

## NY Shark Fin Bill Signed Into Law

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New Yorkers who want to buy or sell shark fins are out of luck.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed a bill Friday into law that bans the possession, sale, trade and distribution of shark fins. Violators can face up to 15 days in jail and \$100 fine for each fish.

“Every year, an estimated 73 million sharks are killed to supply the growing global demand for their fins,” Cuomo said. “Not only is the process inhumane, but it also affects the natural balance of the oceanic ecosystem. With this new law, New York will be doing its part to help preserve this important species and maintain a stable environment for them.”



New York is not the first state to make this move. Seven states have already banned this trade, including California, Illinois, Oregon and Washington.

This state has one of the largest markets for shark fins outside of Asia. A major reason for this is the demand for shark fin soup, an expensive Chinese delicacy.

To provide a balance between the market for this product and the protection of sharks, the sale of shark fins of two species of dogfish are allowed. Currently 70 commercial fishers are licensed to take dogfish, with daily catch limits of 3,000 pounds per license.

Many animal protection groups voiced their approval of the governor’s decision to sign this bill, including the World Society for the Protection of Animals.

“Shark finning is an extremely cruel and inhumane practice driven by the shark fin trade in which fishermen catch sharks, cut off their fins and throw the still-living animals back into the water, where they die slow and horrifically painful deaths,” said Elizabeth Hogan, campaign manager for World Society for the Protection of Animals. “WSPA is happy to see New York state take this step to protect sharks from this needless cruelty, and plan to help other states follow their lead.”

The bill will go into effect on July 1, 2014.