

Fact Sheet & Backgrounder

- How many sharks are killed for shark fin soup?
 - 38 million sharks (=median) are killed each year for their fins*. That's over one shark finned and killed per person in Canada each year. *This is a conservative number considering the fact that many catches go unreported.
 - IUCN has identified that half of open ocean sharks are threatened with an elevated risk of extinction.
 - Long life spans (8–65 years), late maturity (average=11, range=2–21 years), long gestation periods (typically 9–18 months) and low reproductive rates (2-3 pups) mean that it is difficult for depleted shark populations to recover.
- What is shark fin soup?
 - Shark fin soup is served at traditional Chinese banquets and restaurants but most popularly served for wedding banquets.
 - An average wedding banquet of 300 guests serving shark fin soup can kill up to 30 sharks.
- Why do people drink shark fin soup?
 - Shark fin soup is a delicacy in Chinese culture that is a symbol of respect and status. It is often served at important dinners to show 'face.' Traditionally, the groom's side of the family pays for the banquet. In the past, it was believed that if shark fin soup wasn't served, the bride was marrying into a poor family.
 - Like most cultures, changing the traditions around food can be difficult – imagine telling your Western friend that they can no longer have turkey for Thanksgiving dinner. However, Shark Truth believes that we can empower consumers to make change if we collaborate with them and use an informed approach.
- Do only Chinese people drink shark fin soup?
 - In general, it's mostly Chinese people that drink shark fin soup and it is especially popular in the Cantonese culture. The custom has spread to the rest of China as well as Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia.
 - However, a growing number of Chinese people do not drink shark fin soup and have taken a stand against shark finning.
 - A lot of modern couples already know about the issue and choose not to serve shark fin soup at their wedding banquet.
 - Celebrities like basketball superstar Yao Ming, China's Olympian gold medalist Guo Jing Jing, Olympian Li Ning and the pop star Liu Huan have publicly spoken out against shark fin soup.
- Don't they use sharks for other things besides fins?
 - Different regions of the world consume various parts of shark for their meat, liver oil, cartilage and teeth but those uses are marginal. The leading cause of the demise of shark populations is driven by the demand for their fins, specifically for shark fin soup. Another big threat to sharks when they are caught as bycatch.
- How much does shark fin soup cost?
 - It can range from \$10 to \$2,000+ per bowl. It depends on (1) the size of the shark fin that is served and (2) the intactness of the fin.
 - Approximately from \$200 - \$1000 USD per kg. The final value depends on the size of the fin. The bigger the fin, the more it costs.

Media Contact: Claudia Li | Founder & Co-Chair | E: claudia@sharktruth.com | T: 604.723.0134