. The charter captain wouldn't have minded sleeping in as well, but that is not his call—he reports first thing in the morning and shoves off only when his customers arrive.

Finally, shortly before noon, a collection of five amiable, pastry-faced Brits arrives at the marina. Quartiano's focused on pleasing his customers, not giving them a guilt trip, so he's acting more like a camp counselor than anything else. "We're going to do shark fishing, so everyone who wants to catch a shark, come with me!" he announces cheerily. Most boat tours that last more than a couple of hours offer plenty of food to their customers, but Quartiano makes it clear that's not an option today. "We only have liquids: beer, soda, water. No food," he warns them. "That's fine," one of the Brits replies.

Quartiano is just as clear on who will be the focus of his attention this April afternoon: Michael Sandford, the bachelor boy. Just as Stephanie Perez takes center stage when she's paying the bill, Michael Sandford is the one who gets special treatment this time. "Michael's the man," Quartiano declares. Being "the man" means catching a

shark, of course, so the two men running the boat arrange it so Sandford will be sitting at the gleaming white chair on the main deck, where he will be able to haul in the big fish on a black shiny rod with a golden reel. "Once you're in the chair, baby, it's hard to get out," Quartiano tells the group.

Sandford, who is getting married in less than a month, is fascinated by the possibility of catching a big fish. "How big can you go?" he asks Quartiano. "We've got a bunch of world records," the tour operator answers, with his usual braggadocio. "Any shark that swims, I can kill."

This sort of talk is a big hit with Sandford and his friends; all of whom are stock traders and real estate developers in their late thirties and early forties. Their Miami trip is a way to escape overcast English skies and their work responsibilities for a long weekend. Much of their trip has consisted of golfing and drinking, but Sandford likes going fishing, so they figure a trip with Mark the Shark can't hurt. Of course, Sandford adds, fishing on his side of the Atlantic has gotten a lot harder in recent years. "They're getting pretty scarce at home, fish," he says.

As they pull out of the marina, the boat's sound system blasts a song Quartiano saves for groups like this: Dick Pickle's "South Beach, the Official Anthem." Singing to the tune of *The Sound of Music*'s "My Favorite Things," Pickle croons about everything from silicone implants to celebrities:

Jews in Mercedes and nipples with rings

South Beach has all of my favorite things.

Several of the Brits chuckle. Quartiano knows his clientele well. His average customer, he says, is "a guy all pumped up, a big-game guy, kind of macho . . . I don't have too many Greenpeace folks coming on my boat. Usually, it's guys wanting to kill something."

Tim O'Hare, Quartiano's mate on this particular day, focuses on baiting the hooks rather than on the charter that swirls around him on

the boat as the Brits get comfortable. If Quartiano is the entertainer, O'Hare is the workhorse: he just wants to make sure these novices catch a shark, so they can declare victory and head for shore. But he relishes the struggle it takes to haul one of them into the boat. "These sharks are more exciting than any other fish. They're harder to catch," he says, as he handles the squid that will theoretically lure one of them to the boat. "It's the fight, and then just the nature of the animal."

O'Hare is well aware of monster fishing's detractors: like Quartiano, he sees these critics—especially those who call upon fishermen to "catch and release" their prey—as two-faced. "People call us slaughterers, murderers. We're just not hypocrites. Most of these fish, if you catch and release them, they're going to die." O'Hare has a point—many sport fish hauled up to the surface after a struggle end up dying anyway, depending on the duration of the battle, the given biology of a specific species, the wounds inflicted on the animal, and other factors. But most sharks can survive being dragged to the surface if they're let go quickly enough. Since they lack swim bladders, sharks are not vulnerable to pressure changes like other fish. And fishermen can use gear that increases the shark's chance of survival, including circle hooks that will lodge in its jaw rather than its gut, non-stainless-steel hooks that will rust out quickly rather than stay embedded for long periods of time, and a sufficiently strong line so that the person catching the shark doesn't have to wage an extended battle to deliberately tire it out.

While O'Hare and Quartiano do everything possible to spoon-feed their clients, preparing the fishing rods, handling the sharks once they land on the boat, they also see some risks as inevitable. "There are a lot of close calls," Quartiano confides. "You're dealing with live sharks. These things are going to happen, but nothing like we need a rourniquet."

