

SHOUT OUT FOR SHARKS

EDUCATION PACK

PART 4



TAKE ACTION FOR SHARKS
CAN WE HELP SAVE SHARKS FROM EXTINCTION?



PART 4 TAKE ACTION FOR SHARKS



FirstNews 
EDUCATION



TEACHER NOTES

Key questions

- How are shark activists and charities taking action to save sharks?
- How will saving sharks play a much greater role in protecting life in the ocean's ecosystems?
- Can you campaign to make people think differently about sharks?

Learning objectives

- Understand how individuals, charities and pressure groups take action to make changes
- Understand how taking part in conservation campaigns can lead to positive changes
- Experience taking part in campaigning for a global conservation project

ACTIVITY ONE

ACTIVISM RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Pupils are tasked with finding out how people support conservation efforts to protect sharks and the wider marine environment. Pupils read the interview with Finlay and the fact file on Bite-Back, and then discuss the 'Info check' questions to check understanding.

i) Understanding the role of an activist

- How has young activist Finlay Pringle contributed to the global challenge of protecting sharks?

ii) Understanding the role of a campaigning charity

- How does shark and marine conservation charity Bite-Back support shark and marine conservation efforts?
- How does Bite-Back work as an organisation?
- How is Bite-Back campaigning for change?

ACTIVITY TWO

TAKE ACTION: BITE-BACK'S SHOUT OUT FOR SHARKS CAMPAIGN

Pupils are tasked with becoming active participants in Bite-Back's **'Shout Out for Sharks'** campaign. Can they work as part of a national campaign to persuade people to think differently about sharks, to raise awareness of the need for shark conservation?

Campaign instructions

Send all artwork in to info@bite-back.com to be part of the campaign gallery.





ASK THE ACTIVIST: FINLAY PRINGLE



“To me, sharks are the most iconic animal that has ever lived on this planet”

Marine activist Finlay Pringle has been campaigning since he was ten. He is a huge shark fan and has worked on campaigns with Bite-Back to ban shark fin soup in UK restaurants.

Finlay has taken part in beach cleans, school strikes for climate change action and has talked publicly to raise awareness of the urgent need for marine conservation. In 2020, Finlay was awarded a UN Young Activists Summit grant for his environmental action. The grant money has funded this Shout Out For Sharks: Education Pack and, without Finlay, you would not be having this lesson in school today!

● How did you become a marine conservation activist?

I'd been interested in the natural world for a long time. But it all started for me when I was ten. I'd been snorkelling all my life, it's one of the many things I do to relax.

This was the situation. There was a beach in Gairloch where I live. **Scottish Water** was planning on degrading the sewage system to dump sewage into the sea here. But then they would re-upgrade it in summer when the tourists are about. In February, with about 100 other local people, we went into the sea to show Scottish Water that we used the beach and the sea all year round.

● You say that since then, you've been concentrating on shark conservation. What do you love about sharks, and why are you trying to protect them?

To me, sharks are the most iconic animal that has ever lived on this planet. You look at all those time periods



Emma Smith

GAIRLOCH PROTESTS CHANGE SEWAGE PLANS

In February 2018, Finlay took part in the community protests on the shores of Loch Gairloch. The villagers' campaign won support from local politicians. The water company listened to the residents and altered the plans for how they would deal with wastewater treatment.

– there's been the dinosaurs, the **massive insects**, now mammals. The one constant in 450 million years of evolution is sharks. They were there before the dinosaurs. There were some around when the giant insects were about. They've been a constant on our Earth, and now, because of our actions we may send them to extinction. In fact, by the time I finish university, many species of shark will be extinct if we don't stop what we are doing.

Other than that, sharks are so beautiful. They've been made into monsters for a film [*Jaws* released in the 1970s], when they're just doing what any other animal has ever done – hunt, live, exist. Honestly, I cannot





wait until the mosquito version of *Jaws* comes out. That would be a good film, cos they kill like 1,000,000 people a year!

