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The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, & Education

NEWS RELEASE
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HISTORIC OREGON LEGISLATION PROTECTS SHARKS

Oregon Lawmakers Approve House Bill 2838 Today,
Continuing Efforts to Ban Shark Fins on the West Coast

San Francisco, California – 02 June 2011 -- The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education, known more commonly by its acronym "COARE", applauds the State of Oregon for its passage of House Bill 2838 to ban the sale, trade, possession, and distribution of shark fins. Since its inception, COARE has been actively addressing shark conservation issues, and attempts to reduce shark fin consumption in the U.S. and worldwide.

House Bill (HB) 2838 was introduced to the Oregon State Legislature on 11 January 2011 by Representative Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie), and subsequently passed the House of Representatives and Oregon State Senate unanimously, with votes of 44-0 and 30-0, respectively. Today, the House of Representatives voted 58-1 to concur with minor amendments made in the Senate, and the bill now moves on to the governor for action.

Oregon is now one step closer to helping the West Coast of the United States enact a full ban on the trade of shark fins, which will help reduce pressure on rapidly declining shark populations. Oregon's ban complements similar legislation signed into law on 12 May 2011 by Washington Governor Chris Gregoire, as well as pending legislation in California, which recently passed California's State Assembly. Oregon's proposed ban is also preceded by legislative bans adopted by the State of Hawai'i, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Every year, fins from up to 73 million sharks are used for shark fin soup, a dish traditionally served at Chinese weddings and banquets. This soup has grown in popularity, increasing consumer demand for shark fins and contributing to the decimation of shark populations worldwide as millions of sharks are killed every month, many for their fins alone. As a result of these fishing pressures, one-third of shark species are already threatened with extinction.

"All too often shark fins are obtained by means of a barbaric practice commonly referred to as finning. This involves the taking of sharks solely for the purpose of harvesting their fins, while the rest of the fish is usually wasted," said Representative Witt. "Worse yet, sharks are often finned alive, only to die an agonizing death of starvation, drowning, or bleeding."

"We are absolutely thrilled by the leadership of Representative Witt and his colleagues in the Oregon State Legislature," said Christopher Chin, COARE's Executive Director. "These decisive votes

continue to set a very clear direction and provide strong examples to follow. If any California Senators have been harboring doubt about which direction to take, the choice should be clear."

About COARE

The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education, Inc. (COARE) is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Its purpose is to study our oceans and increase public awareness of the earth's marine environment through educational programs and outreach. COARE seeks to enlighten people, young and old, to the plight of the oceans, to change the way they think and act, and to encourage them to create positive and lasting change. For more information about COARE, and the Shark Safe certification program, visit <http://www.coare.org> and <http://www.sharksafe.org>.

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