

A person wearing a grey t-shirt with a shark graphic and a brown apron is holding a large white bowl filled with a brown, bubbling liquid, likely shark soup. The person is using a metal spoon to stir the soup. In the background, there are large metal pots and a red fire. The text "THAILAND'S DEMAND FOR SHARKS PERSISTS" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# THAILAND'S DEMAND FOR SHARKS PERSISTS

ช่วยสัตว์ป่า  
**WILDAID**

# ABOUT WILDAID

WildAid inspires change and empowers the world to protect wildlife and vital habitats from critical threats including illegal wildlife trafficking, climate change, and illegal fishing. WildAid delivers impact at scale in two distinct ways: 1) **creating** innovative communications campaigns that inspire millions of people in China, South East Asia, Africa, and the U.S. to protect endangered wildlife and reduce climate impacts, and 2) **strengthening** effective ocean enforcement of priority marine areas including marine protected areas, coastal fisheries, coral reefs, and blue carbon habitats with government, NGO, and community partners in 16 countries around the globe.

[www.wildaid.org](http://www.wildaid.org)

Contact Information

## WILDAID

220 Montgomery Street, Suite 1200  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Tel: +1 (415) 834-3174

Christina Vallianos  
[vallianos@wildaid.org](mailto:vallianos@wildaid.org)

Nuthatai Chotechuang  
[nuthatai@wildaid.org](mailto:nuthatai@wildaid.org)

CONSUMER SURVEY CONDUCTED BY  
Rapid Asia Co., Ltd.

RESTAURANT OWNERS SURVEY CONDUCTED BY  
P.I.Y.A Research Co.,Ltd.

PHOTOGRAPHERS  
Jeerasak Kaysee  
Sirachai Arunrugstichai  
Sippavit Vanasusri

COVER PHOTO  
Jeerasak Kaysee

DESIGNER  
Kasidit Khamsee

## AUTHORS

Christina Vallianos  
Alyssa Richards  
Nuthatai Chotechuang  
Sippavit Vanasusri  
Patranan Suphanganan  
John Baker

COVER PHOTO CAPTION  
A waitress is seen serving shark fin soup in a clay pot at a roadside seafood restaurant in Bangkok's Chinatown. A bowl of shark fin soup in downtown Bangkok ranges from 300 Baht (8 USD) to as high as 12,000 Baht (329 USD) for large-size fin.

# CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
IMPACTS OF THE FIN TRADE	8
AN EXAMINATION OF SHARK FIN & MEAT CONSUMPTION IN THAILAND	14
A SNAPSHOT OF RESTAURANT OWNERS' ATTITUDES	22
WILDAID'S CAMPAIGN IMPACT	24
CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	30
REFERENCES	32

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A 2017 WildAid survey report,<sup>1</sup> independently conducted by Rapid Asia, raised the alarm about a burgeoning shark fin market in Thailand. The survey found that consumption of shark fin was widespread with 57% of urban Thais having consumed the product and 61% stating they planned to consume shark fin in the future. Given the potential for the country to become an even more significant market for the trade, WildAid launched a series of behavior change interventions designed to foster an appreciation and respect for sharks and the role they play in our oceans and to turn people off from shark fin consumption. The campaigns have spanned television, billboard, and social media, enlisting prominent celebrities to use their voices for sharks, and WildAid has partnered closely with government agencies, the tourism and hospitality sectors, and research institutes to facilitate capacity building training workshops, encourage stronger legislation, as well as conduct research into the species composition of the trade.

In late 2023, we again employed Rapid Asia to conduct a follow-up survey to assess changes in shark fin consumption and demand. We found that demand for shark fin in Thailand has declined over the past six years. Accounting for Thailand’s urban population growth over the period,<sup>2</sup> it is estimated that the number of shark fin consumers has dropped from around 6.6 million to around 5.3 million. In addition, the frequency of consumption also declined: In 2017, those who consumed more than once per year represented 86% of consumers (around 5.7 million), but in 2023 this group decreased by 43% to around 3.2 million. Together, these changes represent an estimated 34% reduction in the estimated number of times shark fin was consumed, amounting to about 8.17 million fewer times since 2017.

There is evidence to suggest that demand reduction initiatives are likely to have contributed to the reduction in demand. The behavioral change model, KAP Score,<sup>3</sup> was used as part of the survey to examine the overall mindset of consumers in terms of their knowledge, attitude and behavior towards shark fin consumption. The KAP Score model’s lead indicator, the KAP Index, increased from 24 up to 41 points, a significant improvement. That is, consumers have become more aware of the negative consequences of shark fin consumption and are beginning to question the killing of tens of millions of sharks for their fins and meat.

The 2023 survey found that 35% of participants had seen a random selection of three WildAid shark fin campaign PSAs released in the past five years. All three ads were disseminated via pro bono support from media partners, including television stations, out-of-home media companies, and influential social media pages without advertisement spending.

All three ads received an average “ample processing” score of 80%, meaning viewers indicated they learned something new or had spoken to others about the issue. Forty-seven percent of respondents had seen and recalled the campaign hashtag #chalongmaichalarm (“Celebrate with #NoSharkFin”) and 56% of those who encountered the hashtag claimed that they shared it.

Despite evidence of a decline in demand, the latest findings also show that Thailand remains an active market for shark fin consumption. Fifty-six percent of respondents want to try shark fin soup in the future, only a slight decline from the 61% who expressed such interest in the 2017 survey. An increasing number of consumers are now eating shark fin in the comfort of their own homes, acquired via online delivery or takeaway from restaurants - a change perhaps inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In light of the latest research on global shark fishing mortality,<sup>4</sup> which demonstrated rising demand for shark meat and non-shark fin products globally, the 2023 survey also collected data around shark meat consumption in Thailand, a segment not explored in the 2017 research. The survey found shark meat is often consumed with friends and family at restaurants, business functions and while traveling, although a significant number of respondents mentioned consuming shark meat in the comfort of their own home. One in three urban Thais plan to try shark meat in the future out of curiosity, a strong indication that the market is potentially growing.

Restaurants in Bangkok’s Chinatown commonly offer shark fin dishes, as there is a widespread expectation among customers to find the items on the menu. A separate survey of restaurant owners, conducted by P.I.Y.A Research, indicates a lack of compelling reasons for restaurants to discontinue the sale of shark fin dishes. This underscores the need for organizations like WildAid to develop campaigns that empower both consumers and restaurants to break the cycle perpetuating the shark fin industry.



Ongoing interventions, particularly demand reduction strategies, should continue. In keeping with behavior change best practices, campaign consistency and continuity are paramount for effectiveness. Additionally, increasing effectiveness in fisheries management to limit and reduce bycatch of sharks, improve traceability systems and limit the trade, conduct stock assessments, and protect priority habitats for sharks are imperative to the survival of vulnerable shark populations globally and in Thailand.





# IMPACTS OF THE **FIN** TRADE

ช่วยสัตว์ป่า  
**WILDAID**

Dried processed shark fins of various sizes are displayed at a shop for home cooking. The price for a bag of dried processed fins in Bangkok's Chinatown varies depending on the size of the fin, ranging from 3,000 Baht (81 USD) to as high as 30,000 Baht (820 USD) © Sippavit Vanasusri for WildAid

Overfishing and the demand for shark and ray products have driven one-third of all shark and ray species toward extinction globally, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).<sup>5</sup> The latest research estimates global shark mortality increased from 76 million sharks per year in 2012 to more than 80 million per year in 2017, and around 25 million of those are threatened species.<sup>6</sup> Sharks are targeted and killed not only for their fins, but for their meat, liver, cartilage and other body parts. Others die as bycatch on longlines and purse seine nets employed by fishers to catch commercial species like tuna and swordfish.

