



SHARK SPOTLIGHT

SHARK NUMBERS ARE DECREASING. MAKING THE WORK OF THE LATE ROB STEWART CRUCIAL TO THEIR FUTURE. WRITES REESE HALTER.

The late Canadian award-winning filmmaker and conservationist, Rob Stewart, is a hero whose work should not be forgotten. Allow me to tell you about this intrepid planetary leader, filmmaker and vegan.

Rob Stewart adored Mother Earth and in particular sharks. He spent his lifetime defending and recording these fabulous fish, which have patrolled the oceans for 420 million years, surviving four mass extinctions.

In his three beautiful solution-rich documentaries: *Sharkwater*, *Revolution* and *Sharkwater Extinction*, Stewart reveals how imperative sharks are as apex predators, 'blue' carbon-keepers and climate solvers.

Sharks maintain ocean ecosystems but most people don't understand how these interconnected networks function because they aren't taught enough about it in school. In order to comprehend these complex living systems, we must learn about the role of predators, prey and nature's flawless 'blue' carbon storehouses.

Stewart's docos, available free on waterbear.com, delve into the plight of sharks and the climate emergency. We discover shark fisheries legally slay some 70 million creatures annually. Additionally, transnational organised crime illegally massacres about 80 million more sharks, each year, for fins in soup bowls. Billions of hooks on 21 million kilometres of longlines are decimating sharks and collapsing the oceans. Stewart's undercover filming spotlights this corrupt multi-billion-dollar mafia-driven business of extinction.

We bravely journey from Africa to Latin America and witness gory shark finning. Then we watch

megatons of frozen sharks transferred from fishing boats onto giant vessels that eventually off-load into vast warehouse freezers. Though more than 100 countries have banned finning sharks, only a handful prohibit vessels from carrying fins to Hong Kong – the global sharkfin hub.

The single biggest issue, according to Stewart, is the lack of awareness of what's going on in the oceans and that governments and corporations are annihilating nature. "If we [were aware], our morals would be engaged and guide us into a world that held governments accountable."

Humans are morally bound together. When we become aware of the conservation issues then more careful ecological decisions will be made.

"Conservation is the preservation of human life on Earth," declares *Revolution*.

In *Sharkwater Extinction* we see shark meat, fins and liver oil (squalene), which are chock-a-block with forever poisons, fed to people, pets and livestock, or smeared on skin within cosmetics.

"Be conscious of what you eat, where you put your dollars and how you live your life," *Sharkwater Extinction* urges.

"It's not just about saving the oceans; it's about saving ourselves." Stewart's clarion call to defend all planetary life is possible by assigning Mother Earth rights, the same personhood rights that corporations hold. Rob Stewart's riveting documentaries and message, "Never give up!", is more poignant now than ever. Hope with direct action is humanity's antidote to surviving this extinction. 