

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4051

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a task force regarding shark depredation, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 12, 2023

Mr. WITTMAN (for himself, Mr. SOTO, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, and Mr. VEASEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a task force regarding shark depredation, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Supporting the Health
5 of Aquatic systems through Research Knowledge and En-
6 hanced Dialogue Act” or the “SHARKED Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. SHARK DEPREDATION TASK FORCE AND RESEARCH**
8 **PROJECTS.**

9 (a) SHARK DEPREDATION TASK FORCE.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce
2 shall establish a task force (referred to in this sub-
3 section as the “task force”) to identify and address
4 critical needs with respect to shark depredation.

5 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Secretary of Com-
6 merce shall appoint individuals to the task force, in-
7 cluding—

8 (A) 1 representative from—

9 (i) each Regional Fishery Manage-
10 ment Council established under section
11 302(a)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fish-
12 ery Conservation and Management Act (16
13 U.S.C. 1852(a)(1));

14 (ii) each Marine Fisheries Commis-
15 sion, as such term is defined in section 3
16 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Con-
17 servation and Management Act (16 U.S.C.
18 1802);

19 (iii) the fish and wildlife agency of a
20 coastal State from each Regional Fishery
21 Management Council established under
22 section 302(a)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens
23 Fishery Conservation and Management Act
24 (16 U.S.C. 1852(a)(1)); and

1 (iv) the National Marine Fisheries
2 Service;

3 (B) an individual with expertise in the
4 management of highly migratory species; and

5 (C) a researcher with expertise in shark
6 management and behavior.

7 (3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The task force shall—

8 (A) develop ways to improve coordination
9 and communication across the fisheries man-
10 agement community to address shark depreda-
11 tion;

12 (B) identify research priorities and funding
13 opportunities for such priorities, including—

14 (i) identifying shark species involved
15 in interactions;

16 (ii) shark stock assessments;

17 (iii) how sharks become habituated to
18 humans and thus lead to more interactions
19 between sharks and humans;

20 (iv) how angler behavior and fishery
21 regulatory frameworks may influence shark
22 interactions; and

23 (v) techniques and strategies to re-
24 duce harmful interactions between sharks

1 and humans, including the development
2 and use of non-lethal deterrents;

3 (C) develop recommended management
4 strategies to address shark depredation; and

5 (D) coordinate the development and dis-
6 tribution of educational materials to help the
7 fishing community minimize shark interactions.

8 (4) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the
9 date of the enactment of this section, and every 2
10 years thereafter until the termination of the task
11 force in accordance with paragraph (5), the task
12 force shall submit to Congress a report regarding
13 the findings of the task force.

14 (5) SUNSET.—The task force shall terminate
15 not later than 7 years after the date on which the
16 Secretary of Commerce establishes the task force.

17 (6) COASTAL STATE DEFINED.—In this sub-
18 section, the term “coastal State”—

19 (A) means a State of the United States in,
20 or bordering on, the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific
21 Ocean, Arctic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, or Long
22 Island Sound; and

23 (B) includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Is-
24 lands of the United States, Guam, the Com-

1 monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,
2 and American Samoa.

3 (b) SHARK DEPREDATION RESEARCH PROJECTS.—

4 Section 318(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Con-
5 servation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1867(c)) is
6 amended by adding at the end the following:

7 “(6) Projects to better understand shark depre-
8 dation, including identifying what causes increases
9 in shark depredation and determining how to best
10 address shark depredation.”.

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