

Europe's role in the fin and shark meat trade

The EU has sent an important global signal with the Fins Naturally Attached Policy:

“We want to eradicate the horrendous practice of shark finning and protect sharks better.” [1]

(former fisheries commissioner Maria Damanaki)

While the sharks are now landed with their fins attached, the shark finning industry found other ways to continue their unsustainable practises:

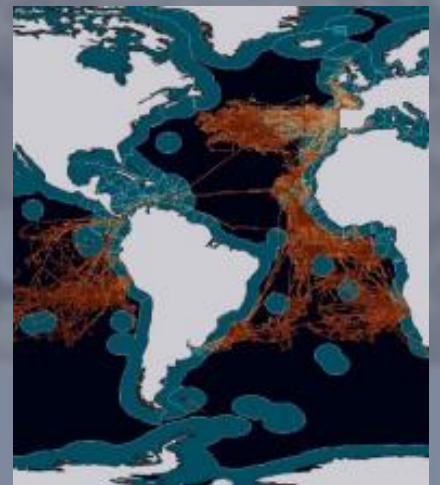
Europe is a leading global player in the shark fin and meat market.

Spain

In 2015 there were 228 surface longliners registered in Spain. The Spanish shark fleet includes another 50-60 longliners operating in various areas under other flags

(including Namibian, Senegalese, Panamanian, Ecuadorian), but controlled by Spanish interests, usually through joint ventures.

These vessels may not be included in export numbers, since there is a considerable lack of available documentation. [2] This is especially relevant for Namibia, where the vessels frequently land their catches (image to the right)



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Italy

Italy is now the top importer on shark meat and makes up as much as 45 % of the imports of dogfish/sharks (frozen/chilled) products in 2023. [3]

Portugal

While Spain dominates the shark fin trade and meat market [4], Portugal also ranks within the top countries in trading frozen shark fins. The two countries also trade shark products with each other. However, there is discrepancy between these numbers. For example, Spain reported 6780 t of imports from Portugal whereas Portugal reported 8415 t exported to Spain in 2014 [5].

Sources

The full details of the sources can be found on www.stop-finning-eu.org

1. euobserver.com
2. Research in vessel databases and registers such as IHS, Global Fishing Watch, TMT IUU register, etc.
3. EU: Access2markets.com
4. WWF, 2021
5. EOC World Trade data