

**Sharks:  
Half (51%) of Americans are Absolutely Terrified of Them  
and Many (38%) Scared to Swim in the Ocean Because of  
Them...**

***But Majorities Agree Great White Sharks Are Vital for the Ecosystem  
(82%) and Believe Sharks Should be Protected from Being Hunted or  
Killed Unless Absolutely Necessary (73%)***

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Washington, DC - Though many Americans are terrified of them and scared to go into the water because of them, a majority believe sharks are vital for the ecosystem and should be protected from being hunted or killed unless absolutely necessary according to a new poll released today by Ipsos Public Affairs.

Against a backdrop of recent attacks by sharks making waves across the USA, the poll released today finds that half (51%) of Americans admit to being absolutely terrified of sharks and four in 10 (38%) say they're scared to swim in the ocean because they worry about sharks—but in spite of this, a significant majority (82%) agree Great White sharks perform a vital role for the ecosystem in our oceans and another three quarters (73%) believe sharks should be protected from being hunted or killed unless absolutely necessary.

***Half (51%) are Absolutely Terrified of Sharks...***

Half (51%) of Americans admit to being absolutely terrified of sharks of which 20% most definitely agree with this emotion compared with 45% who disagree



(including 22% who most definitely disagree). Of those who are most likely to express the sentiment of being terrified, they are women (55%) compared to men (46%) and are older (55% aged 55+) compared to those who are younger (48% aged 18 - 34) and middle-aged (48% aged 35 - 54). Being terrified of sharks runs highest in the Northeast (55%) followed by those in the Midwest (51%) and West (50%) and the South (48%).

***Many (38%) are Scared to Swim in the Ocean Because of Sharks...***

Four in 10 (38%) of Americans indicate they are scared to swim in the ocean because they worry about sharks – however this is only comprised of 15% who most definitely identify with this view and another 23% who are “somewhat” sure this sentiment. This compares with 57% of Americans who disagree (34% most definitely) that they are scared to swim in the ocean because they worry about sharks. Women (41%/16% definitely) are most likely to admit being terrified followed by men (35%/13% definitely) and those most likely living in the West (41%/18%), Midwest (39%/15%), South (39%/12%) and the Northeast (33%/15%).

***Despite Fears, a Majority (82%) Agree Great White Sharks Perform a Vital Role...***

A significant majority of Americans (82%) agree that Great White sharks perform a vital role for the ecosystem in our oceans compared with just one in 10 (8%)



who disagree. In fact, half (49%) definitely agree with this view followed by one third (33%) who somewhat agree with this perspective. Those most likely to believe that the Great White sharks are vital are women (83%) compared to men (79%) and those living in the Midwest/West (83%) followed by those in the South (81%) and the Northeast (79%). When it comes to a, there's virtually no differentiation: younger (83% aged 18 - 34) and middle-aged (83% aged 35 - 54) Americans are just slightly higher than those who are older (79% aged 55+) to agree with this view.

***And a Majority (73%) Agree that Sharks Should be Protected...***

Three quarters (73%) of Americans believe that sharks should be protected from being hunted or killed unless absolutely necessary - 42% most definitely agree with this view while 31% somewhat agree. Women (76% - 44% definitely) are more likely than men (69% - 39% definitely) to believe that sharks should be protected from being hunted were killed unless absolutely necessary and most likely living in the Northeast (75%/49%) followed by those in the West (74%/42%), the South (72%/39%) and the Midwest (70%/40%).

*These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted June 3-8, 2015. For the survey, a sample of 1,006 adults, ages 18+ were interviewed online. The precision of the Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all adults. For more information about credibility intervals, please see the appendix.*

*The data were weighted to the U.S. current population data by gender, age, education, and ethnicity. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to*



*coverage error and measurement error. Figures marked by an asterisk (\*) indicate a percentage value of greater than zero but less than one half of one per cent. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding.*

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