

Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific bans shark fin

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Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific is banning the carriage of shark fin on all its flights

Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific said Wednesday it will ban the carriage of shark fin on all its flights, a victory for conservationists concerned for endangered species of the predator.

The southern Chinese city is one of the world's biggest markets for shark fin, which is viewed by many Asians as a delicacy, often served as a soup at expensive Chinese banquets.

Animal rights campaigners have been pushing Cathay for a carriage [ban](#) on shark fin for years. Other airlines including Thai Airways and Philippine Airlines banned the item in recent years.

"On the issue of shark's fin, with immediate effect we are happy to agree to ban the carriage," Cathay Pacific said in a statement Wednesday.

The airline confirmed to AFP that the ban extended to all shark products on both cargo and passenger flights.

In its statement, Cathay said it has not approved "any shipments" for shark fin for the past year, adding that it had rejected 15 shipment requests for shark-related products.

Marine conservationists praised Cathay for its decision, with one saying that it would make the city "proud".

"It's high time that Cathay took the stand. It would make Hong Kong people proud," Hong Kong-based Aquameridien conservation foundation executive director Sharon Kwok told AFP.

"More Hong Kong businesses need to follow the lead," said Kwok, who has been pushing for the ban for years.

Hong Kong's government in 2013 said it would stop serving [shark fin](#) at official functions as "a good example", following years of lobbying by conservation groups.

Environmental group WWF said 457 tonnes of shark products were imported into Hong Kong by air in 2015, a 31 percent drop from 2014.

More than 70 million sharks are killed every year, according to the WWF. Huge quantities are exported annually to Hong Kong, and most of

those fins are then sent on to mainland China.

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