

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3078

To direct the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the National Marine Fisheries Service, to study the practice of shark finning in United States waters of the Central and Western Pacific Ocean and the effects that practice is having on shark populations in the Pacific Ocean.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 14, 1999

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the National Marine Fisheries Service, to study the practice of shark finning in United States waters of the Central and Western Pacific Ocean and the effects that practice is having on shark populations in the Pacific Ocean.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 The Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Shark finning is the practice of removing
6 the fins of a shark and disposing of its carcass.

1 (2) Shark finning is wasteful, since fins typi-
2 cally comprise only one to five percent of a shark's
3 bodyweight and 95 to 99 percent of the shark is dis-
4 posed of.

5 (3) The National Marine Fisheries Service has
6 stated repeatedly that shark finning must be
7 stopped, as it is contrary to the fisheries conserva-
8 tion and management policies of the United States
9 under both domestic and international law. To that
10 end, shark finning is already prohibited in the Fed-
11 eral waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mex-
12 ico, and the Caribbean, as well as in the State wa-
13 ters of many coastal States.

14 (4) In the Central and Western Pacific Oceans,
15 the number of sharks killed increased by more than
16 2000 percent between 1991 and 1998. Of the more
17 than 60,000 sharks killed in such waters in 1998,
18 more than 98 percent were killed solely for their
19 fins.

20 (5) The unique biological characteristics of
21 sharks, including their slow rate of growth, their late
22 sexual maturity, and the small number of offspring
23 born per shark each year, make shark species par-
24 ticularly vulnerable to over-fishing.

1 (6) The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Man-
2 agement Council and the National Marine Fisheries
3 Service have completed a study of the socio-cultural
4 importance of shark finning in the Western Pacific
5 Ocean.

6 (7) Shark finning is of some economic impor-
7 tance to the United States fishing industry in the
8 Central and Western Pacific Ocean.

9 (8) There is insufficient scientific data to deter-
10 mine if the current level of shark finning will result
11 in a sustainable fishery.

12 **SEC. 3. STUDY OF SHARK FINNING IN THE CENTRAL AND**
13 **WESTERN PACIFIC OCEAN.**

14 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Commerce, acting
15 through the National Marine Fisheries Service, shall study
16 the practice of shark finning in United States waters of
17 the Central and Western Pacific Ocean and the effects
18 that practice is having on shark populations in the Pacific
19 Ocean. The study shall include data collection and analysis
20 regarding the following:

21 (1) The types and number of sharks in United
22 States waters of the Central and Western Pacific
23 Ocean, and whether these numbers are relatively
24 stable or changing significantly.

1 (2) The types and number of sharks killed per
2 year in such waters.

3 (3) Any trends in current shark finning activity
4 in those waters.

5 (4) For each species of shark in such waters,
6 the estimated level of shark kills that would produce
7 the maximum sustainable yield.

8 (5) How to best manage shark fisheries in such
9 waters.

10 (b) REPORT.—The Secretary shall report to the Con-
11 gress the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of
12 the study under subsection (a) by not later than October
13 1, 2000.

○