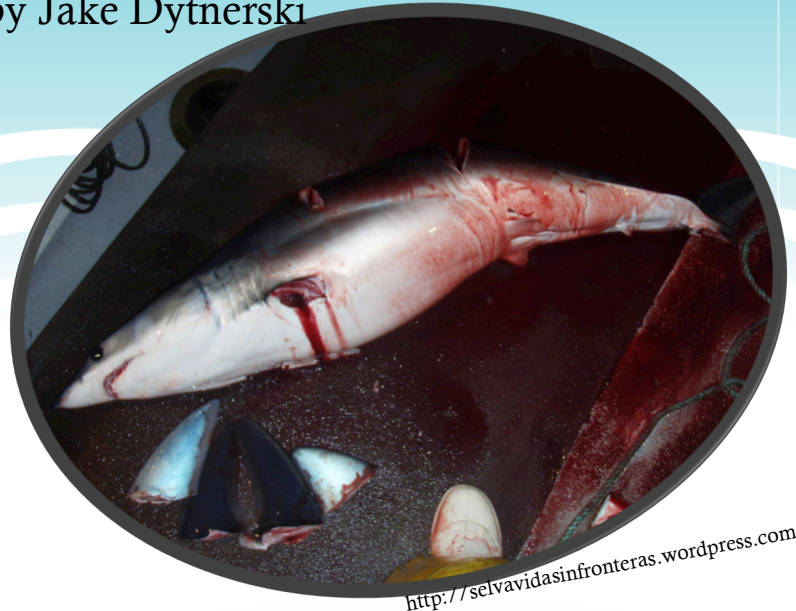


# Shark Finning in Thailand: You can't afford NOT to stop!

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<http://selvavidasinfronteras.wordpress.com/>

## Read Me First

Tourism in Thailand is worth billions (USD) and a large portion of that is related to marine activities. Sharks are a large draw for visitors and are worth 1000 more alive than dead. Loss of sharks was directly related to huge economic losses in a case study. Thailand cannot afford to continue shark finning and must ban shark finning immediately.

## This is how a shark should look



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## Introduction to Thai marine tourism

Tourism is big business in Thailand, it contributes 7% to the GDP directly and 17% indirectly. In 2013 there were 26.5 million tourists that spent \$16 billion USD<sup>1</sup>. About 70% of all tourism income is related to coastal marine activities<sup>2</sup>, which is about an \$11.2 billion USD injection into the Thai economy. Much of the marine tourism is directly related to SCUBA diving. On Koh Tao, a hugely popular tourist destination, 60% of the visitors participated in SCUBA diving or snorkeling activities<sup>2</sup> and in 2008, \$55 million USD was spent in the Similan islands of diving alone<sup>3</sup>. Sharks are one of the main draws for divers to Thailand and have been estimated to be worth 100 to greater than 1000 times more alive than dead<sup>4</sup>. With more than 100 million sharks being killed each year<sup>5</sup> around the world and a large portion of that in Thai waters<sup>6</sup>, Thailand needs to ban shark finning to not only protect the health of its marine ecosystems, but to protect its economy.



<http://wwf.panda.org/>



<http://www.oceanwideimages.com/>

## Addressing the issue and findings

Sharks are being fished at an alarming rate, with estimates above 100 million sharks per year, and Thailand being a major contributor to this industry. As these sharks disappear, they can threaten the stability of economies that depend on live sharks. An example of this is in the Maldives, when about 20 grey reef sharks were fished and diving activities were subsequently suspended. The fishers earned \$1,000 USD and the local economy suffered a loss of \$500 000 USD per year<sup>4</sup>. A study in Moorea has cited an individual shark's worth at \$316, 699 USD per year and \$2.64 million USD over its entire lifespan<sup>4</sup>. An Australian study found whale sharks to carry an estimated worth of \$2 million USD over their lifespan<sup>7</sup>. The shark finning industry is only worth about \$450 million to \$550 million USD, worldwide<sup>4</sup>. Sharks are worth money, lots of money, but far more so when they are alive. The risk of losing sharks to communities that depend on them for tourism are far greater, from an economic standpoint, that to the fishers that kill the sharks for their fins.

### References

<sup>1</sup>Thailand Tourism Authority

<http://www.tourism.go.th/home/listcontent/11/221/276>

<sup>2</sup>Hein, M.Y., Lamb, J.B., Scott, C. and Willis, B.L. 2014. Assessing baseline levels of coral health in a newly established marine protected area in a global scuba diving hotspot. *Marine Environmental Research* 103: 56-65.

<sup>3</sup>Asafu-Adjaye, J. and Tapsuwan Sorada. 2008. Estimating the Economic Benefit of SCUBA Diving in the Similan Islands, Thailand. *Coastal Management* 36:431-442.

<sup>4</sup>Clua, E., Buray, N., Legendre, P., Mourier, J. and Planes, S. 2011. Business partner or simple catch? The economic value of the sicklefin lemon shark in French Polynesia. *Marine and Freshwater Research* 62:764-770.

<sup>5</sup>Topelko, K.N. and Dearden, P. 2009 The shark watching industry and its potential contribution to shark conservation. *Journal of Ecotourism* 4:(2) 108-128.

<sup>6</sup>Simon Fraser University. "One quarter of the world's cartilaginous fish, namely sharks and rays, face imminent extinction." *ScienceDaily*. ScienceDaily, 22 January 2014. <[www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/01/140122202304.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/01/140122202304.htm)>.

<sup>7</sup>Norman, B. and Catlin, J. 2007. Economic importance of conserving whale sharks. Report for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Australia.

## What to take home

Sharks earn far more money for communities when they are left alive in the ocean than they do dead on a boat. They certainly earn more alive than they do sinking to the bottom of the sea, bleeding and drowning, with no fins with which to swim. If shark fins earn \$550 million USD per year for 100 million dead sharks, that is one time only value about \$5.5 USD per shark. Every live shark is worth \$317, 000 USD, every year it lives. It would only take about 2000 live sharks to match the money earned from 100 million deaths. If none were killed, well, imagine the economic potential! Thailand's \$16 billion USD tourism industry, of which \$11.2 billion is based on marine activities, cannot afford to keep losing sharks. Ban shark finning now.

### Fast Facts:

-100 million sharks are killed each year, worth \$550 million USD

-Thai marine based tourism is worth \$11.2 billion USD

-Sharks are worth \$317,000 USD per year, when alive