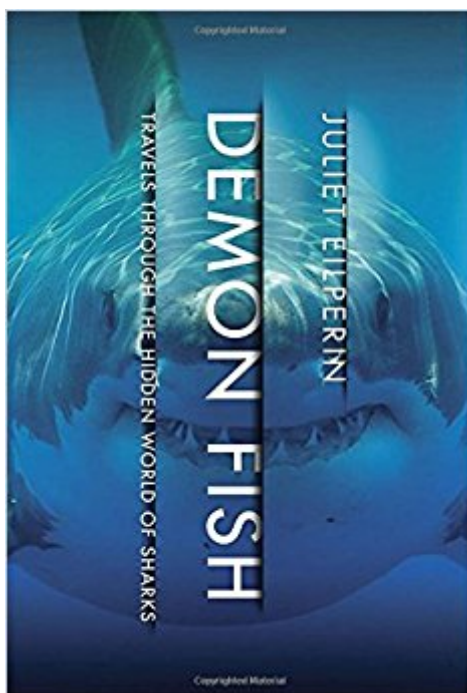


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# Demon Fish: Travels Through The Hidden World Of Sharks



## Synopsis

A group of traders huddles around a pile of dried shark fins on a gleaming white floor in Hong Kong. A Papua New Guinean elder shoves off in his hand-carved canoe, ready to summon a shark with ancient magic. A scientist finds a rare shark in Indonesia and forges a deal with villagers so it and other species can survive. In this eye-opening adventure that spans the globe, Juliet Eilperin investigates the fascinating ways different individuals and cultures relate to the ocean's top predator. Along the way, she reminds us why, after millions of years, sharks remain among nature's most awe-inspiring creatures. From Belize to South Africa, from Shanghai to Bimini, we see that sharks are still the object of an obsession that may eventually lead to their extinction. This is why movie stars and professional athletes go shark hunting in Miami and why shark fin soup remains a coveted status symbol in China. Yet we also see glimpses of how people and sharks can exist alongside one another: surfers tolerating their presence off Cape Town and ecotourists swimming with sharks that locals in the Yucatán no longer have to hunt. With a reporter's instinct for a good story and a scientist's curiosity, Eilperin offers us an up-close understanding of these extraordinary, mysterious creatures in the most entertaining and illuminating shark encounter you're likely to find outside a steel cage.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Guest Reviewer: Susan Casey © Ruven Afanador Susan Casey is the bestselling author of *The Wave* and *The Devil's Teeth*. In the deeply mysterious ocean, no this darkness, and shows

how corner is more shadowy to us than the unknown, uncharted realm of the shark. And as with all shadows, we're afraid of what lurks in them. Juliet Eilperin's beautifully evocative *Demon Fish* lights up fearing sharks rather than understanding them has cost us more than we know. (It's cost the sharks even more: Though we've never been able to pinpoint how many of them live in our planet's waters, we do know that their populations are plunging, possibly even into decimation territory, largely at our hands.) For my money the best, page-turning narratives are immersive ones, and Eilperin excels at this. Readers will enjoy traveling with her as she ventures from Indonesia to Japan to Africa to North America in dauntless pursuit of answers to questions that few writers have asked: Why do we approach sharks with such runaway emotion? Why do we fear these fish sometimes, and revere them others? What's really going on with these animals, beneath the ocean's surface? And of course the big one: after surviving all five global mass extinctions, can sharks make it through another decade of co-existing with us? --Susan Casey

"For this inclusive and important book, Eilperin traveled around the world to find people who study, fish for, dive with, venerate, or have been attacked by sharks . . . [she] discusses many others who have brought sharks into human consciousness • Jules Verne, Edgar Allen Poe, Ernest Hemingway, and Jacques Cousteau; to this list, we must now add Eilperin herself. • Richard Ellis, *The American Scholar* "More books probably have been written about sharks than about any other creatures that live in the sea, so when I opened this one I was skeptical: What could it possibly add? A great deal, it turns out . . . Eilperin circles the world in pursuit of sharks and the people who love and hate them . . . whether they are killers or protectors, she tells their stories with fairness and understanding. I forgot the time as I immersed myself in the world of sharks. Whether you've never read a book about sharks or have a shelf full of them, this is a book for you. • Callum Roberts, *The Washington Post* "Eilperin investigates the greatest threats to sharks: the shark fin trade and the ecological and economic forces affecting shark populations . . . The book is certainly timely. And *Demon Fish* does the subject justice. • David McGuire, *San Francisco Chronicle* "Poised to be one of the summer's most compelling beach reads. • Rachel Syme, *NPR.org* "In this wide-ranging natural history of shark-human relations, the author recounts frank interviews with an entertaining cast of scientists, fishermen, wholesalers, chefs, and eco-tour operators, all of whom have a stake in the survival of the oceans' top predators. She also gets into the water with the sharks. For readers who

