

# Overfishing of the ocean essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Overfishing is defined simply as the process of various fishing activities reducing fish populations in oceans, lakes, or any body of water. There are three major types of overfishing; ecosystem overfishing, recruit overfishing, and growth overfishing. Ecosystem overfishing maybe the type of overfishing that is the most popular type which also means the biggest problem. In ecosystem overfishing the larger predatory fishes are fished out of the ocean when then it turn leaves the smaller type of fish to grow in abundance and disturbs the balance of the ecosystem.

Recruit overfishing is when the adult population is decreased in number which means there are no adults to produce offspring. Finally there is growth overfishing, which is the type of overfishing in which fishes are caught smaller in size then they should be, which affects the species type of fish greatly. If overfishing isn't put to an end it not only brings down resources for the human population, but it also disrupts oceans ecosystems. Overfishing has been a major problem for the Grand Banks of North America, The East China Sea of Asia, and the North Sea of Europe. In these three parts it has been crucial to stop overfishing. Recently the overfishing of sharks has lead to the disruption of marine ecosystems. The reason the shark population is so important to ecosystem is because they balance out most of it.

## PROBLEM

The overfishing of sharks has placed nine different species of sharks on the endangered list in 2008. In total over 30 species of sharks have been put on the endangered list, an the reason why the shark population is in danger is because sharks take a long time to mature, which in turn means there are no

adults to produce offspring and help the shark population. Baum (2008) of the Scripps institution of Oceanography in California stated that “ Sharks are definitely at the top of the list for marine fishes that could go extinct in our lifetimes”. Also, according to Baum, overfishing has caused a 99% decline in the shark population along the US east coast, which is one of the best administrated coast (“ Shark Species”). Because of the number of predatory sharks such as Great White, Bull, mako, Dusky, and Hammerhead depleting, it has giving the opportunity of the sharks prey population to grow, which disturbs the marines ecosystem. The biggest problem is the rising number of the cownose ray which has grown 8 percent a year and they have been eating large number of bay scallops, soft and hard shell clams, oysters and other shellfish, which not only disturbs an ecosystem but it also hurts the human population to find these types of shellfish.

One of the main reasons on why sharks are being targeted is because of shark finning, which is an awful fishing practice in which a shark is caught only for its fins and then thrown back into the ocean to slowly. The sharks fin is in high demand in China and was considered a delicacy only for the rich, but since Chinas middle class has grown in the past 25 years the market for shark fins has grown as well. Over 73 million sharks are killed worldwide each year, just for the fins. Some species of sharks like the Sandbar and Porbeagle are allowed to be fished and harvested, but these types of species are still being over harvested and have a high possibility of being put on the endangered list. According to Balsiger (2008) “ Our recent stock assessments show we need to take strong conservation measures to stop overfishing on sandbar and other sharks to allow these species to rebuild”

(US Approves). Although these sharks are being fished out of the ocean legally, the major problem of shark finning arises when the Great White shark is being caught for the market. Great Whites are considered to be the world's most protected type of shark species they are declining in number especially in the Atlantic Ocean, and catches off of Florida coast have been scarce. The Great White sharks do have laws protecting them in the US and Australia, but the problem is that they have very little protection in Asian countries.

## SOLUTION

There are different approaches that have been taking to help the shark population from becoming endangered. According to NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) in 2008 a law has been passed that significantly reduces a certain breed of sharks fishing quota, which is where the government has stepped in and put a limit on a species of fish that can't be fished anymore. In 2007 former President George W. Bush signed legislation on preventing overfishing in US waters. Under the new law commercial fisheries are required to set a conservation plan in a two year period starting in 2010. It also sets a 10 year permit system that would allow limited access in some waters that have been considered to be overfished, which is a great way to let certain species grow.

Another action that has been taken to stop overfishing is a program that was started in the 1970's that started in Australia, New Zealand, and Iceland is a process called catch shares or Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs). The way catch shares work is that it is a type of system that gives a secure

share of fish to an individual fisherman, community, or fishery association. That means that each year fisherman know how much fish they are allowed to take from the ocean and from the fishery's total allowable catch. Usually the fisheries scientist is the one who decides the optimal annual amount of fish that can be caught in a certain area. Like the stock market fishermen are allowed to buy and sell shares in order to help them maximize their profit on their catches. The reason they can do that is because it helps drive the fishery to a resourceful level and helps the fisherman to get paid better at the market.

A way to prevent shark finning is that the NOAA has passed as well is that all sharks when offloaded at the dock have to have all their fins naturally attached. This regulation will assist with identification of shark species and improve species-specific data collection that would help scientist to keep an eye on the species. The reason this would help prevent shark finning is because on a humane level this would be the best way of harvesting a shark, instead of throwing the shark into the ocean and letting it slowly die. The same law regulates on the different sizes in which a shark has to be in order to be fished for.

In Miami, Florida different approaches have been taking in order to stop shark finning. There have been different laws that have over a 60, 000 dollar fine and a 100 day permit sanction, if a boat is caught for shark finning. Another way that has helped preventing shark finning is to completely boycott shark fin soup, which some restaurants in Miami, Florida have been doing. According to the Miami Herald, Philippe an upscale Chinese restaurant has pulled shark fin soup off their menu and have inspired other

restaurants to do the same. Mako sharks are usually the fin used most in Miami restaurants, and are part of the endangered list so that is why some restaurants are taking action.

## CONCLUSION

If action isn't taking more drastically on preventing the overfishing of sharks, and overfishing in general, the ocean may never be seen. Not only would it be cheating the future on not letting humanity see the wonderful creatures that are in the ocean, it is also leaving the ecosystem a mess. There are so many different species of shark in the ocean that have been getting closer to disappearing from the face of the earth, and each of them have a different way on making the ecosystem work. The food chain is one of the most important things in any animal kingdom, and in the ocean the food chain is getting altered. Not only would sharks disappear from the ocean but because of that other types of species would disappear as well, this is why overfishing needs to be put to a limit, and people need to realize the problems that have been rising.

## QUESTIONS/SUGGESTIONS:

The teacher's assignment was to research on a subject that affects not only the local area, but the world.

A few problems maybe comma splices, and also the bibliography maybe wrong for some professors.

Reference Page

Study: overfishing large sharks impacts entire marine ecosystem, shrinks shellfish population (2007). Overfishing large sharks impacts entire marine ecosystem, shrinks shellfish population.

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