On their own, finning bans have not curbed overall shark mortality. In many areas where such bans are in place, fishers have begun keeping the whole shark, potentially opening a new market and/or stimulating existing demand for shark meat or liver oil, in addition to fins. With declines in other key fisheries and economic shifts, shark has become a substitute for other fish with significant reported increases in the EU and Brazil, among others. The estimated value of the global trade in shark and ray meat has increased dramatically, according to a recent WWF report. From \$157 million in 2000 to \$379.8 million in 2011, and then exploded to \$2.6 billion in 2019, increasing 5.8 times in just 8 years.<sup>7</sup>

Researchers and conservationists recognize that regulations to protect the whole shark, thus mitigating mortality altogether, are critical. Banning shark fishing, enforcing catch limits, establishing and strengthening priority protected areas, and carrying out behavior change interventions in key markets are all urgently needed measures.



## THAILAND'S ROLE IN THE SHARK FIN TRADE

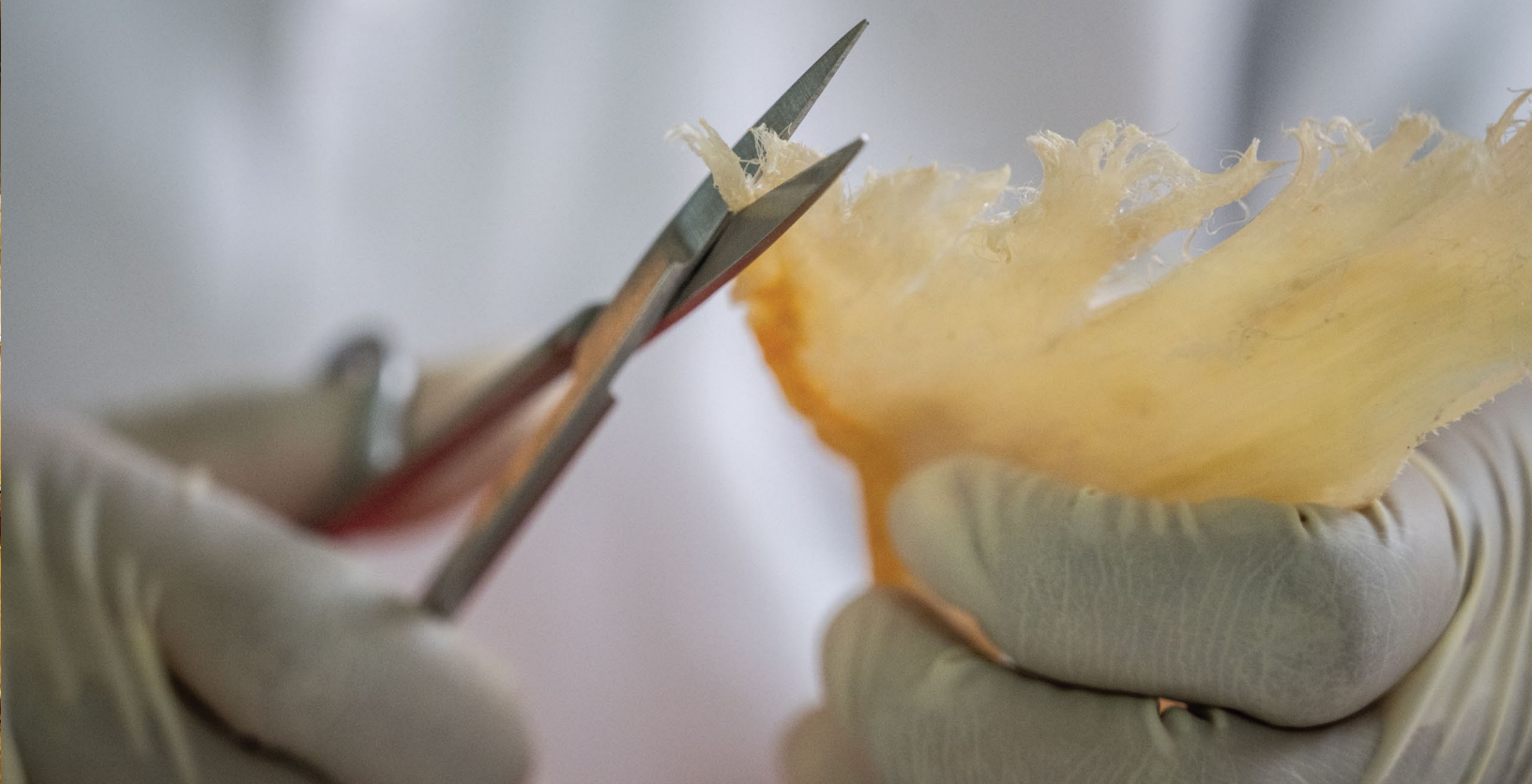
Thailand holds a significant position in the global market for shark fins as one of the major exporters of low-value, processed shark fins, according to the 2015 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) report, State of the global market for shark products.<sup>8</sup>

According to trade data reported to FAO, Thailand exported an average of 5,643 tonnes of fins per year from 2008 to 2013, and has surpassed Hong Kong SAR as the world's largest exporter during that period.<sup>9</sup>

The geographical origin of shark fin supply in the country is hard to trace due to the obscure nature of this lucrative and occasionally illegal trade. But a recent DNA-based species identification study of shark fins traded in Thai markets<sup>10</sup> found 34% of the identifiable fins were from sharks that have not been recorded in or near Thai waters, indicating that fins traded in Thai markets rely heavily on sources from outside the country and may be imported to satisfy local demand or for re-export.

According to the statistics available on Thailand's Customs Department website,<sup>11</sup> Thailand imported at least 336 tonnes of shark fin in 2023 mainly from Indonesia, followed by the United States, Singapore, and China. These are among the top countries that supplied shark fin to Thailand between 2017-2023, amounting to more than 1,580 tonnes. It should be noted that this could be an underestimation, as the revision of commodity coding of each category of shark fin by Thailand's Customs Department has made monitoring of the trade difficult.<sup>12</sup>

Above: Dried processed shark fins of various sizes are displayed at a shop in Bangkok's Chinatown for at-home cooking. © WildAid



## DNA CONFIRMS ENDANGERED SHARKS FOUND IN THAILAND'S FIN TRADE

In 2020, a team of researchers from King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL), in partnership with Thailand's Department of Fisheries (DoF), collected shark fin samples from retail markets, restaurants, warehouses, seaports, and fishing ports in four locations around Thailand. A total of 166 of 206 samples, or 80.58%, were identified. The research found fins from at least 15 unique shark species in Thailand's markets.<sup>13</sup>

Species found include: spottail shark (*Carcharhinus sorrah*) and night shark (*Carcharhinus signatus*) (comprising the majority of species identified), scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*) and great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*) (Critically Endangered and regulated by CITES), as well as dusky shark (*Carcharhinus obscurus*) and blacktip shark (*Carcharhinus limbatus*). A shocking 62% of the fins sampled belonged to shark species that are at risk of extinction, according to the IUCN Red List. Meanwhile, trade in 80% of the species found is now regulated by the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) after the Appendix II-listing of requiem sharks went into effect in late 2023.

