



# Shark Stewards Launches Shark Protection Campaign in Chicago

## Shark Stewards Illinois Chapter Supports HB 4119 to Ban Shark Fin Trade

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Shark Stewards, a non-profit shark conservation organization based in California, announced the launch of its new Chicago-based chapter to support shark conservation in Illinois. Dedicated to conserving ocean health through the protection of sharks, Shark Stewards' newest chapter will focus on engaging citizens and supporting legislation to ban the trade, sale, and consumption of shark fin in the state of Illinois.

House Bill 4119, sponsored by Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, D-Chicago, has already passed the House with an 81-33 vote. The bill now moves on to the State Senate for consideration.

The shark fin trade is widely believed to drive the worldwide overfishing of sharks; 73-100 million sharks are killed every year. According to scientists, at least 107 species of sharks worldwide have had population sizes so reduced that they are threatened with extinction. “The process of shark finning – killing sharks solely for the fins – is wasteful, cruel and causing shark populations to decline dramatically,” explains David McGuire, Shark Stewards' executive director and award-winning conservation filmmaker and marine biologist. “When shark populations are reduced, the overall health of ocean ecosystems declines. By reducing the demand for shark fin we can help stop the devastation occurring in our oceans.”

“I am thrilled to help sharks here in Chicago,” said Janet Thomas, chair of the Shark Stewards Illinois Chapter, a dive expedition leader and owner of [3rd Coast](#), an award-winning restaurant located in the Gold Coast of Chicago.

“Measures to eliminate trade in shark fins have been passed with near-unanimous bipartisan support in Hawaii, California, Washington, and Oregon. I believe we can make it happen here, too.” Thomas added, “We are dishing up something special to raise awareness for shark protection at 3rd Coast on Friday night, March 30th. Please join us.” The newly launched Shark Stewards Illinois Chapter has already begun assembling a team of volunteers and supporters to participate in awareness and fund raising events on March 29 and 30th in Chicago.

“I am energized by the number of people who are interested in this important issue,” said Jeff Morrison, a respected local jazz musician and sustainable energy champion. “We are going to party for the sharks!” Morrison will be playing as a benefit at the popular venue [The Local Option](#) on Thursday, March 29. Lincoln Park's Local Option at 1102 Webster features the city's largest and most unique selection of local, regional and international beers on tap. McGuire will be attending both events with other shark specialists in support of the Illinois effort.

Shark Stewards is presently creating a legislative toolkit to support volunteers for similar legislation in other states. For more information and resources, visit [sharkstewards.org](http://sharkstewards.org).

#### About Shark Stewards

Shark Stewards is a project of Sea Stewards, a 501c3 non-profit based in the San Francisco Bay area. Launched in 2006 by award-winning film conservationist and marine biologist David McGuire, Shark Stewards is dedicated to conserving our oceans through the protection of sharks. Visit <http://www.sharkstewards.org> for information and videos from experts.

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