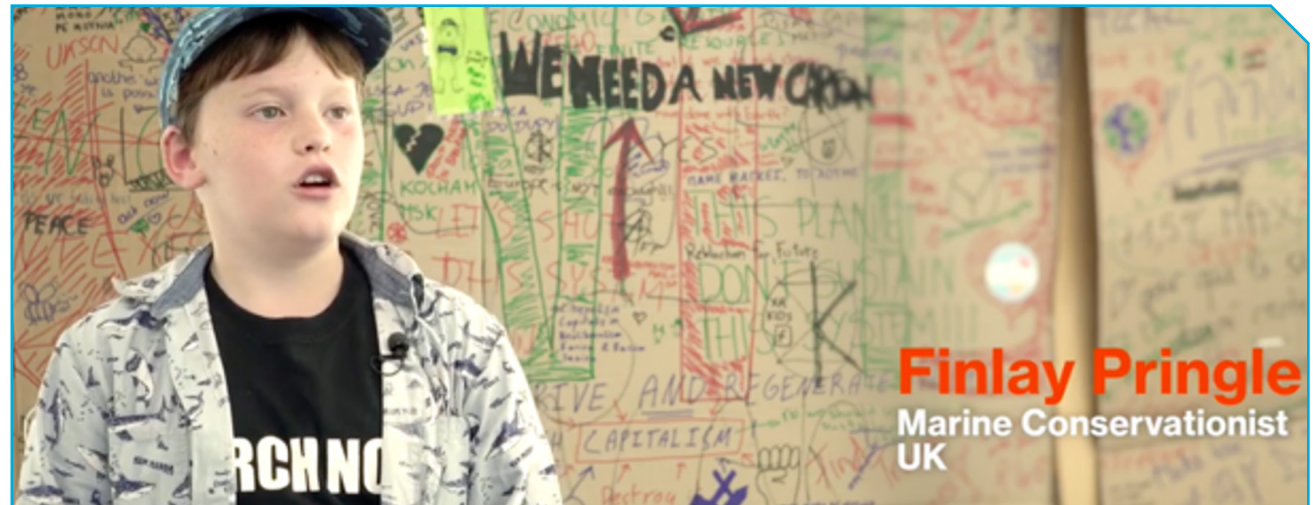
● Tell us about the campaigning you've been doing for shark conservation.

I've been doing a lot with Bite-Back. I was sending letters out for shark finning and we got some of the restaurants closed down. [Read the section on Bite-Back's campaigns to find out more about this.]

I've been writing letters and been telling people everywhere I go about Bite-Back, when I tell them about good charities to follow for their shark work.

I've been given awards from my campaigning but at the same time, I look at it and think I haven't done that much, I've just done what anyone in the world could be doing. Writing letters, joining Zoom calls, beach cleaning. Up near us there are some horrific beaches, like Scouriemore, that are entirely covered in fishing nets.

I was given an award by the United Nations for the Youth Activist Summit and I got a grant for this. I gave Bite-Back the grant money because I know what they do, I know how they operate and I know that I can trust them. I know that funding this school education pack is going to help shark conservation.



UN Young Activists Summit November 2020

On World Children's Day on 20 November 2020, Finlay was one of only seven young people from around the globe to be on the stage at the Young Activists Summit 2020.

More than 9,000 people from 106 countries across five continents took part in this live event and the seven young activists championed the issues they cared about.

They described the positive actions they had been taking to make changes on these

important global issues. They explained what they'd been doing in their country or local community, and the changes they had made on this issue.

Finlay spoke about his work with marine and shark conservation, and how he'd campaigned to reduce the number of restaurants in the UK serving shark fin soup. The other young activists explained how they were working to improve climate action, biodiversity, human rights, sustainable and ethical fashion issues.

Finlay was awarded a grant by the United Nations for being selected to be part of the Youth Activist Summit. This was funded by the Sisley Foundation, which supports and funds the annual Youth Activist Summit.

Finlay decided to give his grant money to Bite-Back to fund this School Education Pack and enable more young people across the UK to get involved with marine and shark conservation projects.





● Environmental problems can seem quite overwhelming. As a young activist, do you have any advice?

Just try to do anything you can. If there's a local event on about sharks or the ocean or plastic, just go for it, even if you find it boring, just go for ten minutes and meet people. Networking is the most important thing I've ever done because it's got me where I am now. It's just going to a meeting and walking around talking to people. If there's a climate strike, or a big litter pick on in your village or town or city, go do it. There's no reason not to. We are all a friendly bunch and at beach cleans there's sometimes biscuits!

Even though what's going on in our world right now can seem depressing, there are so many positives that you can focus on. Just think about the difference that people out there are making, because they're doing the things that you're learning about. If you've ever done a beach clean, think about how much rubbish you got off that beach and how much that may help an individual animal. Just that sort of thing, just think about the positives. Look at the bright side of life.

I would also say that something really important to do is watch your mental health. Do the best that you can do, without causing yourself too much harm. Look after the planet, yes, but also look after yourself.