The findings demonstrate the need for a traceability system to be established both in Thailand and internationally to increase law enforcement and trade monitoring to comply with the existing CITES listings. Thailand has requested a reservation on the inclusion of requiem sharks (Carcharhinidae) valid for a period of six years or until November 2028 to set up systems for monitoring shark landings and trade.

Above: A researcher clips a tissue sample from a dried processed shark fin for DNA extraction. © Sirachai Arunrugstichai / WildAid

# EMERGING TREND IN PET SNACKS MADE FROM SHARKS

Many countries have passed regulations to eliminate finning which require fishers to land whole sharks with their fins naturally attached. While well-intentioned, this could result in increased shark mortality by incentivizing full use of sharks and creating additional markets for shark meat, cartilage and non-shark fin products.<sup>14</sup> For example, over the past few years, WildAid has observed an emerging trend in Thailand for pet snacks advertised as “made from sharks.” WildAid’s initial online market investigation in January 2024 found as many as 100 online vendors selling these products to supply the market for Thailand’s booming pet industry.

Our desktop research found more than 10 different types of dog and cat treats and dental snacks advertised to be dried shark cartilage, dried shark fin, dried whole sharks, dried shark jerky, dried shark meat, etc. Vendors claim these products contain high protein, calcium, and nutrients needed for dogs and cats.

By mid-2024, we observed that many vendors no longer advertise these products as ‘sharks,’ but instead brand them as fish cartilage or bone. This change in marketing strategy may reflect a shift in the public’s perception of products made from sharks in recent years. Although these snacks might be a by-product from fisheries activity, they create a whole new market and are seen as a setback in the effort to reduce demand and to increase public understanding and awareness on the critical role of sharks to the ocean’s health.



Treats for dogs and cats made from shark cartilage wrapped in chicken are displayed by an exhibitor at the Pet Expo Thailand 2024, one of the country’s biggest fairs for pet products. © Sirachai Arunrugstichai / WildAid



Dental treats for dogs and cats, advertised as made from dried shark cartilage, are claimed by the seller to contain high protein, calcium, and other essential nutrients that dogs and cats need. © Sirachai Arunrugstichai / WildAid




A pet owner shopping for dog treats at the Pet Expo Thailand 2024. This year’s expo attracted over 200,000 attendees, the highest number to date. © Sirachai Arunrugstichai / WildAid

# AN EXAMINATION OF SHARK FIN & MEAT CONSUMPTION IN THAILAND

ช่วยสัตว์ป่า  
**WILD AID**

Clay pots are a symbol for serving soup dishes like shark fin and fish maw, and are commonly used at street food stalls and restaurants in Bangkok's Chinatown. © WildAid



# 34%

**LESS CONSUMPTION**

34% REDUCTION IN OVERALL  
SHARK FIN CONSUMPTION SINCE 2017

In fall 2023, WildAid commissioned Rapid Asia to conduct a survey of 1,007 urban Thais aged 25 and older in the central, northeast, north, and south regions of Thailand to understand and assess any changes since 2017 in behavior and attitudes toward sharks, current levels, drivers and deterrents of domestic shark fin and meat consumption, and such attitudinal/behavioral trends implications on shark populations and ocean health. Using our independently conducted 2017 survey<sup>15</sup> as a baseline, we are able to evaluate the effectiveness of our campaigns in reshaping consumer behavior over the past several years.

The research consisted of an online survey to assess campaign impact and uncover insights for potential future campaigns and six focus group discussions conducted to understand customer motivation and attitudes toward shark consumption. The survey contained similar structure and content to its 2017 predecessor for comparison, but this time included questions about shark meat consumption.

KEY FINDINGS:

SHARK FIN CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

The 2023 survey revealed a decline in the demand for shark fin in Thailand over the past six years. Among the respondents, 21% had consumed shark fin in the past 12 months, a decrease of 28% compared to the 2017 survey (29%). Based on Thailand’s population statistics of the urban 25 years or older segment, it is estimated that the number of shark fin consumers has decreased by 1.3 million or 19% from around 6.6 million to approximately 5.3 million. With the 2.7 million increase in that population segment over the period, this represents a 28% decline in the proportion of urban residents in that segment who consumed shark fin.

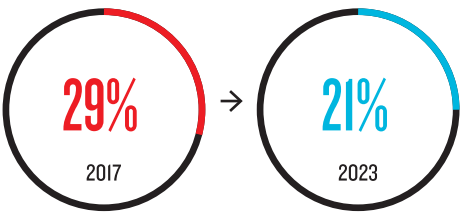
Furthermore, the frequency of consumption has also decreased: findings show a substantial reduction of 47% among “occasional” consumers (or those who said they consumed shark fin 2-5 times per year), along with a 25% decrease among those who consume it 6 times or more per year. Based on the frequency of consumption, we estimated that the number of times shark fin was consumed in 2017 has declined from 23.9 million times or meals per year to about 15.7 million times in 2023. These changes represent an estimated 34% decrease in the estimated number of times shark fin was consumed, amounting to about 8.17 million fewer times. Meanwhile, the number of respondents who never consumed shark fin increased by 25% in 2023 (from 43% to 54%).

Despite these positive trends, 56% of urban Thais still want to try shark fin soup in the future, a slight decline compared to 61% in the 2017 survey. The latest findings show that Thailand remains an active market for shark fin consumption.

Respondents from the latest survey said they consume shark fin most often with family at restaurants (60%), followed by weddings (57%), and with friends at restaurants (46%). This finding was consistent with that of 2017, and social gatherings remain the main consumption occasions for shark fin. However, home consumption increased in 2023 and is likely to have been a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of these at-home consumers acquired the products via online delivery platforms or takeaway from restaurants.

