

Congratulations to our Pacific islands! We're saving sharks!

Showing global leadership, the EEZ's of The Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Samoa are legally declared as shark sanctuaries! This means a total estimated area of 17 million sq. km has been established as shark sanctuaries in our Pacific islands.



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Why do we need to save our sharks?

- Sharks help maintain the health of the marine life in the ocean, including the population of commercially important fish species.
- Coral reefs in particular benefit from a healthy shark population to maintain a balance in the marine food chain.
- Sharks are of more value alive, than dead. An individual reef shark is estimated to be valued at USD 1.9 M over its lifetime to the tourism industry, and the shark diving industry contributed USD 42.2 M to the Fijian economy in 2011.
- Sharks are culturally important to Pacific Islanders as they are featured in our Pacific island legends, proverbs and songs.

Did you know that sharks are threatened with extinction?

- Between 63 million to 273 million sharks are killed each year in commercial fisheries mainly to meet the high demand of shark fins.
- One-third of species found in the global fin trade are threatened with extinction.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) estimates that 54% of sharks, rays and their relatives are threatened or near threatened with extinction.

When it comes to protecting sharks, the Pacific islands have shone a beacon of leadership on the world stage.

In 2016 Fiji, supported by Samoa and Palau led the call for mobula rays, thresher sharks, silky sharks and the nautilus to have trade sanctions placed upon them under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

In 2017 Samoa and Sri Lanka successfully lobbied to place the blue shark on Appendix II under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals to help ensure their conservation. An estimated take of 20 million blue sharks are caught each year.

Let's keep this momentum up and all work together to ensure the protection of our sharks and rays!

Have that Pacific Conversation today!