● Do you have any strategies for coping with struggles with mental health issues?

There's a book out about blue spaces. A blue space is anywhere near the water, so that can be a swimming pool, a local river, the sea. You don't even have to go swimming, you just have to like sit down, and watch a river for a bit, and it's actually been proven by doctors

to help de-stress. Also, I'm being serious, trees release a chemical that de-stresses people. I don't know why, but tree hugging actually makes sense, so go hug a tree!

● What can young people do in general to help the environment? Can you give us your top tips?

I'm gonna pitch Finlay Pringle's one to five things that you can do to help.

1. Meat Free Monday: it's Monday, just don't eat meat. If you can cut down one day with no meat, that's 27kg of carbon not going in the atmosphere per person a year.
2. Try not to use plastic, and if you do use plastic, (I can't believe I'm about to use the words 'recycle it' but) recycle. There are some ways that you have to use plastic so be responsible with it.
3. Attend a climate strike. There's probably one near you. They are pretty much everywhere. For me, it's an hour out of my week, it's like an hour out of school that I can easily catch up on. It's simple!
4. Talk to your MPs and MSPs [Members of the Scottish Parliament]. They are there to represent you and have the power to actually make changes.
5. But, don't believe everything people say to you! Companies, businesses and politicians reply to you to make it look like they are doing a good job. Question them again and hold them to account to make sure they really are behind the changes you want to happen.

● What do you think are the main threats to sharks?

Fishing poses a threat to marine life everywhere. If you think about it, fishing nets are designed to kill things so if they're just out in the ocean that's horrific. Without doubt, fishing is the biggest threat to sharks. Fishing in the UK produces more carbon than the **aviation industry**, it's killing marine life, it's polluting the water – it's a triple threat!





● You love sharks and campaign to protect them. But why do you think it is essential that more of us understand why sharks are so important?

The way I like to explain sharks is, if you've played Jenga, you'll know what I mean...

Let's just pretend that the marine ecosystem, the oceans, is a Jenga tower. And every species, habitat, and all that, is a block in the tower. So, we can lose some species – obviously it's terrible that we do, but we can, the tower can still work, but it's wobbly. But if we remove sharks, they're like the bits in the middle that hold the thing together. And by removing sharks, the apex predators, the entire ocean ecosystem collapses. At the top of the food chain, sharks basically keep the larger fish in check, so when we remove all of the sharks, all the larger fish massively overpopulate. Then, they eat all the smaller fish, and then they have no food so they all die out. And then, all the krill overpopulate and then they eat all their food. And then they die out. So, by losing sharks, it sets off a domino effect that basically causes the entire oceans to collapse. Everyone knows Jenga gets really wobbly and dodgy towards the end – that's what our ocean's heading towards. So... sharks are pretty important!



● How do you hope to inspire young people with this education pack? And can they inspire others?

I think that anyone in the world can be inspiring. Anyone who's out there doing literally anything to protect sharks is inspiring for me. If you're using your time to try to protect the planet for the future, you're an inspiration to everyone around you.

GLOSSARY

activist – Someone who participates in actions that will benefit their community. Also described as an active citizen

apex predators – The predators at the top of the food chain that are not eaten by any other animals within that ecosystem

aviation industry – All aspects of air travel and the businesses that make this work

campaign – A planned set of activities that people carry out in order to achieve something such as social or political change

community protests – Local people work together and demonstrate to show their opposition to decisions that have been made about where they live and to bring about changes in these plans

'massive insects' – Fossils show that giant insects inhabited Earth between

360 and 250 million years ago. The largest known was a giant dragonfly that was about the size of a crow. They are thought to have become extinct due to changes in the atmosphere and the evolution of flying dinosaurs and birds

networking – Trying to meet new people to exchange ideas and potentially work together to develop projects, or on areas that you are all involved with

politicians – Members of a government or law-making organisation who have been elected to represent a wider group of people

residents – The people who live in a particular location

Scottish Water – The publicly owned organisation that runs the water supplies and waste water management systems in Scotland





MEET THE CHARITY: BITE-BACK SHARK & MARINE CONSERVATION



“We defend the high seas on the high street”

WHAT IS BITE-BACK?

