

By Senator Bennett

21-00929-12

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to shark fins; prohibiting the
3 possession, sale, trade, or distribution of shark
4 fins; providing a definition; providing for penalties
5 and the assessment of attorney fees and costs;
6 authorizing the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
7 Commission to adopt rules; providing an effective
8 date.

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10 WHEREAS, sharks are one of the top predators in the marine
11 food chain and play an important role in our ocean's ecosystem,
12 and

13 WHEREAS, sharks have characteristics that make them more
14 vulnerable to overfishing than most fish, and data from state,
15 federal, and international agencies show a decline in the shark
16 populations both locally and worldwide, and

17 WHEREAS, unlike other fish species, most sharks do not
18 reach sexual maturity until 7 to 12 years of age and then give
19 birth to only a small litter of young; thus, sharks cannot
20 rebuild their populations quickly once overfished, and

21 WHEREAS, the practice of shark finning, whereby a shark is
22 caught, the fin is cut off, and the shark is returned to the
23 water, causes millions of sharks to die a slow death each year
24 by starvation, predation, and drowning because sharks need to
25 keep moving in order to force water through their gills for
26 oxygen, and

27 WHEREAS, shark fin is the principal ingredient in certain
28 delicacies for which demand has risen, and

29 WHEREAS, fishers continue the practice of shark finning on

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30 a massive scale despite state and federal laws to ban the
31 practice, and

32 WHEREAS, the state's waters will suffer harm if the
33 practice of shark finning continues, NOW, THEREFORE,

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35 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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37 Section 1. Possession, sale, trade, or distribution of
38 shark fins prohibited.—

39 (1) A person may not possess, sell, offer for sale, trade,
40 or distribute a shark fin in this state or on the waters of this
41 state.

42 (2) As used in this section, the term "shark fin" means the
43 raw or dried fin of a shark from which the shark carcass is
44 removed.

45 (3) A person who violates this section or any rule adopted
46 pursuant to this section is subject to:

47 (a) Seizure and forfeiture of the shark fin; and

48 (b) An administrative fine of not less than \$5,000 and not
49 more than \$15,000.

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51 In addition, the violator may be assessed administrative fees
52 and costs and attorney fees and costs.

53 (4) The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission may adopt
54 rules to administer this section.

55 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2012.