



# Support Feigenholtz's shark fin ban

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR February 1, 2012 7:16PM

Updated: February 2, 2012 2:13AM

Dan Balanoff's letter on Wednesday, headlines "Feigenholtz's shark fin ban overreaches," gets it backward. Moral standards of Illinois' eating habits are not the issue. Veal and Kobe beef are not wild animals facing extinction.

Wild shark extinction, caused in part by shark finning, is the issue. After cutting the fins off sharks, dead or alive, the finless sharks are thrown back into the sea to die. The shark fins are sold for shark fin soup.

Sharks are at the top of the food chain. Sharks play a uniquely important role in the oceans. Healthy shark populations are required to keep populations of other fish healthy and in proper proportion for their ecosystem. The extinction of sharks will negatively impact an important source of fish for human consumption.

In recognition of the disastrous consequences of shark extinctions, the U.N. opposes shark finning. The United States banned finning in the U.S. with U.S.-registered vessels (but not foreign-registered vessels) and requires all sharks brought to port to have their fins attached. States that ban shark skin sales and distribution include Hawaii, Washington, Oregon and California, citing the cruelty of finning and potential threats to the environment and to commercial fishing. Asia's Peninsula Hotel chain removed the Chinese delicacy, shark fin soup, from its menus, announcing, "By removing shark fin from our menus, we hope that our decision can contribute to preserving the marine ecosystem for the world's future generations."

Illinois should promptly enact state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz's far-sighted proposal to ban the possession and sale of shark fins.

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