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Video of shark being dragged behind speedboat sparks outrage

By Nancy Coleman, CNN

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FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The video shows a struggling shark being towed behind a boat at high speeds.

Story highlights

A Miami charter fisherman said the individuals in the video sent it to him on Instagram

They also send a photo of the shark's remains, he said

One of the men says the shark looks "almost dead."

Miami charter fisherman Mark Quartiano, who goes by "Mark the Shark," posted the video on social media after it was sent to him by two Instagram users who he said were part of the incident. Quartiano decided to publish the video so the fishermen could be identified and caught.

"I was horrified," Quartiano told CNN. "I've been shark fishing for 50 years and I've never seen a disrespect for an animal my entire career that was that evil."

The video has more than 280,000 views on the Facebook page for Quartiano's business and has attracted more than 1,700 comments, many of them expressing outrage.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission confirmed Wednesday it has identified the individuals in the video. FWC spokesman Rob Klepper said the agency will not release their identities while the investigation is ongoing.

"It is too early to speculate as to what, if any, violations took place in this incident," the FWC said in a statement. "However, the FWC would like to state that that the lack of respect shown in this video for our precious natural resources is disheartening and disturbing, and is not representative of conservation-minded anglers around the world."

Quartiano was out fishing when he received the direct message with the video on Instagram. He said the users appeared to be looking for his approval -- and maybe a few extra followers if Quartiano shared the footage online.

"They said, 'Hi, I think you're gonna get a kick out of this,'" Quartiano said.

Quartiano messaged them back and said he thought the video was wrong. They responded with a picture of the shark's head and remains after it had been dragged through the water.

"They thought it was funny, they thought it was cool," Quartiano said. "Even if the shark was dead, you don't do that. It's totally disrespectful."

The FWC encouraged anyone with additional information to contact its Wildlife Alert Hotline.

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