

U.S.

VIDEO OF SHARK DRAGGED BY HIGH-SPEED BOAT SPARKS OUTRAGE AND INVESTIGATION IN FLORIDA

BY **SOFIA LOTTO PERSIO** ON 7/26/17 AT 6:46 AM



U.S. SHARKS FLORIDA ANIMAL RIGHTS

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is investigating a video shared on social media showing a shark dragged behind a high-speed boat, for the apparent entertainment of the men on the boat.

The video only lasts a few seconds, beginning with a shot of the animal being helplessly dragged behind the high-speed boat. The noise of the engine muffles the voices in the background, but the person filming the video can be heard laughing as the camera turns to three men on the boat. "Look, it's already almost dead" one of them can be heard saying, pointing at the animal. Laughter ensues.

Charter fisherman Mark Quartiano first publicly shared the video on his Instagram page after it was sent to him, expressing anger at what he saw. Quartiano, who legally changed his name to "Mark the Shark", has himself caught thousands of sharks along the South Florida coast line for the last forty years—releasing endangered species or those otherwise not fishable—at times clashing with animal rights' activists. Not this time. "For once I may have to agree with Peta. #Whodoesthisshit #sowrong #notcool," he wrote in his post.

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Warning: Some viewers may find the video disturbing.



In his post, Quartiano said the video was sent by two of the people in the video, whom he tags. One of them appears to have deleted his Instagram account since. "I've been doing this for 40 years and never even seen anything close to that kind of disrespect to an animal," Quartiano told *Local 10 News*. "I just couldn't believe it. I go: 'Look at this, someone sending me maybe an illegal video of a shark being tortured.'"

The episode of animal cruelty was also widely condemned in comments below Quartiano's post, most of them featuring strong expletives.

Quartiano was also sent an image showing the dead shark, or what remained of it. A man with his head cut out of the photo holds the animal, whose meat has been carved out from its pectoral fins to its tail.

The FWC said in a statement it cannot yet determine whether any violations took place in the video, but added: "The FWC takes this very seriously and is currently investigating this incident. We are also attempting to identify the individuals in the video and where it took place." **N**

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