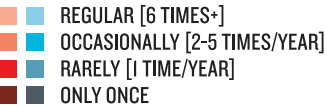
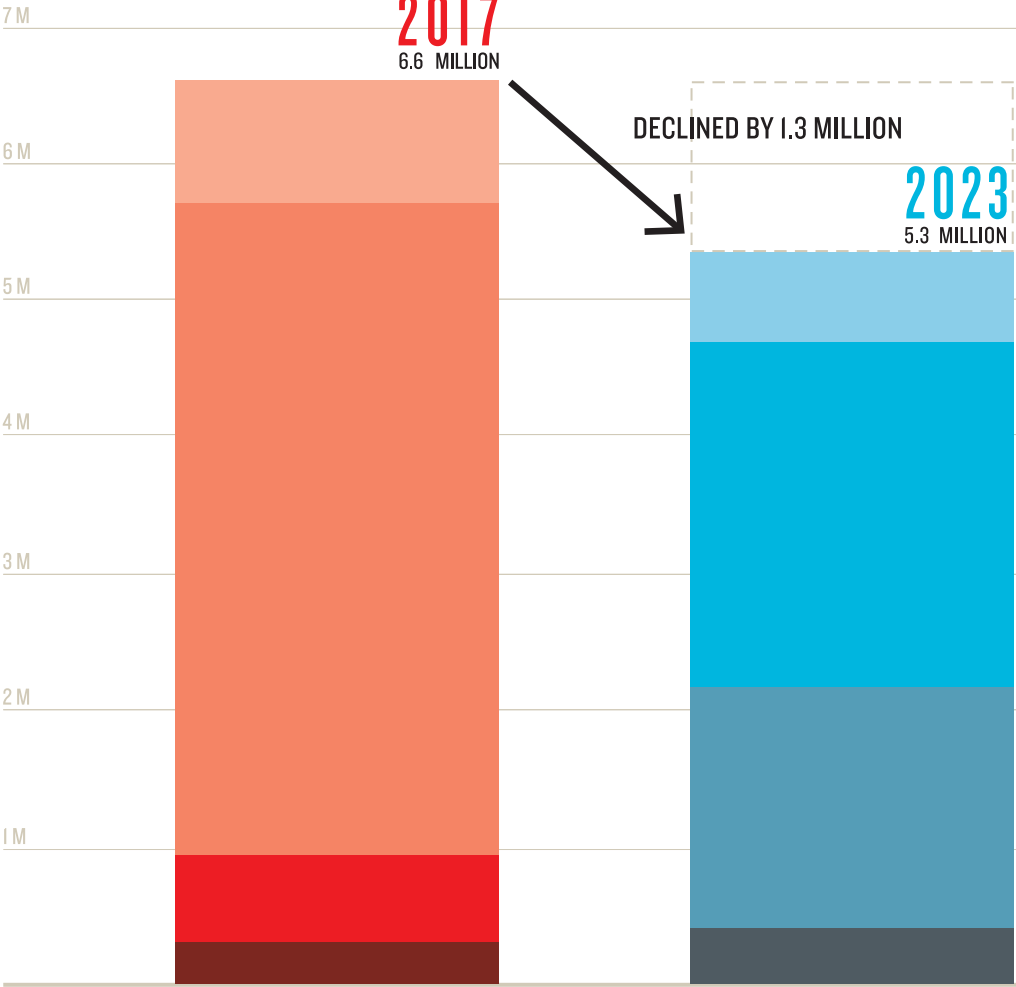


