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SHARKS AND RAYS BECOMING MORE PREVALENT IN RECREATIONAL ANGLING



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Sharks and rays now account for over 5% of all recreational fishing activities, according to a new study published in the latest issue of *Frontiers in Marine Science*. An estimated 54,000 tons of sharks and rays are caught by recreational anglers each year.

According to data that covered over 60 years from 125 countries, that figure has been steadily increasing since the mid 1950s. The study resulted in the the first comprehensive global estimate of marine recreational catches.

“The rise in shark and ray catches started in the 1990s and has been particularly sharp in Oceania and South America,” said Kátia Freire, lead author of the study and a professor at the Universidade Federal de Sergipe in Brazil. “However, we may actually be underestimating the real amounts, as accessing recreational fisheries data is particularly difficult. Most countries do not compile these data or those that do, do not incorporate them into their national fisheries statistics that are reported to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.”

The increased interest in recreational shark angling further compounds problems caused by the overfishing by commercial fishing.

“The problem with sharks and rays is that even if they are thrown back into the ocean, a practice that is not uncommon as many recreational fishers now practice ‘catch-and-release,’ not all individuals survive,” said Daniel Pauly, co-author of the study and principal investigator of the Sea Around Us initiative at the University of British Columbia’s Institute for the Ocean and Fisheries. “For example, 98 percent of scalloped hammerheads die.”

The biology of sharks makes them slow when it comes to growing and maturing, which means that they produce only a small number of young in their lifetimes. If many individuals are caught before they have been able to reproduce sufficiently, then their population numbers start to dwindle.

“In Australia, a group of recreational fishers lands large tiger sharks and hammerheads from the beach. These large animals are essential to population health and are unlikely to survive the experience of a lengthy fight and subsequently being dragged up the beach,” said Jessica Meeuwig, co-author of the study and director of the Marine Futures Lab at the University of Western Australia. “Given the threatened status of these species globally, such practices are inappropriate.”

Link: https://www.sharkophile.com/2020/01/31/sharks-and-rays-becoming-more-prevalent-in-recreational-angling/?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=facebook&utm_source=socialnetwork&fbclid=IwAR0MQGDPI9ktZ1Y60KJJGpzMTJ4a3xaXg8kA7yBgval9Gb3NuSOpzXqMkM