

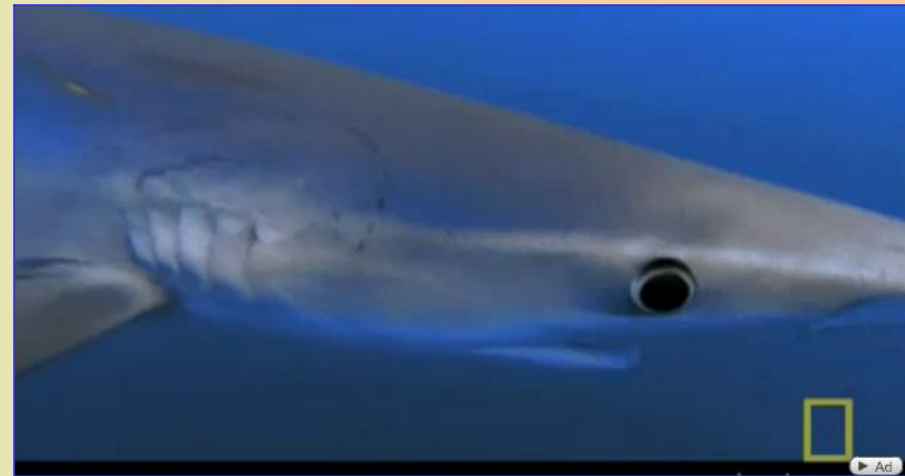
# Shark Alert! Species Struggle (National Geographic)



After 450 million years swimming in the ocean, some shark species are on the verge of extinction - mainly due to overfishing.

99% of white sharks (the main predator in the Gulf of Mexico) are gone.

In the Mediterranean there are 15 large species of sharks at undetectable levels (maybe they exist but are not seen anymore)



# Shark Alert! Species Struggle (National Geographic)



The Great White Shark (protagonist of the "Jaws" film) is at the brink of extinction.

The main culprit (according to conservationists) is overfishing



## Shark Alert! Species Struggle (National Geographic)



The world's nations have come together to set limits on the harvesting of other large food fish, like tuna but there are hardly any rules when it comes to sharks: it is pretty much open season anytime, anywhere .

In America shark tournaments are popular pastimes, with recreational fishermen vying for the largest catch of the day.



## Shark Alert! Species Struggle (National Geographic)



Sharks are also caught commercially for food. IN many countries they become a substitute for sword fish, which is protected and hard to get.

In addition an extract of shark liver oil, known as squalane, is used in beauty products.



## Shark Alert! Species Struggle (National Geographic)



But the most valuable part of the shark is its distinctive fin. They are considered a delicacy in Asia, cooked up and served in soup. As China's economy surges, so does the demand for shark fin soup for a new generation with money to spend.

In addition to that, there is also an increasing demand for shark meat as other traditionally fish species are dwindling and collapsing. There are few, if any, fishing limits on sharks and, therefore, it is easier for fishermen to target sharks and take as many as they want.



## Shark Alert! Species Struggle (National Geographic)



At the commercial fish market in Vigo (Spain) sharks are piled in heaps waiting to be sold at auction. The European Union is one of the largest shark fishing entities of the world and Spain is one of the top exporters of shark fins to Asia.

Fishermen say that sharks have become vital to their economic survival. With sword fish there is a limit that can not be passed whereas with the sharks there is not the case.



## Shark Alert! Species Struggle (National Geographic)



Conservationist want to tackle on the demand on fin on Asia but also want to tighten the supplies here, at the source.

Many countries are already banned the practice known as shark finning, where fins are cut off at sea and the fish thrown back into the ocean to die.

Here in Vigo (Spain) sharks must be landed whole.



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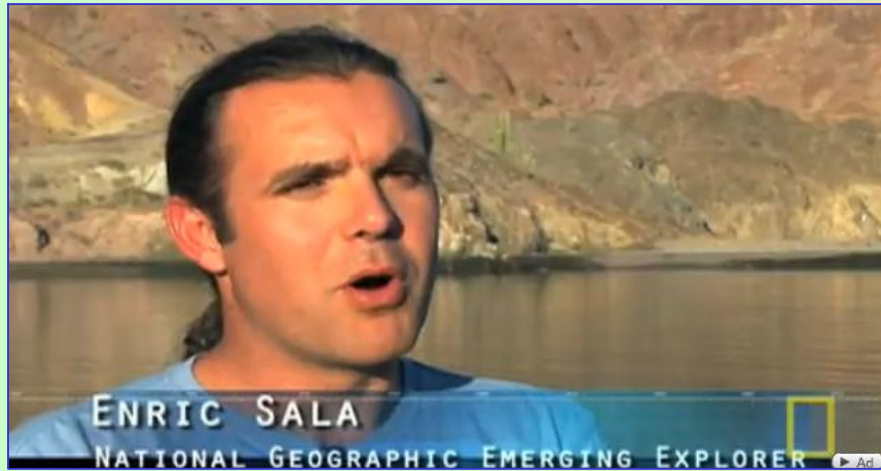
The conservationists say that the finning bans can be easily violated by fishermen .

Sharks are slow to mature and slow to reproduce.

The loss in sharks is having a ripple effect: they are top predators in a delicate balanced marine ecosystem.



## Shark Alert! Species Struggle (National Geographic)



Marine ecosystem is are like a machine composed of thousands of different species that work very efficiently. If one of these parts is missing, the machine is going to malfunction.

The problem with sharks is endemic of a larger problem: we now have the technology to find and catch fish virtually anywhere in the world.

So the shear amout of life that is extracted from the oceans is emptying them worldwide.