A DECLINE IN NUMBER OF SHARK FIN CONSUMERS

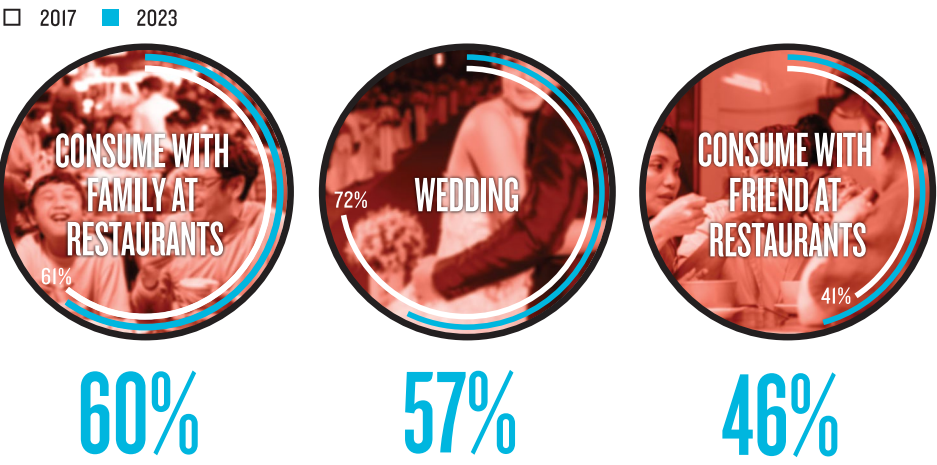


2.7M INCREASE IN URBAN POPULATION AGE 25 +

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SHARK FIN CONSUMERS



TOP 3 SHARK FIN CONSUMPTION OCCASIONS 2017 VS. 2023



THE NUMBER OF CONSUMERS WHO CONSUMED SHARK FIN MORE THAN ONCE / YEAR

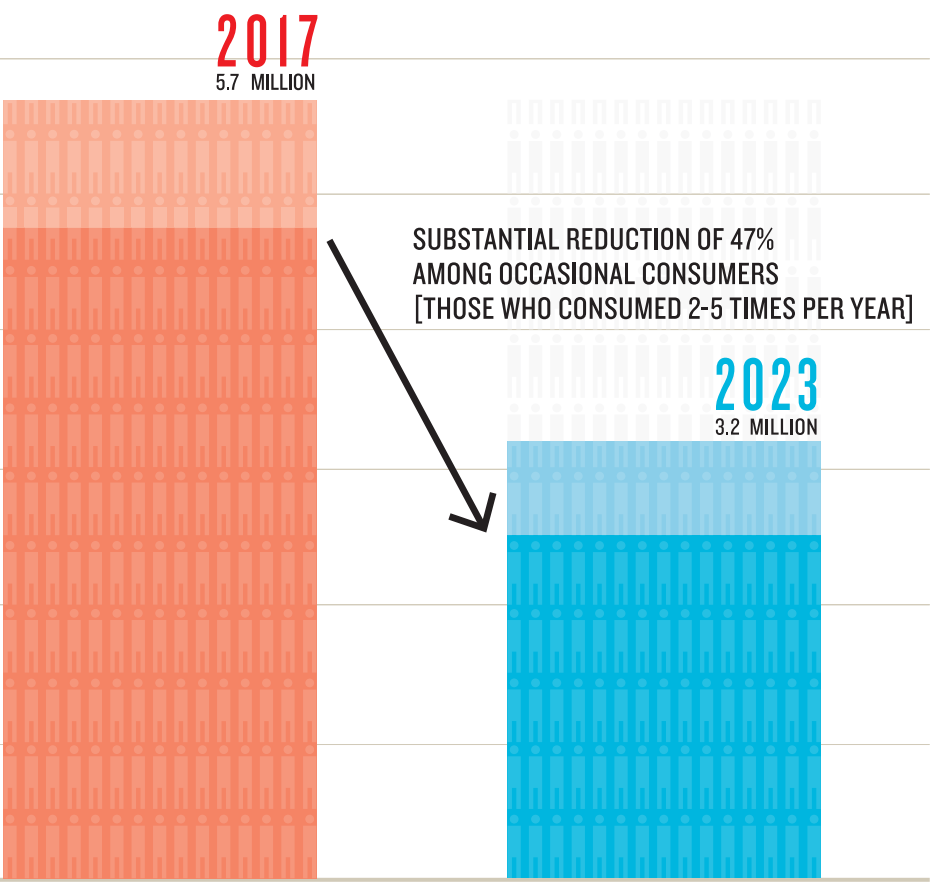
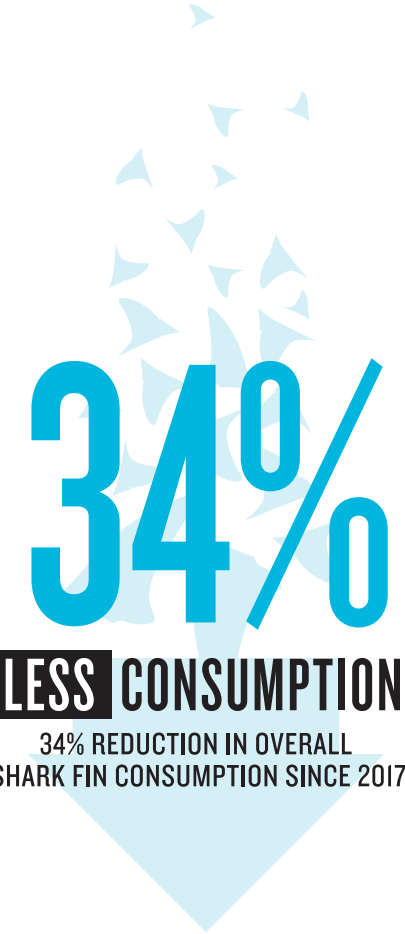
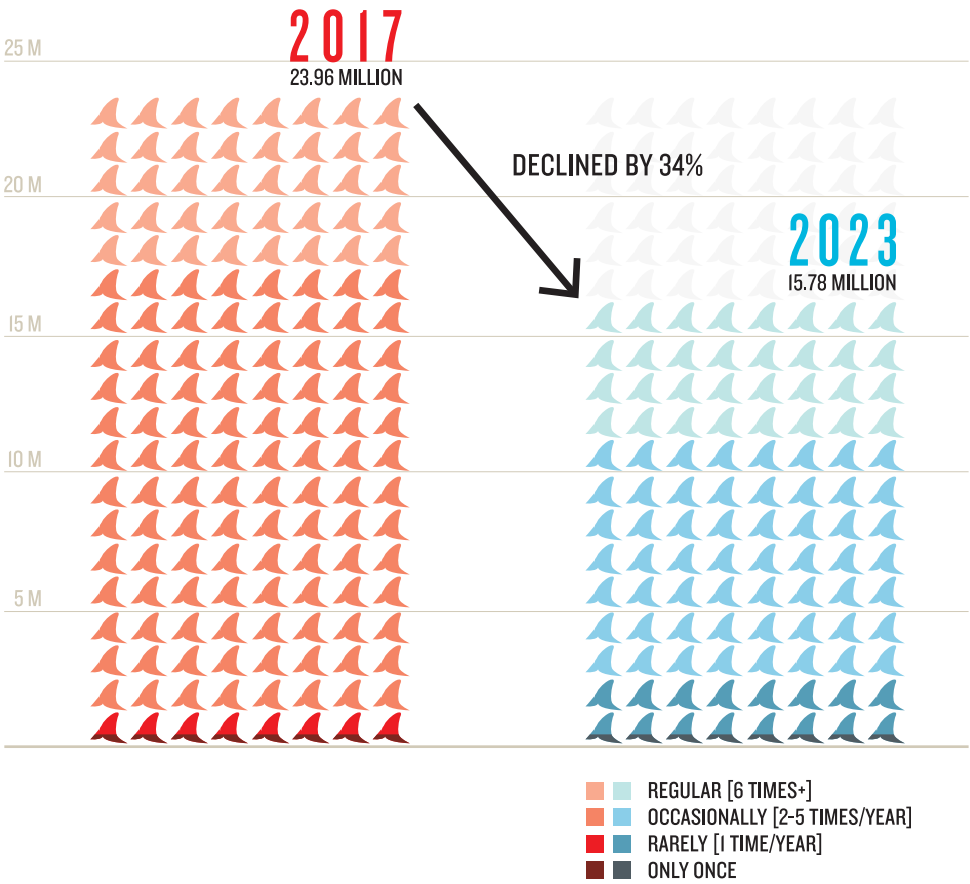


TABLE 1: ESTIMATION OF SHARK FIN MEALS CONSUMED IN 2017 COMPARED WITH 2023 [ MEAL ]

NO.	TYPE		2017	2023	
1	ONLY ONCE		263,000	374,000	* 1 TIME = 1 MEAL
2	RARELY	[1 X /YEAR]	659,000	1,764,000	* 1 TIME = 1 MEAL
3	OCCASIONALLY	[2-5 X /YEAR]	16,593,500	8,795,500	* AVERAGE EST 3.5 X/YEAR
4	REGULAR	[6 X+]	6,454,000	4,865,000	* AVERAGE EST 7 X/YEAR
			23,969,500	15,798,500	- 34.09% [8,171,000]



AMOUNT OF SHARK FIN CONSUMED OVER TWO PERIODS



MOTIVATIONS

When it comes to motivations for consuming shark fin, primary factors include “appealing flavor,” (64%), which was higher compared to 2017 (59%), even though shark fin is known for being rather tasteless with most flavor coming from other ingredients in the soup. Other contributing factors include “showing respect” and being “social.” Motivations for consuming shark meat include “curiosity (73%), good flavor (61%), and texture (58%).”

Focus group respondents mentioned that their families played a role in eating shark fin as it was part of their celebration and gathering culture and a way to show love and respect. Respondents appeared to be split on how shark fin consumption is perceived: some believe they are seen to have a high social status if they eat/order shark fin as it is seen as a luxury item, while others worried they would be viewed negatively, as someone who is outdated and contributing to the destruction of the marine ecosystem.

DETERRENTS

On the opposite end, the number of respondents who intend to consume shark fin in the future decreased by 8% (from 61% in 2017 to 56% in 2023). The most significant reasons for not consuming shark products were moral objection rooted in the feeling that sharks are killed in a cruel way and the potential for feelings of guilt associated with consumption.

In the focus group discussions, participants felt inclined to reduce their consumption of shark meat after being exposed to materials from WildAid’s campaign. One participant said that the tagline made him realize that he didn’t actually have to eat shark meat or fin during special occasions. Existing shark fin consumers in the focus groups said it would be hard to completely stop eating shark fin, but that they will reduce their consumption.

SENTIMENT ON POLICY

Survey participants were presented with a series of potential government policies around habitat protection, fishing restrictions, trade bans, etc., and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each. The findings are hopeful: over 90% agreed the government should “protect shark habitats,” “list sharks as protected,” “not offer shark fin at state events,” “restrict fishing,” “reduce sharks as bycatch,” and “ban shark import/export and trade in Thailand.” Among all groups of shark consumers, the policy aimed at protecting shark habitats garnered the highest level of agreement.

