

# SHARK-FREE MARINA INITIATIVE

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**WHAT THEY DO:** The Shark Free Marina Initiative has a singular purpose, to reduce worldwide shark mortality. Currently between 60 and 100 million sharks are slaughtered worldwide each year. This massive cull of apex predators poses a serious threat to the oceans health.

Over the last 5 years the recreational fishery in the United States has harvested an average of ½ a Million sharks per year, removing them from an already struggling breeding population [Source](#). Shark Free Marinas will reduce the mortal take of sharks and encourage responsible use of our ocean.

The Shark Free Marinas Initiative encourages shark conservation at sport fishing and resort marinas by prohibiting the landing of any shark at the participating marina. With this initiative, fisherman will not be allowed to bring caught sharks into the participating marina for any purpose.

Participating marinas will encourage sport shark-fishermen to exercise catch-and-release techniques. The acceptance of catch-and-release fishing techniques represents an incremental step in protecting valuable marine resources as well as providing valuable data for research organizations.

[Registering your Marina](#) as a Shark Free Marina lets your patrons know your business is conscious of the threat that declining shark populations has on the oceans future health.

You will receive dock signs (marine grade aluminum 12"x18"), information packs as well as the right to use the Shark Free Marina logo on your website and advertising. Your business will also be listed in our [Shark Free Marina directory](#).

## Luke Tipple - Director

Luke Tipple is a marine biologist, professional diver and production consultant from Australia. As a marine biologist he works with numerous species of sharks from top order predators such as the Great White and Tiger Shark to more gentle species like the filter-feeding Whale Shark. His accomplishments include writing tourism guidelines for Honduras, based on his field research, and safely guiding hundreds of clients while diving the infamous Guadalupe Island in Mexico, and Tiger Shark Beach in the Bahamas.

Currently he resides in California and is a consultant for Film and Television programming (with [SharkDivers.com](#)) and is the media representative and Director of the Shark Free Marina Initiative.



# Shark-Free Marina in Action:

On the 4th of July, 2009 Harwich Port Boat Yard in Cape Cod Massachusetts resgistered as a Shark-Free marina. This resulted in positive press in local papers such as ***The Cape Codder, Harwich Oracle*** and several online diver blogs.

<http://www.sharkfreemarinas.com/blog/?p=219>

Shark Free Marinas: Reducing worldwide shark mortality.

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SHARK-FREE MARINA INITIATIVE LAUNCHES IN CAPE COD

08 July 2009 | Marinas | admin

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We are very excited to announce that our first Marina in Cape Cod has been registered! The Harwich Port Boat Yard has a rich maritime history and SFMI is glad to have their support. A special thanks must go to Kate Metzler who took it upon herself to speak on behalf of SFMI, encouraging the marina to register, she even donated the signs that are now being sent to Cape Cod!



Thanks a lot Kate  
- Luke Tipple, Director of SFMI

**A little about the Marina:**  
Harwich Port Boat Yard is at beautiful Wychmere Harbor on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. This man-made harbor was once a horse race track, then cars were raced around once the advent of automobiles came about. Now, dredged (by hand in 1887) and channeled to accommodate boats to 65 feet, it provides access to Nantucket Sound and the islands of Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and Monomoy. Harwich Port Boat Yard began in 1932 as the Lee Ship building Company and then sold to Watt Small who began Harwich Port Boat Works. In 1977, Arthur Cote purchased the property and ran it until November of 2004, when John Our bought the business, changed the name, and has since worked hard to place his mark in Harwich maritime history. Our facilities improvements include a new bulkhead, a new boat ramp that can accommodate boats up to 45 ft., a new fuel system with capacities of 8,000 gallons of diesel and 4,000 gallons of gas. We have purchased a newer fork lift with negative lift capacity for smaller haul outs and some drysailing. We have 19 slips and seasonal moorings as well as transient slips and moorings when available. In the early spring of 2007 we installed a security camera system so our customers know their investment is being protected.

Please take the time to visit their site and drop in if you're in the area  
[www.harwichportboatyard.com](http://www.harwichportboatyard.com)

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Image of article from the *Harwich Oracle*, July 27th 2009.

This article also ran the previous week in *The Cape Codder*.

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### Shielding sharks: Advocate helps establish state's first Shark Free Marina in Harwich Port

By Rich Eldred  
Mon Jul 27, 2009, 08:32 AM EDT

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HARWICH PORT - Nevermore shall sharks darken the docks at the Harwich Port Boat Yard.

It is now the first Shark Free Marina in Massachusetts. Soon there will be signs and other paraphernalia proclaiming the fact, all courtesy of the Shark Free Marina Initiative.

This doesn't mean sharks themselves couldn't swim around the boats - they just can't arrive via hook.

"Sharks are not really a big thing here on the Cape," noted boatyard owner John Our. "But we all know there is a growing problem, especially with shark finning; catching the sharks and cutting the fins off. So when (Kate Metzler) came to me, it was easy for us."

Metzler is a sometime Harwich resident who has a lifelong fascination with sharks.

"I love fishing for marlin or tuna," she explained. "But things are not the way they used to be. We need to correct what's going on if we can."

