

A Delicacy

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I got a call early one morning from a fellow student, and as I answered it, I heard the excited words from her telling me that she found a baby salmon shark on the beach closest to where we live. As fast as I could I grabbed my camera, got in my car, and sped to the beach running to her finding. Getting there, excited as I was, I saw not some ferocious predator of the sea, but a delicate being, dead and alone on the shore.

Artist's Statement:

A valuable delicacy lives along the Oregon coast that is heavily sought after, but it is a resource that is declining quickly. The term "delicacy" is often brought up when referring to sharks and the industry of shark finning, but in the context of this photo series, it refers to the delicate nature and life of sharks. The narrative about sharks has been known to have a negative connotation surrounding it promoting fear and hatred. The message conveying sharks as one-dimensional killing machines is outdated, harmful for shark populations all around the world including the Oregon coast, and doesn't represent sharks and their complex lives.

Sharks and many other marine animals are not "delicacies", they are delicate. Depicted here are images of a juvenile salmon shark that has been beached on the Oregon coast. It is so easy to forget that sharks are not just monstrous creatures that bite off the arms of surfers or ingredients for high-end soup. This narrative must change in order to view the species as delicate as they are shown in these pictures. So many things need to be done to protect them, and it all starts with changing our views on who and what they are.

These animals are impacted by human actions- both positive and negative- that have caused the ocean to change. These pictures capture the delicate essence of the shark in a hope that it resonates with others and shows the pure nature of sharks. It depicts vulnerabilities in sharks that are not often seen. Vulnerabilities are something that everyone and everything on this planet share. Because people's ideas of sharks are warped, it is easy to be indifferent to their issues, but it is necessary to see how we are not profoundly different. It is not well understood by the public how important sharks are to the balance of the ecosystem here on the Oregon coast and in so many other places.

Even though sharks are labeled a delicacy, they are not a resource that should be available for consumption or commercial use. Sharks are a delicate asset to the sea that help keep balance in many ecosystems and need to be kept there and preserved. They are seen as killing machines, but we don't see the whole picture. Who is killing who?



Bastendorff Beach, Charleston OR Oct 2020



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