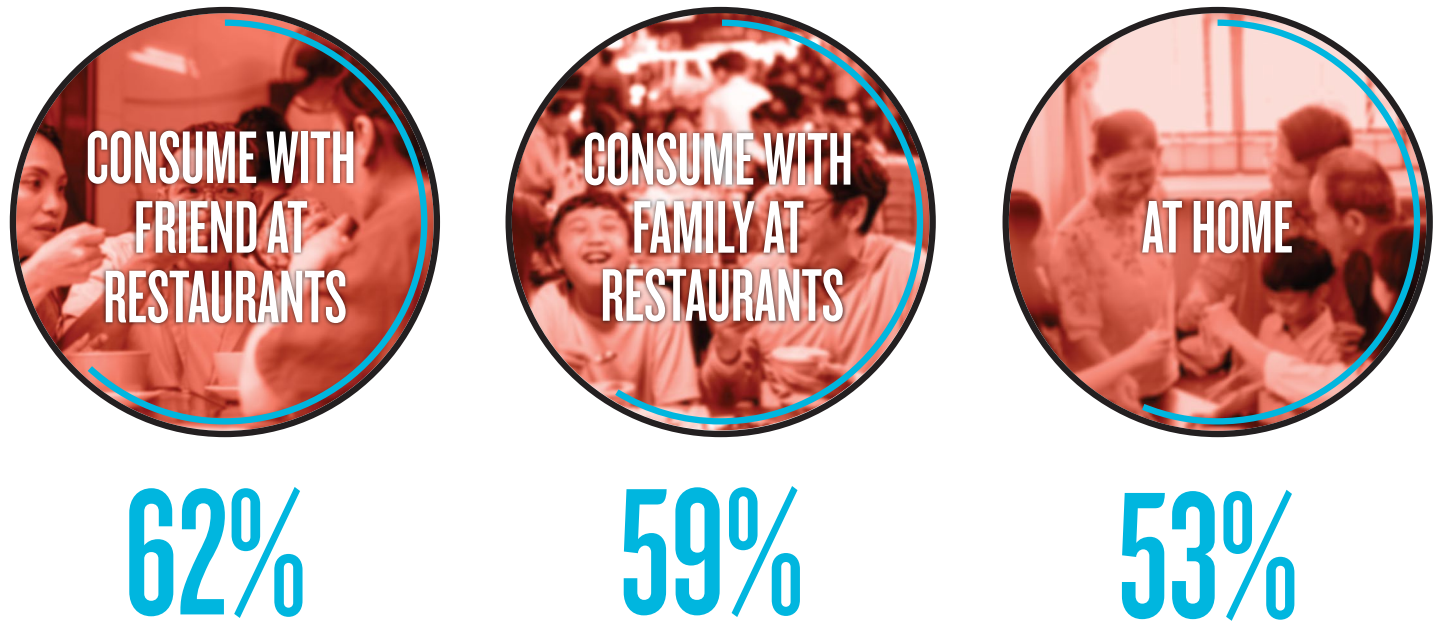
“ IF OUT WITH MY FRIENDS, I RARELY HAVE SHARK FIN SOUP AND HAVE OTHER FOOD INSTEAD. BUT IF I WAS WITH MY SENIORS OR CLIENTS, I WOULD PREFER TO EAT SHARK FIN SOUP. I CONSIDER SHARK FIN SOUP AS A DISH TO SHOW RESPECT AND CARE ”

[ CURRENT CONSUMER, SHARK FIN ]

“ I HAVE SEEN THE CAMPAIGN AND DOCUMENTARIES ABOUT THE CRUEL KILLING METHOD USED FOR SHARK FIN, I FEEL PITY FOR THE SHARK SO I DON’T WANT TO CONSUME IT ”

[ POTENTIAL CONSUMER, SHARK FIN ]





SHARK MEAT CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

The 2023 survey also collected data on shark meat consumption, a segment not explored in the 2017 survey. Results show that 15% of urban Thais have ever knowingly consumed shark meat, with half of them (7.5%) having consumed it in the past 12 months. Half of the current consumers reported eating it two or more times per year (3.5% of the total shark meat consumers). The other 7.5% have since lapsed, the reasons they gave for stopping included: becoming “informed about the endangerment of sharks” and having health concerns around shark meat containing mercury. Meanwhile, 34% of respondents plan to try shark meat in the future, a strong indication that the market could be growing. Shark meat appears on menus as Pad Cha, a local stir-fry seafood dish with spices and herbs, and tends to be consumed in seaside provinces.

Similar to shark fin consumption occasions, shark meat is mostly consumed with friends and family at restaurants and business functions, but a significant number of respondents also mentioned consuming shark meat at home and while traveling.

“ I THINK IT’S MORE HARM THAN BENEFITS TO EAT SHARK MEAT, I’VE READ IT SOMEWHERE THAN SHARK MEAT HAS MERCURY AND OTHER BAD SUBSTANCES THAT CAN CAUSED CANCER IN THE LONG-RUN ”

[ LAPSED CONSUMER, SHARK MEAT ]

1 IN 3 URBAN THAIS PLAN TO TRY SHARK MEAT, A STRONG INDICATION THAT MARKET DEMAND REMAINS SIGNIFICANT

+ 1 1 1





# A SNAPSHOT OF RESTAURANT OWNERS' ATTITUDES

**8 OUT OF 10 VENDORS  
BELIEVE CAMPAIGNS  
TO REDUCE DEMAND  
FOR SHARK FIN  
HAVE LED TO A DECLINE  
IN CONSUMPTION  
AMONG GEN Z & GEN Y**

Recognizing the importance of collecting data on the supply side, we conducted a survey of Thai restaurant owners with the goal of understanding any changes in shark fin consumption in Thailand after the COVID-19 pandemic, and to explore the perspectives of various restaurant owners on shark fin ingredients from a business standpoint. WildAid commissioned P.I.Y.A Research to conduct face-to-face and telephone interviews with representatives from five different types of eateries – premium shark fin restaurants (defined as offering a high-end shark fin menu), premium Chinese restaurants (features shark fin as one of their delicacies), shark fin specialty restaurants (primarily serves shark fin soup as a popular dish), non-shark fin specialty restaurants (offers a variety of food and shark fin soup is just one of their items), Chinese banquet caterers (provides on-site Chinese food catering services) – and one shark fin supplier (sources shark fin from importers and supplies them to restaurants) in Thailand.

In Yaowarat, or famously known as Bangkok's Chinatown, restaurant owners still see shark fin soup as a must-have menu item. However, outside of Yaowarat's main road, the significance of shark fin has diminished. Vendors reported that, overall, shark fin consumption is on the decline, perhaps as a result of the global and Thai economic downturn (people being more budget-conscious) and because younger generations (Gen Y & Z) are becoming more environmentally conscious, leading to voluntary declines in consumption of shark products.

Eight out of 9 restaurant owners surveyed said the consumption frequency and amount have recently declined compared to that before the COVID-19 outbreak. As one restaurant owner said, "Before Covid-19 outbreak, customers used to order one pot for each person, but now they order one pot for sharing."

In Chinatown, alternatives such as mantis shrimp and lobsters are gaining popularity among the younger generations. However, foreign travelers such as Singaporeans, Malaysians and Chinese are reported to remain the key consumers of shark fin soup.

Most restaurant owners seem to be aware that shark fins are likely to be from a gray market and are careful when talking about their suppliers. They claimed the price of shark fin as a raw ingredient has increased gradually over time mainly due to inflation and because sharks are now more difficult to catch. None of the owners were very confident about the origin of the shark fin they sell, but many assume the fins are coming from Hong Kong SAR (South China Sea) and Spain.

# WILDAID'S CAMPAIGN **IMPACT**



With Thailand's status as a significant market for shark fin and an overall lack of consumer awareness of threats to sharks, from 2017 onwards, WildAid launched multiple communications campaigns aimed at educating existing and potential consumers and changing their consumption behaviors. These campaigns have utilized video PSAs, billboards, and social media messages as part of our "Celebrate with #NoSharkFin" initiative. We enlisted popular and well-respected celebrities and key influencers to lend their voices to messages urging protection of sharks as a critical component of keeping our oceans healthy, and to create a new social norm where Thais consider shark fin socially unacceptable and a new standard where sharks are permanently off the menu. By forging partnerships with media companies and social media platforms such as TikTok, these campaign messages have reached over 30 million people across Thailand.