Mark the Shark's clients expend little effort pondering what it takes to catch a shark, but that's because Quartiano and O'Hare have done the thinking for them. The boat is cruising along what Quartiano calls "the middle of a highway": it is a two-hundred-yard transect

most of the fish follow as they move along the Gulf Stream, where they are easy prey. The two fishermen put the bait on lines of varying depth, at times dropping down as far as fifteen hundred or two thousand feet in order to lure six-gill sharks, which have six gills on each side rather than five and prefer deeper water. By covering the entire water column, they increase the chances that high-paying clients such as Sandford will manage to hook something while sitting in the comfort of the captain's chair, Budweiser in hand.

Which is what happens, by the end of the day. Sandford gets his hammerhead, and they catch one more for good measure. That's another satisfied client who can return to London and his future bride with full bragging rights about his monster-fishing adventure in America.

Mark the Shark has to work harder now to please his customers than he did in the past, and he blames commercial fishermen who set long-lines for his predicament. These fishing lines with baited hooks frequently end up tangling and killing sharks, and there's no question that the sharks caught unintentionally from such activities, known as bycatch, far outnumber the targeted fish, be it tuna or swordfish.

"They've definitely gone down because of long-liners, not because of me," he says of sharks. "We never touch a population. Those long-liners do more damage in a night than we do in a year." And Quartiano simply does not believe that species such as bigeye thresher sharks are endangered, because he still hauls them in on his rod and reel. "I've caught more than anyone else on the planet. There's no way they're endangered."

Data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Fisheries Service tell a different story: federal officials estimate that recreational landings of large coastal sharks outpaced commercial catches for fifteen out of twenty-one years between 1981 and 2001, with U.S. recreational anglers catching 12 million sharks, skates, and rays in 2004 alone.¹ These numbers appear to be on the rise: the absolute number of sharks U.S. anglers caught increased

by roughly a third between 2006 and 2007, according to NOAA.² Apparently, all those bachelor and bachelorette parties add up.

It's a classic case of tunnel vision: humans fail to comprehend the massive impact of our collective activities on the planet because we think of ourselves as lone actors. In 2007, for example, twelve million anglers made nearly 87 million fishing trips on the Atlantic, Pacific, and gulf coasts, catching roughly 468 million fish.³ That's more than one fish for every man, woman, and child in the United States, and then some. Boris Worm, the marine biologist at Canada's Dalhousie University, puts it another way: "Say you have only one in a thousand Americans catch a shark each year. That's 300,000 sharks a year, just like that. I don't think we understand how many of us there are." We dwarf every other large animal on earth in terms of numbers, and that has consequences.

On a certain level, Quartiano acknowledges that he might be contributing to the fish's demise, though he still sees long-liners as the enemy. "In terms of the numbers of sharks we've killed, nobody comes close to us. We've caught just about everything there is left to catch. Sharks are fascinating, but we're trophy hunters; I get paid to kill fish. Some people don't like it, but too bad." If environmentalists have such a big problem with his activities, he reasons, they should pay him to park his boat. In an era of government bailouts, Quartiano jokes, he's happy to take his place in line at the federal trough. "Basically, my ultimate goal is to get subsidized by the government. They pay farmers not to farm, right? I want to get paid not to fish."

Despite his bravado, Quartiano has been feeling a little uneasy lately about his activities. He wants sharks to stick around long enough for his son Maverick—whom he describes as "fearless"—to kill them. So he's been bringing some of his catches back to local scientists, which he says more than justifies his business. "How else are you going to get data on some species of sharks unless [sic] we don't bring them to the scientists?" he asks, adding that it's no use throwing sharks back into the sea if they've died by the time they're hauled into the boat. "This is how they're going to get them. They may not like it. They're specimens. Like it or not, we're going to catch 'em. If we catch an endangered species, why should we let it sink to the bottom?"

In the end, he can only hazard a guess as to whether sharks will survive over the long term. "Sharks are cool," he says, shortly before I head out to catch my water taxi back to shore. "Hopefully, they'll be here after we're gone."