Marlins and sharks can be caught on a catch and release basis.

"Shark fishing is not a bad thing if it's catch and release," Our noted. "But cutting the fins off and sending them back is morally wrong. This just shows that we care."

Even the Martha's Vineyard shark tournament is doing more measurements by photography and then releasing the sharks, Our noted.

"We can change our fishing philosophy," Metzler said.

So she set about doing just that.

"I've been passionate about sharks since I was young. I was wondering how I can make that my lifelong occupation, waiting for a job like that to come to me, and I thought why not take it upon myself and go before other people. It opened my mind that I don't need a job, title or organization. You can benefit from all those groups that are out there and on the right path," Metzler reflected.

Metzler is a dedicated shark advocate.

"I started out a lot different from my sisters; they all liked whales and dolphins. I liked sharks," she recalled. "As I got older I learned how important they are and I came to have a great appreciation for them as marine animals. I feel we're killing them

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Shark-Free Marina is received well by editor Doug Olander of *Sport Fishing: The Magazine of Saltwater Fishing*.

### EDITORIAL

## Dead Sharks Encourage No-Fishing Zones

By Doug Olander



**G**ROUP PUSHES MARINAS TO GO "SHARK-FREE" (CBS4 News, Miami, May 22, 2009)

That news item caught my attention when I saw it online. It's no secret that many species of large sharks are in varying degrees of trouble worldwide. The primary culprit is the by-now infamous practice of finning — hacking off the fins of sharks (often while they're still alive) and tossing the body

back to sink and decompose on the ocean floor.

The practice has been widely banned but (a) not before many shark stocks were severely impacted; (b) it's still legal in many areas; and (c) it's still widely practiced (in largely unpatrolled waters) where it's not legal.

The motivation for the barbaric and wasteful practice is an old one: greed. Shark fins bring relatively big bucks on the Asian market: think shark-fin soup. A few pounds of fins are worth more than a few hundred pounds of shark meat — and even a small boat can bring in a lot of fins, representing tons of dead sharks.

Recent estimates have put that tonnage of sharks killed each year for their fins as high as 100 million; however, a recent study suggests a figure of about 38 million tons. Either way, it bodes ill for these ecologically vital apex predators.

In this context, it's interesting to see the formation of the nonprofit group Shark-Free Marinas ([www.sharkfree.com](http://www.sharkfree.com)), intent on "reducing worldwide shark mortality" by persuading marinas to sign on with a pledge to prohibit the landing of any shark.

Of course, the recreational fishery — even at the half-million sharks killed per year by one estimate — represents but a fraction of the worldwide shark-finning massacre. Some might argue that for this very reason, it's pointless to bother even trying to

dissuade anglers from bringing back large sharks to hang up on the scales for a weight and photo or to score points in a shark tournament.

Miami's famous and (more often) infamous skipper, Mark the Shark, might be one who'd make that argument. Well known for encouraging his clients to kill just about any large shark they hook, the ironically self-named skipper claims on his website that thanks to his unequalled expertise on capturing sharks, his dead sharks have "been a great benefit [sic] to science."

Those trying to convince marinas worldwide to forbid off-loading large dead sharks would say otherwise. Their efforts have a long way to go, but several marinas — in the United States, Bahamas and Fiji — had signed on as of this writing.

Recently, other actions suggest an increasing awareness among the mainstream recreational-fishing community that populations of large, slow-growing sharks are in a tenuous position (with the National Marine Fisheries Service officially considering most species overfished in the Atlantic) and need help. And, of course, in addition to doing what they feel is the right thing, many believe it's the smart thing.

While slaughtering and hanging up dead sharks so a client can get a photo and tourists can gawk may work for Mark the Shark, a broader view is that



hanging up big, dead sharks fosters a public perception of recreational fishing as a sport of greed and carnage and plays right into the hands of concerned, hard-core green groups trying to close off the ocean to angling.

For this reason, it was gratifying to learn recently that the International Game Fish Association is considering a proposal — submitted by IGFA board member Guy Harvey — to stop keeping world records for tiger sharks and great hammerheads.

Also, Gray's Taxidermy, one of the largest providers of fish mounts, has finally announced that it would no longer accept sharks or any parts of them for fish mounts, finally joining some other progressive taxidermists who years ago began making only fiberglass-replica mounts. Charter skippers who work with Gray's have lost one excuse to kill sharks.

It seems that the pendulum among sport fishermen continues to swing gradually toward not killing large sharks. But it has a long way to go. Among charter skippers and some private boaters, there remains the sentiment that killing an occasional large shark is insignificant in the scheme of things and that as long as the only fish killed are taken legally, doing so bears no shame. In fact, there are most assuredly those (both among recreational fishermen and the general public) who feel the only good shark is a dead shark.

I admit I'm not one of those sharing that mentality. I applaud shark-free marinas for their efforts. Ditto anglers who carry cameras and, should they wrestle in a huge shark, take home photos of the great fish boat-side — before its successful release. Those who find it profitable to hang up dead sharks may help their income in the short term but, in the long term, can only hurt everyone else who loves the sport of fishing.