

Solutions / Policy recommendations

Existing trade policies

Canada (2019)

Canada has banned the trade of shark fins by making it illegal to import or export fins not attached to a shark carcass, and to engage in shark finning. The ban was incorporated into a revised Fisheries Act.

USA (2022)

14 U.S. State laws: Hawaii (2010), California (2011), Washington (2011), Oregon (2011), Illinois (2012), New York (2013), Maryland (2013), Delaware (2013), Massachusetts (2014), Rhode Island (2017), Texas (2015), Nevada (2018), New Jersey (2020), Florida (2020)

U.S. Territories: Guam (2011), Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) (2011), American Samoa (2012)

UK (2023)

The UK implemented a ban on the international trade of detached shark fins and products containing them with the Shark Fins Act 2023.

EUROPE

Austria enacted a ban on the import, trade, and processing of sharks and all shark-related products, in 2024 via the Species Trade Supplementary Ordinance.

Previous policies of “*landing sharks whole*” and “*landing with fins naturally attached*” are **very important policies that must remain in place. Now they must be complemented and strengthened by a shark fin trade ban.**

1. A trade ban simplifies enforcement:

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Regulations that require monitoring of activities on vessels or in harbors are unrealistic, because that scope is beyond the capacity of authorities in most countries.

When loose fins are illegal, no matter where or how they were “harvested”, monitoring and reporting becomes simplified.

2. A trade ban avoids unwieldy bureaucracy:

Currently, holding up shipments, testing, documenting, and prosecuting any incidents is an expensive and complicated process. When the sale and trade of fins is clearly prohibited, there is no question about lawfulness or burden of proof.

3. A trade ban advances the global effort:

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The trade of fins is an international problem that requires multinational cooperation as well as leadership that takes definitive steps.

The EU governments can take this clear step to end their involvement in the shark fin trade.

4. A Fin Trade Ban supports the goals of existing agreements:

The EU has expressed its commitment to being a global leader in the fight to protect biodiversity, on land and in the seas.

The European Ocean Pact, published in June 2025, has as a core priority to restore and protect ocean health, recognising the importance of a healthy ocean, both for life on Earth but also for prosperity and competitiveness. A Fin Trade Ban is an easy and simple tool to contribute to this objective, as well as strengthening EU ocean diplomacy and international rules-based governance.