like passionate investigative reporting. — Rick Roche, Booklist — “In this fascinating and meticulously reported book, Juliet Eilperin crisscrosses the globe, on the trail of one of the most mysterious creatures. She illuminates not only the hidden nature of the seas, but also the societies whose survival depend on them. — David Grann, author of *The Lost City of Z* — “Hate, fear, envy, awe, worship. Of the many shark books, precious few explore the human-shark relationship. And none do with such style as Juliet Eilperin does in this fact-packed, fast-paced narrative. This is the shark book for the person who wants to understand both what sharks are, and what sharks mean. Bite into it. — Carl Safina, author of *Song for the Blue Ocean* and *The View From Lazy Point; A Natural Year in an Unnatural World*

This will be a really short review because this is the type of book that someone will either want to read or immediately dismiss because they aren't interested in sharks. And although I could spend hours upon hours trying to convince you why sharks are so important, I won't do that here. So, with that said, I love this book! The author made sure to cover all sides of shark hunting, demonstrating its importance to fishermen and different local economies and also why it's harmful to the oceans to continue such practices. The book is written more as a novel than a non-fiction piece and the folklore surrounding sharks is told in a way that does justice to their mythical powers. As a shark lover, I was already pro-shark, but now I understand how and why some cultures see sharks as gods and how hunting them is an integral part of their way of life, which adds a whole new aspect to my respect for them.

This was a fascinating read. Each chapter focused on a different story about sharks, from shark fin soup to a guy who runs a kind of extreme-shark-hunting business. The major takeaway message is that sharks have gotten a bad rap in pop culture and we're pretty much completely destroying them. I'd say we're decimating them, but decimating literally means to kill one-tenth, and it's much worse than that. Don't be thrown off by the cover and the title -- I actually don't like things about sharks because I don't like hearing scare stories about people being torn to shreds or about sharks being demons, but that's completely not the focus of this book. This is an easy book to carry about and read a chapter at a time here and there. Major points for readability.

After having written a very perceptive book on how the demise of civility has adversely affected Congress, Juliet Eilperin turned her attention to real sharks and, not surprisingly, found them to be far less dangerous than Congress. She writes about their proper place in our ecosystem and how

overfishing for their fins has endangered many species and threatened their role. The reason they are being killed in such vast numbers is that it is a status symbol in Asia to eat shark fin soup, a barely palatable concoction noted primarily for its cost. Her travels take her around the world to describe some memorable characters who are either trying to kill or save sharks. All together its a fun but sobering read. She actually makes the reader care about the sharks survival.

I bought this book to write a review for my Evolution class. If you're interested in sharks I would definitely say buy this book. Eilperin dives deep into different rituals and cultures that are heavily circled around sharks. She gives her experiences in the shark trade as well as the protection of sharks and the understanding of why shark fin soup is so popular. Give it a try and I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

Required reading for a summit the grandson is attending. He likes to book very well and it has some great information.

Very nice surprise to have found a book who talks about sharks from a cultural point of view. These creatures have been here since before the dinosaurs and the only creature who could eliminate them from this planet is man. Very interesting accounts of shark callers from the South Pacific and other stories who few people have ever heard about.

Juliet does a good job of covering a lot of ground in her book. I truly enjoyed her later chapters on the various threats and the impact of finning on sharks on places I've dived. Too bad she didn't include Jim Abernathy and the Tiger Sharks on Tiger Beach Bahamas.

I learned a great deal from this book, not only about sharks and their role in our world, but also about the ocean and the damage that has been done to it. At the same time, I enjoyed the stories about people connected with sharks. I recommend this book as a good read and a thoughtful introduction to a creature we don't really know..

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