Circumstances belie his wish. The kind of recreational fishing Quartiano promotes is helping ensure the reverse outcome, since these activities take a serious toll on the shark populations that once thrived off the Florida coast. On one level, what these men are doing is nothing new: fishermen have been battling with sharks for centuries, and in the eighteenth century bored sailors often entertained themselves by hooking sharks. The explorer George Vancouver gave an account of these games from Cocos Island in the eastern Pacific during this time, saying:

The general warfare that exists between sea-faring persons and these voracious animals afforded at first a species of amusement for our people, by hooking, or otherwise taking one for the others to feast upon, but as this was attended with the ill consequence of drawing immense numbers round the ship, and as the boatswain and one of the young gentlemen had both nearly fallen a sacrifice to this diversion, by narrowly escaping from being drawn out of the boat by an immensely large shark, which they had hooked, into the midst of at least a score of these voracious animals, I thought proper to prohibit all further indulgence in this species of entertainment.⁴

The difference is when Vancouver's men were dangling sharks off their boat, there were plenty of sharks congregating below, so the impact of one animal's death did not weigh as much. In addition, few people were hunting them at the time. Now the loss of a single shark exacts a far higher price on the population to which it belongs.

Quartiano's entire business is fueled by testosterone, but he has drawn two opponents who are nearly as brash as he is. While some scientists have earned their deservedly geeky reputations, neither Demian Chapman, nor Neil Hammerschlag, fits the stereotype. Chapman is a bold New Zealander in his mid-thirties, so exuberant that he started

a food fight with his wife at their wedding (before becoming sick from drinking). Nicknamed Pointer—the name for great white sharks from Down Under, since the species is mainly gray with white on the tip of its nose—by some of his fellow marine biologists, Chapman spent several years researching sharks in southern Florida before moving to the Institute for Conservation Science at Stony Brook University. He first earned his Ph.D. at Nova Southeastern University and then worked at the Pew Institute for Ocean Science, based in Miami, allowing him to observe the work of Mark the Shark and other fishing operations at close range. One of Chapman's strengths is that his half-fellow-well-met demeanor allows him to bond with unlikely allies, which in turn lets him infiltrate enemy territory. Much of Quartriano's bread and butter comes from killing pregnant hammerhead sharks, since they tend to be large and make for some of the most impressive trophies. The fishing operator frequently fires off e-mails that include pictures of these sharks, strung up and bloody, towering well above his head, to show off his catches.

In 2002, Chapman befriended a taxidermist in South Beach who let him know when a haul of hammerheads was coming in. In April alone Chapman counted more than forty litters that had been killed through recreational fishing: some carried as many as twenty pups each. The toll such fishing takes on a population, he says, cannot be overestimated. "By killing forty pregnant females, you're killing eight hundred animals or more. It doesn't take a genius to figure out it's unsustainable to kill pregnant females of a selected species," he says, the scorn audible in his voice. "Think if aliens started hunting humans by killing off pregnant females. It wouldn't take long to wipe us out." Chapman isn't the only young marine biologist who has Quartriano in his sights. Neil Hammerschlag, a research assistant professor and director of the R. J. Dunlap Marine Conservation Program at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, is relentless in the attacks he has launched on Mark the Shark. Hammerschlag uses every forum he can to question the activities of recreational fishermen like Quartriano, debating him in a sportfishing magazine or crusading against him on his Web site,

www.neilhammer.com. The elaborate Web site features not only a section on how recreational shark fishing is taking its toll (including a photograph of Quartriano displaying two massive dead sharks) but details about conservation efforts and Hammerschlag's own research. Hammerschlag has mulled the idea of mobilizing activists to set up a picketing operation near the Marriott to lobby the weekend warriors who patronize Quartriano's business to eschew his fishing tours, but he's wary of giving Mark the Shark additional media exposure. "He's trying to live up to the legend he's trying to create for himself," he says. "He kind of likes attention."

Catching sharks as a hobby is, by definition, about getting attention. As Quartriano points out, you barely have a story if you don't have a big hulking shark dangling beside you at the end of the day. Nothing embodies this phenomenon more than shark-fishing tournaments, which are thriving up and down America's East Coast. They have become annual summer rituals, another way beach towns can lure tourist dollars to their area.