Bite-Back Shark & Marine Conservation is a UK **charity** that campaigns, also known as a **pressure group**. This means Bite-Back's supporters – **volunteers** – work to change the behaviour of people and organisations to protect sharks and marine life. Bite-Back says it ‘defends the high seas on the high street’. Bite-Back supporters write letters to supermarkets, restaurants and other retailers to educate them on the need for shark and marine conservation. The campaigners highlight the problems these businesses are adding to, and ask them to change things they do that threaten sharks and other endangered marine life.

The charity and its supporters also **lobby** UK parliament to change laws to bring about further protection. It is committed to making Britain shark fin free.

Bite-Back's focus is to:



Educate: Highlight the environmental risks of overfishing and change public perception of sharks.



Eliminate: Stop shops and restaurants selling shark and other threatened marine life.



Motivate: Inspire compassion for the marine environment and empower supporters.

Watch: Bite-Back founder Graham Buckingham explain *The Terrifying Truth About Sharks* in this fascinating TEDx talk tinyurl.com/bitebacktedx

How is Bite-Back funded?

As it is a charity, Bite-Back's work is funded by donations. It relies on its supporters to become members, **fundraise** and make donations.





What are Bite-Back's current campaigns?



End the sale of shark fin soup in the UK

More than 73 million sharks are slaughtered every year. Many of these are killed simply for their fins. Bite-Back's campaigning has reduced the number of UK restaurants selling shark fin soup by 82%, but there are still a few that do. Bite-Back wants the UK to be the first country in the world to ban shark fin soup.



Make it illegal for people to bring any amount of shark fin products into the UK

Currently, anyone travelling to the UK from outside Europe can legally bring in 20kg of dried shark fins with them for personal use. That's enough to make 705 bowls of soup, which could be sold illegally on the **black market** for around £3,600. Bite-Back is lobbying parliament to get this legal loophole closed.



End the sale of all shark products in the UK

Bite-Back campaigns have already stopped retailers such as Asda, Makro and Iceland Foods, along with dozens of smaller businesses, from selling mako, thresher and blue shark steaks. And they've inspired Holland & Barrett to take shark cartilage capsules out of their 580 stores.

Bite-Back asks anyone who finds a business in the UK that is selling shark items to let them know, and they will work to get it stopped.





Find out more about Bite-Back and their campaigns at www.bite-back.com



Stop sensational shark reporting in the media

Clickbait headlines hinder shark conservation. When the media describes sharks as monsters, killers, beasts, or as menacing, lurking and razor-toothed, etc, it reinforces outdated **stereotypes** that still remain after the film *Jaws* was released in the 1970s.

Bite-Back has written guidelines to advise national and international press organisations. Contact Bite-Back if you see a news article or watch a broadcast using sensationalist reporting.



Stop supermarkets selling threatened fish species

Swordfish, marlin, monkfish and skate are all threatened marine fish species. Many UK supermarkets continue to sell these.

Bite-Back asks its supporters to write to supermarkets asking them to stop selling these threatened species.



Stop restaurants serving threatened fish species

Menus in restaurants also don't need to include these threatened fish species. Bite-Back works hard to educate restaurants to understand their role in the depletion of the oceans.

Bite-Back asks its supporters to let them know if they come across a restaurant serving these fish, and they will work with them to persuade them to change their menu.





GLOSSARY

charity – A charity is an organisation set up for a specific cause. They are usually funded by donations and must be legally registered to show that their funds are being used to support their agreed cause

clickbait – Sensationalised or misleading headlines that are written with the purpose of attracting attention and to shock, in order to make people click on links to open particular webpages

fundraise – To raise money for a cause

lobby – To try to persuade members of a government or council to change a particular law, or that a particular thing needs to be done differently

pressure group – A voluntary group who work to raise the interests of a particular cause and to persuade governments to make changes in the law, and for organisations to make changes in the way they operate. Environmental pressure groups include Bite-Back, WWF, RSPB, Surfers Against Sewage, etc

stereotypes – Fixed and untrue opinions about something

volunteers – Individual people who undertake work or tasks for others in an unpaid capacity for charitable or community groups





INFO CHECK

ACTIVIST: FINLAY PRINGLE

Investigate how we can all help, and what actions we could take.

Read through this interview and discuss what you find out from this activist.

Finlay's campaigning

- What was the first campaign Finlay got involved in? What change did this protest lead to?
- What type of activities has Finlay's campaigning work involved?
- Why was Finlay awarded the grant to fund this education pack? And why did he want Bite-Back to use the funding for this?

Finlay's shark knowledge

- Why does Finlay talk about dinosaurs and prehistoric giant insects when explaining why he thinks sharks are so iconic?
- Finlay talks about the game Jenga when he explains why shark conservation is so essential. Why?

