Abstract: Global narratives around shark declines and shark conservation have focused overwhelmingly on shark finning, including on demand for high-priced fins as a luxury product. In the United States and Europe, sharks and cetaceans are both increasingly seen as “charismatic megafauna” to be conserved rather than natural resources to be sustainably exploited. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, these charismatic animals are culturally important resources which remain vital to food security for some communities. This talk reports early results of research into the social and economic systems underlying shark fisheries and whaling operations in Saint Vincent and discusses current practices in the context of local goals, public health, and marine conservation. Findings suggest that “on the ground” decisions about shark fisheries are considerably more complex than common conservation narratives suggest, and that proposed solutions may fail to adequately address these complexities.

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