There's nothing subtle about these contests: each one of them plays up the danger of sharks and the manliness of those who catch them. There's the "Swim at Your Own Risk Mega Shark Tournament" in Pensacola, Florida; the South Florida Shark Club's "Big Hammer Challenge," with contestants such as "Team Vile" and "Reel Boyz"; and the "Newport Monster Shark & Tuna Tournament" in Rhode Island. Only brave and flamboyant contestants need apply, and their willingness to flout political correctness has begun to stir controversy. Jack Donlon spent years organizing fishing tournaments for grouper, tarpon, and other species before he hit the jackpot with his "Are You Man Enough? Shark Challenge" in 2007. He remembers how he and his business partners fretted over attracting attention for their previous ventures: "The problem we always had was, how do you make fishing for grouper exciting? How do you make fishing for tarpon exciting? When you talk about sharks, it's exciting, then and there."

From Donlon's perspective, the explanation is obvious. While *Jaws* helped glamorize shark fishing by making the fish a public target, it's the perceived risks involved that make the sport popular. "It's something that can eat you. There's danger there. It's different from going out deer hunting. One misstep, and it can eat you."

Before Hammerschlag and his allies started making a fuss, Donlon's Fort Myers competition was thriving undisturbed. He looked down on nearby catch-and-release tournaments, where none of the sharks were taken back to shore, as boring. "They die of loneliness," he explains. The "Are You Man Enough? Shark Challenge" had significant backing from local businesses and had expanded to encompass a street fair, boat show, and kid fishing derby by the summer of 2009. Donlon took pains to describe the contest's "eco-outlook" on its Web site, writing, "There are laws on the books for recreational and commercial fisheries. We responsibly abide by these laws and we respect the legal decisions of anglers to keep or release their quarry in accordance with those laws. . . . We are proud that after several years and hundreds of anglers, the tournament has had only 7 shark [sic] harvested."

But the contest required its participants to land their sharks if they wanted to vie for the winning title, and that drew the ire of conservationists. These large sharks were inevitably the pregnant females that had come into the area each year to give birth, just like the ones Quatrano finds in Biscayne Bay. The Shark Safe project, a group Hammerschlag helps direct, threatened to hold a rally two weeks before the June 6 and 7 contest. The unwelcome publicity prompted some local businesses to have second thoughts: for a region that's economically dependent on tourism, highlighting the fact that sharks swim close to the shore is not a selling point.

Then the Lee County commissioner Ray Judah weighed in, decrying the tournament's shark-killing policy. Judah first heard about the contest from a friend who has devoted her career to saving sea turtles, and then got an irate e-mail from a marketing agent the county had hired to promote the area to German vacationers. "I got an e-mail from Vera [Sommer] saying, 'What the hell are you thinking? Here we are trying to market our beaches for tourists, and here you are

showing pictures of battered and bloody sharks!'" Judah mobilized his fellow commissioners, who voted unanimously to stop the tournament. While the move had no legal standing, it sent a message. At the last minute Donlon changed course and adopted a catch-and-release policy for much of the contest, awarding just \$1,000 for the retrieval of one shark. He had little choice, faced with opponents he refers to as "e-mail jihadists."

Donlon is blunt about why he switched gears: he is no environmentalist. "The real decision came because of pressure. Not because of conservation," he says now.

The following year two entertainment promoters, Sean and Brooks Paxton, decided to retool the tournament. Rather than fighting with scientists and activists, they enlisted the aid of Robert Hueter, who directs Mote Marine Laboratory's Center for Shark Research, and the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation. They opted for a more upscale, high-tech catch-and-release tournament, "The Guy Harvey Ultimate Shark Challenge," which has won the unprecedented blessing of the U.S. Humane Society. The contest allows only fifteen teams to compete at the outset: the first weekend narrows the field to five finalists, and in the finals streaming video allows fans to watch the fishing dockside in real time. Since the public can watch the sharks hauled on board and then thrown in the water, it compensates for the fact that they won't be able to stare at the shark carcasses that typically hang at marinas at the finale of any fishing competition. After all, shark fishing still has to be a spectator sport if it's going to turn a profit—the question is how to make it a bloodless spectator sport. In its first year 1,660 people showed up to watch the nonlethal contest, proving sharks still have allure even if they are allowed to escape at the end of the day.

These activists have succeeded, in part, because they sought to preserve something that helps sustain the local economy, rather than abolish it outright. "At the end of the day, the community didn't want people going out and slaughtering sharks off their beaches, and pulling up catches and hanging up sharks," Hammerschlag says. The community needed a little prodding, and Hammerschlag was willing to provide it. In many ways he and Chapman represent the new breed

of marine biologists, who are researcher-activists. Faced with the dramatic decline of the fish they have set out to study, they have little interest in staying on the sidelines when it comes to policy debates. And while both remain focused on publishing academic work, they have consciously crafted research projects that aim to show the importance of keeping sharks around.