In July 2018, WildAid launched the "Chalong Mai Chalarn" or "Celebrate with #NoSharkFin" campaign with the first campaign video, "Speak for Sharks," featuring Thai superstar and passionate diver, Nawat 'Pong' Kulrattanak as WildAid's ambassador for sharks. The video aimed to raise awareness among consumers about the cruelty behind shark fin soup, as such public awareness was low at that time. A second ad, "Making of a Wedding," launched prior to peak wedding season to urge Thais to stop serving shark fin at weddings and other celebratory events. Both campaign ads were widely distributed on social media and aired on six prominent Thai television channels. Campaign billboards reached additional audiences at 17 locations inside the Suvarnabhumi International Airport and around Bangkok, Thailand.



In December 2019, just over a year after WildAid launched the “Celebrate with #NoSharkFin” campaign, the Thai government came under heavy public criticism after local media reported that shark fin soup had been served at an official government banquet. Following the incident, WildAid ambassador Pong Nawat and a coalition of 8 other NGOs submitted an open letter to the Thai government seeking their urgent attention and action on ending consumption of shark fin at any state events. Though no official government announcement was made in response, the public outcry on social media was swift and fierce, with tens of thousands supporting posts with WildAid’s campaign message, #ฉลองไม่ฉลาม (celebrate with #NoSharkFin), which eventually became a top trending hashtag on Twitter. This demonstrated a shift in public opinion and increased public intolerance towards consumption of shark fin.

In July 2022, WildAid launched "Sea of Chaos," a new PSA highlighting the role of sharks in the ocean and how our consumption of shark fin is disrupting ocean ecosystems. The video featured WildAid shark ambassador Maria Poonlertlarp, Miss Universe Thailand 2017 and a passionate environmental activist and diver, alongside Pong Nawat. “Sea of Chaos” video was shown over 1.1 million times on nearly 200 out-of-home digital screens across Thailand including Bangkok’s top 10 busiest streets, underground train stations and 23 airports nationwide and generated over 100 million impressions.

The 2023 survey found that 35% of participants had seen a random selection of three WildAid videos released in the past five years, the majority via YouTube, social media, and television. All three campaign videos were distributed via pro bono support from media partners, including television stations, out-of-home media companies, and influential social media pages, without any advertisement spending.

The ads received an average of an 80% “ample processing” score, meaning viewers indicated they had not merely found the ads “interesting,” but had learned something new or had spoken to others about the issue.

In the survey, consumers were asked about their likelihood to ‘like,’ ‘share,’ and ‘follow’ after viewing each video. Survey respondents gave WildAid’s 2022 “Sea of Chaos” PSA the highest approval rating, with 97% of respondents expressing their intention to ‘like’ the video. Furthermore, 96% stated their willingness to ‘follow’ the organization on social media after viewing the clip, while 94% expressed their readiness to ‘share’ the video. Respondents reiterated that celebrities, especially those with a large following, are influential in helping to amplify the reach of conservation messages to wider audiences and to “make a difference.”

Online, 47% of survey respondents had seen and recalled the hashtag #chalongmaichalarm (“Celebrate with #NoSharkFin”), which has been consistently used throughout the campaign. Among those who encountered the hashtag, 56% claimed that they shared it.

The campaign analysis framework used by Rapid Asia in 2017 is based on knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) concerning the consumption of shark fin and meat. Following the base line analysis, an overall campaign strategy was developed, and baseline indicators were established with the ability to verify the impact of the campaign with the post-intervention survey conducted in 2023.

The 2023 survey found evidence to suggest that demand reduction initiatives, such as WildAid’s “Celebrate with #NoSharkFin” (or Chalong Mai Chalarm) campaign, are likely to have contributed to the reduction in demand seen between 2017 and 2023. A behavioral change model (KAP Score)<sup>16</sup> used as part of the survey examined the overall mindset of consumers in terms of their knowledge, attitude, and behavior towards shark fin consumption. The KAP Score model’s lead indicator, the KAP Index, increased from 24 to 41 points, representing an incremental but significant improvement. That is, consumers have become more aware of the negative consequences of shark fin consumption and are beginning to question what it means when tens of millions of sharks are killed for their fins and meat. The result is consistent with the decline (43%) seen in those consuming shark fin multiple times per year and shifting to one time per year or less.

WILLINGNESS TO SHARE WILDAID PSAS:



SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR LIKELIHOOD OF ENGAGING IN SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIONS (LIKING, SHARING, FOLLOWING) AFTER VIEWING EACH CAMPAIGN VIDEO. THE ‘SEA OF CHAOS’ VIDEO RECEIVED THE HIGHEST APPROVAL RATING, WITH 97 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS EXPRESSING THEIR INTENTION TO ‘LIKE’ THE VIDEO.

Opposite page: The "Seas of Chaos" campaign video on display at one of the busiest subway stations in downtown Bangkok, Thailand. © WildAid

# KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SHARKS

2017

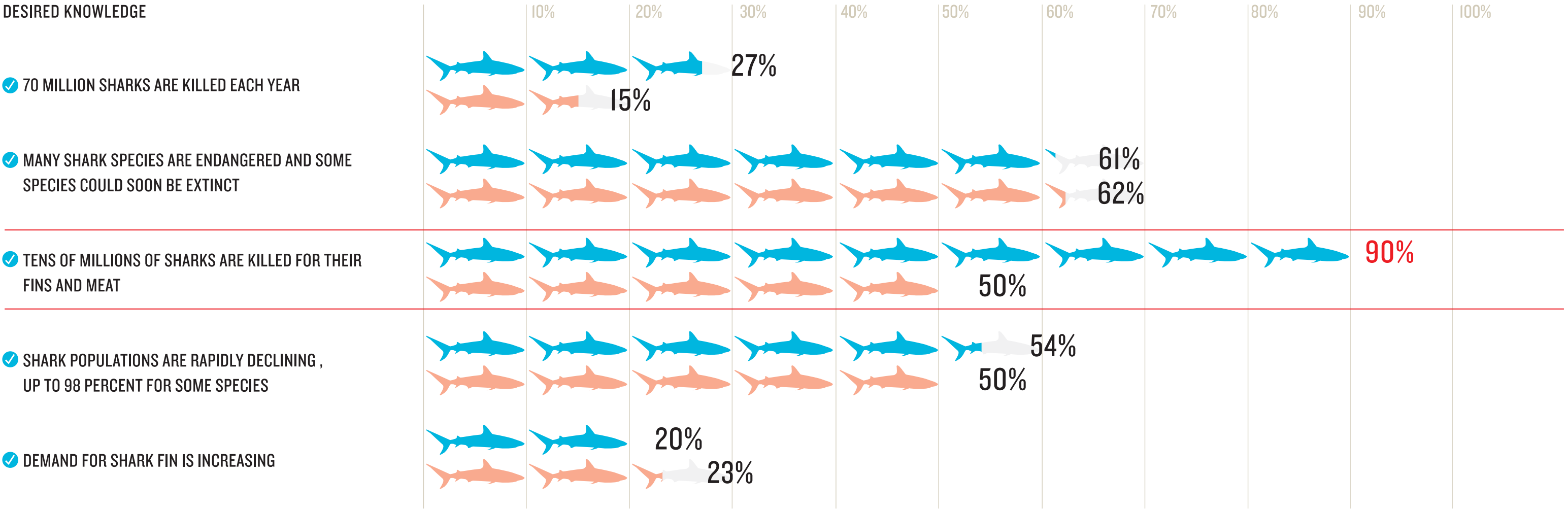
BASELINE (%)

BASE: ALL, N=866

2023


ENDLINE (%)

BASE: ALL, N=1007




\*NOTE: MEAT CONSUMPTION WAS ONLY ASSESSED IN 2023

KNOWLEDGE




The majority of respondents (88%) now understand that sharks are key to maintaining the balance of marine ecosystems - an increase from 68% in 2017.