Finlay's advice for young activists

- Have you done any of Finlay's list of top things you can generally do to help the environment? Which ones do you think you'd be up for trying?
- What advice does Finlay have for young activists?
- What strategies does he suggest for coping with mental health issues when working on challenging global environmental problems?
- How does Finlay think you can inspire other people?



INFO CHECK

CHARITY: BITE-BACK

Read through this fact file and discuss what you find out about the conservation charity and their campaigning.

How does Bite-Back work as an organisation?

- The charity Bite-Back wants to protect sharks and other marine life by the following three actions:

Educate: Who do Bite-Back want to educate? And what about?

Eliminate: Who do Bite-Back want to stop doing what?

Motivate: Who do they want to inspire, and why?

- What does it mean that Bite-Back is a pressure group?
- How is Bite-Back funded?

How is Bite-Back campaigning for change?

- Why is Bite-Back's '**We defend the high seas on the high street**' such a powerful slogan?
- Bite-Back has four current campaigns that focus directly on shark conservation.
 - What are they?
 - What is each one trying to stop?
 - How can you get involved with each of these campaigns?
- Bite-Back has two campaigns that focus on the conservation of threatened fish species more generally.
 - Which species of fish is Bite-Back raising awareness of?
 - Who do they want to stop doing what?
 - How can you get involved with each of these campaigns?





SHOUT OUT FOR SHARKS CAMPAIGN

Finlay and Bite-Back want you to be part of the new campaign launching with this education pack.

Campaign aim:

Can young people join together to be a united voice for shark conservation? The challenge is for young people to educate the older generation as to why sharks are such a fascinating family of sea creatures. And why protecting these apex predators is vital for the conservation of the whole marine ecosystem.

A Bite-Back survey of adults found that:

- Nearly half (46%) of all Brits think sharks are more terrifying than spiders, snakes and rodents combined
- 64% of British people would "prefer sharks not to exist"

This out-of-date thinking hinders vital shark conservation projects.

Your activism challenge:

- Can you create posters, artwork, poems and more to change older people's thinking about sharks?

How will Bite-Back magnify young people's messages?

- Posters and artwork will be shared in the campaign gallery on Bite-Back's website to magnify your message to a wider audience. Bite-Back will work with *First News* and the wider media to get the message of this campaign picked up and talked about.

Taking part in the Shout Out for Sharks campaign

In your **campaign poster** or **artwork**, you could decide to **focus** on **ONE** or more of the following:

- Enthral and educate
- Talk about the threats
- Ask for action
- Challenge misconceptions

enthral = fascinate

Campaign focus explained:

Enthral and educate: Draw a picture of your favourite shark and say why you find it so fascinating. Be the champion for this species of shark! This will educate people who don't know it exists in our oceans!

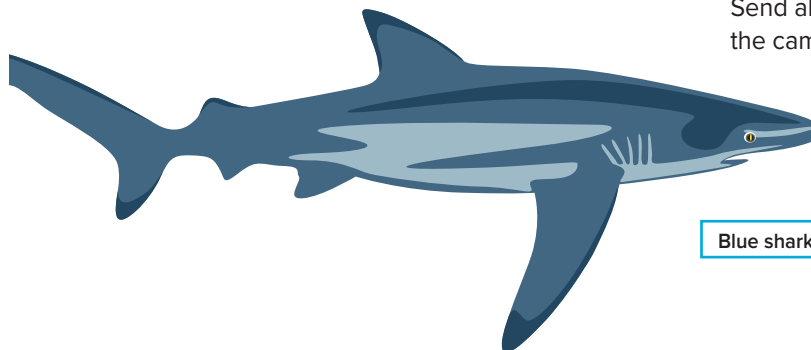
Talk about the threats: Humans kills thousands of sharks every day for many different reasons. Can you educate the older generation as to why humans are such a huge threat to sharks?

Ask for action: State what people can do more widely to protect the ocean's marine ecosystem, for example, by not eating fish species that are under threat, or by trying to not use any unneeded plastic that could end up as microplastics in the ocean. Or educate people to make sure they don't eat shark fin soup or shark steaks when they're on holiday.

Challenge misconceptions: Lots of people think sharks are out to get them. Give examples of other things that are more dangerous than sharks and let people know that sharks aren't terrifying.

Campaign instructions

Send all artwork in to info@bite-back.com to be part of the campaign gallery.



Blue shark

