

Kong and Unraveled the Mystery of Where the Fins Belong

By Paw Mozter Jul 21, 2022 12:22 AM EDT



According to new research, sharks that live closer to our coastlines may be of greatest conservation concern as more than 70% of species that wind up in the worldwide shark fin trade are at risk of extinction.

Sharks At Risk for Extinction



(Photo : BERTHA WANG/AFP via Getty Images)

9,820 fin trimmings were collected by a group of international scientists from the U.S. and China from marketplaces in Hong Kong, one of the world's major centers for the sale of shark fins.

They were able to determine which fin belonged to which species through some DNA sleuthing.

Together with their relatives, the rays and chimeras, they discovered a total of 86 different species of sharks, as per [ScienceDaily](#), and 61 of them, or more than two-thirds, face extinction.

The recent publication of the study in Conservation Letters.

Sharks and their relatives were evaluated by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species in 2021, and it was discovered that around one-third of all species were under threat.

The findings of this recent study showed that species involved in this trade are substantially more likely to fall under the threat category.

The collaborative team has been tracking and monitoring the international shark fin trade for almost ten years under the direction of Dr. Demian Chapman, adjunct professor at FIU and director of the Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium's Sharks & Rays Conservation Research Program.

About 10,000 tiny pieces from processed imported fins sold in marketplaces in South China and Hong Kong have undergone DNA testing thus far.

Collaboration on the project has been established with Kadoorie Farm & Botanic Garden and BLOOM Association Hong Kong.

The team wants to know more about what species are traded and how widespread they are. They will be able to advise decision-makers on the effectiveness of different management methods by monitoring this over time.

According to the study, open-ocean, or pelagic sharks like blue and silky sharks are the most frequent species to wind up in the shark fin trade.

Coastal regions are home to the majority of the trade's species, including the blacktip, dusky, spinner, and sandbar sharks, as well as several of the most prevalent ones.

Without control, many coastal species risk extinction, the researchers warned.