ATTITUDES



The majority of urban Thais remain aware of the negative consequences of eating sharks, while attitudes toward cultural sensitivity showed the majority of respondents (74%) disagree that “shark fin soup is an old tradition that should not be interfered with.”

BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS



The majority of respondents (68%) indicate they intend to suggest to friends not to order shark fin soup, an increase from 53% in 2017, while more people (42%) say they intend to boycott stores that sell shark fin, compared to just 23% in 2017.

# CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The shark fin trade in Thailand continues to pose a threat to shark populations around the world. Despite independent survey data and observations from restaurant owners indicating that demand for shark fin is on the decline, half of urban Thais still plan to consume the dish in the future, which is more than enough to sound the alarm to all those who care about sharks, biodiversity, human and pet health, as well the health of our oceans – on which millions of lives and livelihoods depend.

Interventions such as those employing behavioral change strategies to educate and dissuade existing and potential consumers from purchasing shark products are paramount. As is meaningful policy action, such as fisheries management to limit and reduce shark bycatch, introduction of shark fishing

restrictions and trade bans, improvements to traceability systems, increased protection of shark habitats, and elevated domestic protection levels of individual shark species, all of which appear to have tremendous support from Thailand’s active consumers, lapsed consumers, and those who have never consumed shark products. If the government acts to protect and conserve sharks, they can rest assured they will have the majority of the country backing and celebrating the initiatives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the KAP Index results, which is the strongest indicator for showing how consumer mindsets and behavior on shark consumption are changing over time, the 2023 survey showed consumers are beginning to question the implications of the excessive killing of sharks. However, knowledge about the negative consequences of consuming shark fin remains generally low and there is a strong need to educate consumers.

This suggests that momentum could slowly be building against the shark fin trade, but regular communications should continue to foster a societal shift in perception of the negative consequences of consuming sharks and the positive role sharks play in the marine ecosystem. Effective strategies should include seeking collaboration from policymakers and the government, as well as conducting research to support efforts in inspiring behavioral change.

## CONSUMER CAMPAIGN

It is imperative to maintain consistency and continuity in behavioral change efforts. Creative methods should be employed to engage consumers, with an emphasis on outreach to younger generations (Gen-Z and Gen-Y) who are trend-conscious, socially inclined, enthusiastic and capable of advocating conservation campaigns as allies. Deterring consumers’ perception of shark fin as ‘high social status’ and being a ‘premium’ and ‘luxury’ food could influence consumers’ decisions.

## RESTAURANT CAMPAIGN

Efforts should be made to engage restaurant owners and incentivize those currently offering shark fin or meat dishes to remove the items from their menus. Creation of a restaurant network and certification program could be explored.

## ENGAGE WITH POLICYMAKERS, GOVERNMENT & STAKEHOLDERS

Policymakers have a critical role to play in minimizing the impact of Thai demand on shark populations. With a substantial portion of consumers demonstrating a willingness to forgo shark consumption, the government should be encouraged to improve fisheries management to limit and reduce shark bycatch and implement further restrictions on shark fishing, import and trade, ultimately reducing the supply of shark fin and meat in Thailand. Encouraging greater participation from the fisheries community in plans and actions to protect sharks will promote better understanding and help overcome the barriers and challenges from this sector.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

Research on target tourists - particularly Singaporeans, Malaysians, and Chinese - who travel to Thailand for both business and pleasure is crucial. These visitors contribute significantly to shark fin consumption in Thailand, particularly in tourist areas like Chinatown. Understanding the extent of impact from these visitors can provide a broader perspective on the overall shark fin consumption in the country.

## WILDAID’S NEXT STEPS

WildAid will continue to advance shark conservation in Thailand by implementing the recommendations above and highlighting sharks as flagship species for marine conservation. We will lead a strategy to drive public communications to reduce demand for sharks, influence policy, increase capacity for relevant government agencies, support research, accelerate effective enforcement, expand a network of marine protected areas (MPAs), and conserve critical shark habitats, as well as engage key stakeholders to take part in protecting these keystone species. These priorities are imperative for shark populations to recover and for marine biodiversity conservation locally and internationally.



A billboard launched in 2018, featuring WildAid ambassador for sharks, Pong Nawat Kulrattanakarn, advocates for Thais to remove shark fin from the menu as part of the ‘Chalong Mai Chalarn’ or ‘Celebrate with #NoSharkFin’ campaign.

# REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> <https://wildaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Shark-Fin-Demand-in-Thailand-2017.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Population Division. World Population Prospects: 2022 revision. National Statistical Office of Thailand,2027

<sup>3</sup> <https://rapid-asia.com/services/kap-score/>

<sup>4</sup> Boris Worm et al., Global shark fishing mortality still rising despite widespread regulatory change. Science 383, 225-230 (2024). DOI:10.1126/science.adf8984

<sup>5</sup> Dulvy, N.K., Pacoureau, N., Rigby, C.L., Pollom, R.A., Jabado, D.H., Herman, K.B.,Sherman, C.S., VanderWright, W.J., Lawson, J.M., Walls, R.H.L., Carlson, J.K., Charvet, P., Bineesh, K.K., Fernando, D., Ralph, G.M., Matsushiba, J.H., Hilton-Taylor, C., Fordham, S.V. and Simpfendorfer, C.A. 2021. Over- fishing drives over one-third of all sharks and raystoward a global extinction crisis. Current Biology 31: 1-15 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2021.08.06>

<sup>6</sup> Boris Worm et al., Global shark fishing mortality still rising despite widespread regulatory change.Science 383, 225-230 (2024). DOI:10.1126/science.adf8984

<sup>7</sup> WWF, The Shark and Ray Meat Network: A Deep Dive into a Global Affair. 2021. [https://wwfeu.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/a4\\_shark\\_2021\\_low.pdf](https://wwfeu.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/a4_shark_2021_low.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Dent F, Clarke S (2015) State of the global market for shark products. FAO, Rome, p 187

<sup>9</sup> FAO. 2018. A country and regional prioritisation for supporting implementation of CITES provisions for sharks, by Marcelo Vasconcellos, Monica Barone and Kim Friedman. Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1156. Rome, Italy Page 109.

<sup>10</sup> [https://wildaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Shark-fin-DNA-report\\_final\\_EN.pdf](https://wildaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Shark-fin-DNA-report_final_EN.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.customs.go.th/>

<sup>12</sup> [https://wildaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Shark-fin-DNA-report\\_final\\_EN.pdf](https://wildaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Shark-fin-DNA-report_final_EN.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The KAP Score model developed by Rapid Asia Co., Ltd. (www.rapid-asia.com) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-non-commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

ช่วยสัตว์ป่า  
**WILDAID**