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## Guy Harvey Applauds Decision to Ban Commercial Shark Fishing in Bahamas

GRAND CAYMAN—JULY 7, 2011— The oceans just got a little safer for sharks, and conservationist, artist and scientist Guy Harvey couldn't be more pleased.

Responding to this week's announcement from the Government of the Bahamas that it will prohibit all commercial shark fishing in its more than 240,000 square miles of territorial water, Dr. Harvey commented: "I am very impressed and pleased that the Government of the Bahamas has taken the necessary and correct step to further protect its marine resources from over-exploitation by both local and foreign interests. This new legislation compliments the ban on commercial long line fishing enacted 20 years ago. The ban on commercial shark fishing and exportation by shark by-products is a huge step in the conservation of sharks worldwide."

Dr. Harvey, better known throughout the world as marine wildlife artist, is also a respected scientist, holding a PhD in fisheries science and biology. He is the founder of the Guy Harvey Research Institute at Nova Southeastern University and the internationally regarded Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation (GHOF), both of which are supporting shark studies, including tagging and migration.

Through the Bahamas National Trust, Dr. Harvey met with government officials last March to add his voice and influence as a highly respected conservationist to call for strict regulations to ban the commercial fishing of all sharks in The Bahamas—an archipelago of 700 islands sweeping across 500 miles of open ocean. The Bahamas is the fourth country to ban shark fishing after Honduras, the Maldives and Palau. Estimates are that more than 70 million sharks are killed annually around the world.

One of the premier shark-watching destinations for divers, reeling in \$800 million over the past 20 years for the Bahamian national economy, sharks, according to Dr. Harvey, were worth much more alive than dead.

"Many countries have seen their populations of sharks annihilated by commercial over-exploitation," said Dr. Harvey. "Research has shown that shark populations do not recover. Other countries will take encouragement from the Bahamas' very bold move. They are realizing very quickly the value of the living shark in maintaining the health of reef ecosystems. In addition, the economic value of a living shark to ecotourism is now widely accepted as a sustainable and non-consumptive use of a marine resource with many additional benefits to respective island nations."

Last year, following news that a Bahamian seafood company was considering exporting sharks to the Far East, the BNT along with the U.S. based Pew Environmental Group and individual conservationists such as Dr. Guy Harvey, who created a “Protect Bahamian Sharks” campaign logo and poster, initiated a petition drive to force the issue of banning commercial shark-fishing. The government upon receiving a petition signed by 5,000 Bahamian residents acted this week to protect the some 40 sharks species found in Bahamian waters.

With shark populations around the world continuing to spiral downward, marine scientists such as Dr. Guy Harvey, are working around the clock to give these magnificent animals a fighting chance for survival.

Dr. Harvey is also seeding cultural change in the structure of shark fishing tournaments to creating Catch and Release divisions.

Last month he brought his cause into the epicenter of one of the nation’s oldest and largest shark fishing tournaments in Ocean City, Maryland. Thanks in part to his efforts and a willingness to continue to adapt by the tournament founders and organizers, The Ocean City Shark Tournament’s cash and prize package payment in the catch and release division increased to over \$15,000.

In May, the Second Annual Guy Harvey Ultimate Shark Challenge, a catch and release only tournament was held on the West Coast of Florida in Punta Gorda. The tournament—created as a model for catch and release only shark tournament formats—drew some 3,000 competitors and spectators and paid out over \$15,000 in cash and prizes.

In related shark conservation activity, Dr. Harvey offered his artistic talent and foundation sponsorship funding in support of the recent Circle Hook Symposium held in Miami. The symposium, hosted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is an international gathering of scientists, resource managers and constituents convening to discuss the performance and use of circle hooks in commercial, recreational and artisanal fisheries. While it is legal to use a J-hook to fish for sharks, experts such as Dr. Harvey recommend using a circle hook, where the barb points inward and not outward.

Dr. Harvey’s message regarding shark protection initiatives is heard loud and clear in the recently released documentary “This is Your Ocean: Sharks”, co-starring fellow artist Wyland and photographer Jim Abernathy. The 44-minute documentary, which premiered at the Newport Beach Film Festival to positive reviews, depicts sharks in their environment capturing both adventure and passion and providing the audience with face-to-face realism never shown before on film. To view the trailer of the documentary, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPdZVnkoMCM>.

He has also recently released a public service message promoting shark free marinas <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pn6kCzgurCA>.

### **About Guy Harvey**

Guy Harvey is a world-renowned as a painter, underwater photographer, diver and marine biologist. Harvey, with permission from the Ernest Hemingway family, made a name for himself by debuting two sets of pen and ink drawings, including a collection titled *Santiago's Finest Hour*, inspired by the author's book, ***The Old Man & the Sea***. Since then, Harvey expanded beyond pen and ink to develop an artistic style of painting and photography that captivates fish and ocean lovers. He is a member of the prestigious Society of Animal Artists.

Guy's books are collectors' items, including his new "Panama Paradise" book featuring pictures and illustrations of the world famous Tropic Star Lodge in Panama. Among his many other accomplishments, Harvey's ***Portraits from the Deep*** book was made into a television fishing series currently airing on Fox Florida TV Network. The series received a Telly Award.

Much of Harvey's distinguished work is on a grand scale, having created full-wall murals at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, the Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale International Airport and Owen Roberts International Airport in Grand Cayman. Harvey is the recipient Panama's highest recognition, The Vasco Nuñez de Balboa Grand Cross and Silver Star, presented to those who make a positive impact in preserving Panama's ocean resources. Solomon Shamah, Panama's Minister of Tourism, presented the medal to Dr. Harvey. For additional information on Guy Harvey, visit [www.guyharvey.com](http://www.guyharvey.com)