For years, activists and scientists have enjoyed a sort of symbiotic relationship, in which environmental advocates took the research academics had done and used it as ammunition to lobby for policy changes. But even as this went on, many researchers took great pains to distance themselves from the activist community, because they feared it would undermine how other academics viewed their work and could jeopardize their chances for promotion. "The word 'activist' is kind of taboo within the scientific community," Hammerschlag says, adding that when it comes to many of his colleagues, "They're kind of scared to use that word. It's a shame . . . Everything's agenda-driven anyway." Within the last decade or two the line between these two camps has blurred, with many scientists deciding they cannot afford to stay neutral on policy questions that affect the future course of the planet.

It's also not limited to the United States. Even as a Ph.D. student at the University of Cape Town, Alison Kock made the news many times for her work on the great whites that swim not far from her university. Kock believes that sometimes she has a duty to publicize her data even before she's submitted it to a peer-reviewed journal, a radical notion for a scientist who's hoping to ascend to academic heights. "There's a huge generational gap," she says, pausing for a moment. "*Huge*. Huge." Kock has studied under and collaborated with more senior scientists who feel differently, but she has become comfortable with the idea of bucking convention. "Given what's happening in the marine environment, if you have information and you just put it in a scientific paper years from now, from my perspective, it's not responsible."

This radicalization among conservation biologists is beginning to redefine scientific research. Not only are researchers such as Chapman, Hammerschlag, and Kock pursuing studies aimed at producing

a specific policy outcome—an end to shark fishing—they are actively working to shift popular sentiment, through either the media or public protest. As federal dollars for nonmedical scientific research have shrunk, some nonprofits with a conservation agenda have stepped in to fund this sort of work. The Pew Environment Group, headquartered in Washington, D.C., not only pays for academics to research the overfishing of sharks but also publishes attractive, easy-to-read brochures summarizing the scientists' findings and pitches these results to reporters in order to generate favorable press coverage. While these groups are invested in promoting scientific inquiry, they view it as a means to achieve a policy end. And they can find several willing partners within academia, because these researchers have seen firsthand what's happened to their case studies. In the same way that many climate scientists have decided they have no choice but to push for limits on greenhouse gases in order to avert drastic global warming, shark researchers argue they cannot afford to remain silent while shark populations decline.

Dalhousie University's Boris Worm, a German who has helped drive international media coverage of ocean issues and befriended journalists across the globe, has published a number of studies that suggest sharks and other top ocean predators have declined much faster than others have thought. The evidence has been out there, he argues, but scientists were not looking for it: they were paying attention to whales, sea turtles, and other compelling marine animals.

"Sharks have been largely under the radar, even ten years ago. Our attention was more on things that were commercially valuable, or things that were pretty and cute," he says. "I have more concern about sharks than anything else, because we've been aware of these other things for a long time. With sharks, we're only now getting on top of the problem, let alone thinking of the solutions."

While academic scientific research can take years or even decades to complete, shark researchers are now rushing to gauge the extent of these animals' decline. They are scrambling to track how many sharks, and which kinds, humans extract from the sea each year. Without providing a precise body count, they stand little chance of arresting sharks' march toward extinction.

FW: shark story

Show Details

This same story was in both the Boston Globe and the CC Times on Sunday. Nahant is just south of Boston. Note the comment on the hook injury. FYI

Dead 9-foot-long blue shark washes ashore in Mass.

September 24, 2011

<http://cache.boston.com/universal/site_graphics/etaf/pointer_top.gif>

NAHANT, Mass.-Officials say a dead 9-foot-long blue shark has washed ashore in Massachusetts during high tide.

New England Aquarium spokesman Tony LaCasse says the adult male shark was spotted Saturday morning by beachgoers. He says workers with the state Department of Conservation & Recreation used a bucket loader to remove the 300-pound carcass from the beach.

LaCasse says the shark had a small cut on its lower jaw where it might have been hooked. A biologist says many sharks can die after being hooked because of shock from a long fight.

