



Fact Sheet

Shark Finning

- ! The global shark fin trade is estimated to be between 3,000 to 4,000 metric tons (mt) of fins per year, or 6.6 to 8.8 million pounds. Hawaii's domestic longline fleet produces between 30B40 mt (66,000B88,000 lbs) of shark fins per year or about 1 percent of the total global production.
- ! Federal observers on Hawaii longline vessels have documented that 98 percent of sharks that are finned are done so while dead and that most sharks that are killed by severing the spinal column or spiking the brain, methods used to kill other fish brought on board alive.
- ! The Magnuson Act requires Councils to minimize bycatch in federally managed fisheries. If shark finning is stopped in the Hawaii longline fishery, this will actually increase bycatch, since none of the shark is used. However, it is hoped that greater utilization of blue shark can be achieved by 2001, when the U.S. National Plan of Action for Management of Shark Fisheries is to be completed.
- ! The Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service have just completed a study to examine the sociocultural importance of shark fishing in the Western Pacific, evaluate the impact of regulations to constrain shark finning in U.S. domestic fisheries in the region and look at the realities of promoting greater utilization of blue sharks by the Hawaii longline fishery. This study will be presented to the Council at its June meeting where it will decide on what action, if any, is required.

- ! Total shark catch has declined as fishing directed at swordfish has declined. In the early 1990s, the total catch of sharks was at about the same level as now, but very few sharks were retained. Currently, about 60,000 sharks are retained by the Hawaii longline fishery, predominantly for finning.