He says the shark probably died miles from the coast and was swept ashore.

The aquarium says the blue shark is the most common large shark off New England. It isn't considered an endangered or threatened species. <http://cache.boston.com/bonzai-fba/File-Based Image Resource/dingbat_story_end_icon.gif>

Reply to Sharon Young

Send



THE
**SHARK-FREE MARINA
INITIATIVE**

September 6, 2011

Dear Mr. Hugh Upton

I am writing you today to ask for your support in an initiative aimed at conserving the world's shark populations.

The Florida 'Shark Free Marina Initiative' is a voluntary program for marinas to join that discourages an angler from bringing a dead shark back to their docks.

Not only will this prevent the needless killing of these ecologically and economically vital fish, but your marina will also receive recognition around the world as a partner in this growing initiative.

Sharks are currently being killed at an unsustainable rate. It is estimated that 70 million sharks are killed annually, primarily for their fins to be sold in the Asian market. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, roughly 200,000 of these sharks are killed by recreational anglers in the United States. Not an insignificant number by any means.

You can help reduce this number by joining the 'Shark Free Marina Initiative' and preventing dead sharks from being brought back to your docks.

Organized by the Pegasus Foundation, The Humane Society of the United States and my own Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, the 'Shark Free Marina Initiative' aims to reduce shark mortality worldwide by discouraging the landing of sharks, encouraging catch-and-release shark fishing and rewarding forward-thinking marinas that participate in this program.

There are two different levels of commitment that your marina may participate in. Both are free, without cost to you or your marina.

You can become a 'Shark Free Marina', that completely prohibits the landing of all sharks on your docks or you can become a 'Shark Friendly Marina', a facility that

(over, please)



2100 L Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20036

We have Two Classifications

We'd like to register every marina as Shark-Free, however, some State laws or private companies have policies that do not allow for a complete ban on killing sharks. In these cases we offer the Shark-Friendly classification which discourages the intentional killing of sharks.

This allows for educational materials and participation in a conservation program by facilities which would otherwise not have access to our program.

What's the Difference Between Classifications?



A **Shark-Free Marina** does not allow sharks to be killed and landed from their facility.

This is a ZERO TAKE policy.



A **Shark Friendly Marina or Business** discourages killing or landing sharks.

They do not serve shark products or promote activities that intentionally harm sharks.

Registration Requirements

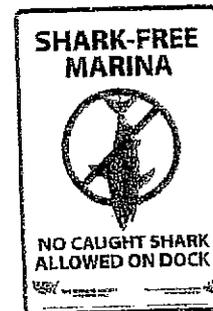
- ✓ You are the owner or manager of a marina with access to an ocean outlet
- ✓ You are prepared to mount our sign in a visible place within the facility
- ✓ You will monitor your clients fishing activities and will **ban or discourage killing sharks** from your facility
- ✓ Your restaurant or business does not serve or carry shark products

Tournament and product policy

- ✓ A member marina may only hold shark fishing tournaments if they are **catch and release**
- ✓ A member marina **does not allow shark carcasses** to be displayed for any purpose
- ✓ A member business **does not serve or carry shark products**

Marinas and businesses who support this initiative will receive

- ✓ 2 marine grade aluminum dock signs (businesses receive window treatments)
- ✓ Advertising space on this website and the right to use our logo
- ✓ Access to educational literature

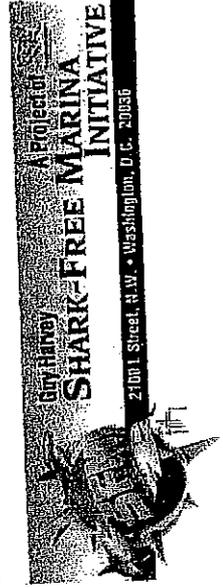


Marinas in the USA & Caribbean will receive 2 dock signs



**We look forward to welcoming you to
The Florida Shark-Free Marina Initiative.**

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BY THE
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Project
Buy Harry
**SHARK-FREE MARINA
INITIATIVE**

2100 I Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20036

Mr. Hugh Upton
Port of Call Yacht Club LLC
PO Box 881
Astor, FL 32102-0881



POSTAGE AND FEES PAID

RECENT SLAUGHTER DURING ORK BLUFFS MONSTER SHARK TOURNAMENT



WHY DO WE DO THIS ?