

the big boy was scavenging for food thrown overboard and was perfectly friendly."

The early Hawaiians distinguished five kinds of sharks: the *mano kihikihi* or hammerhead shark, the *lalakea* or white-fin, the *mano kanaka* or man shark which was revered as the family *aumakua*, the *mano*, a large white shark, and the *niuhi* which was the largest and fiercest of them all. The *niuhi* was greatly feared by the Hawaiians who said they could see it a long way off at night by the greenish light of its eyeballs. The capture of one of these sharks was a great event. The following description was written in 1897 by a Hawaiian woman:

Preparations consisted of catching many of the common shark and cooking their livers, together with a little of the flesh, in *ti* leaves in underground ovens. Large quantities of *awa* root were pounded and mixed with water to make a highly intoxicating liquor. Then the cooked meat and *awa* were put in gourds and loaded into fifty to a hundred of the largest single and double canoes. This fleet sailed many miles out to sea where the *niuhi* was known to appear frequently. When they had arrived at a comparatively shallow place, the canoe in which the *kahuna* for the expedition rode, cast anchor. The meat and baked liver were thrown overboard, a few bundles at a time, to attract the shark. After a few days the grease and scent of the cooked meat spread through the water many miles in radius. The *niuhi* would almost always make its appearance on the third or fourth day. Bundles of meat were thrown to it as fast as it could swallow them. After awhile

the shark became comparatively tame and would come close to the canoes to be fed. Then bundles of the liver soaked with *awa* were given to it. When it had become not only satiated but stupefied with the *awa*, a noose was slipped over its head. The fleet raised anchor and started for home, the shark following, a willing prisoner. The people of the nearest canoe carefully continued to feed it the *awa*-soaked liver from time to time. When they reached land, the shark was led into shallow water, stranded, and killed. The body was carefully divided among all the participants. Apparently the value of the capture of the *niuhi* was entirely psychological. It was believed that whoever owned any fragment of its skin or bones became endowed with great courage. The man who slipped the noose over the head of the shark was supposed to be victorious ever after.

Shark fishing was considered a great sport by the ancient *alii*. The bait used was human flesh, which, according to one authority, was cheaper than pig and equally acceptable to the shark. Besides, it gave the chiefs an opportunity to dispose of anyone they disliked. The victim was killed two or three days in advance of the fishing expedition and the flesh cut up, placed in a calabash and left exposed to the air to decompose.

On the day of the event the royal party set out with the human bait tied to the outrigger of the canoe in such a manner that it would leave a trail of blood and oil on the water. At the shark grounds, hooks of bone or wood a foot in length were baited with chunks of the flesh. The chiefs showed great skill and courage in

capturing the sharks for this feat was considered a measure of their stature as *alii*. Kamehameha I was very proud of his title as a great shark hunter. He penned his victims close to the *heiau* of Mookini near Kawaihae, Hawaii.

In shark fishing, as in other things, the *haoles* brought progress to the Islands. Their advances consisted of using harpoons instead of oversized fish hooks, and horses instead of humans for bait. According to one old account, a dead horse was tied to the stern of a boat and the belly slashed so that it bled freely and the entrails spread through the water. This attracted the sharks so that they came quite close to the boat where they were easily harpooned. In one day of such sport the catch was three yellow-green sharks and one with indistinct stripes like a tiger.

Noosing a shark while it slept with its head in a cave in the reef was once a popular technique with the Hawaiians. A fisherman would dive down and gently slip a noose around the tail of the shark, then return to the surface and climb into his canoe. The line was pulled in and the shark hauled up and killed. Dangerous as this sounds, it is not at all impossible, for fishermen have found that the shark's active strength is in its tail. When the shark is lifted tail first out of the water it seems to be paralyzed by the weight of its body pressing downward on its head and can make only feeble movements. While hanging thus it may be killed without difficulty.

Today shark hunting is no longer a sport, although sharks are sometimes caught with a hook and line by fishermen casting for *ulua*. Gill nets stretched across channels and harbors often entangle small hammerheads. The shark is the only fish which may legally be killed

with firearms. This is for protection, not sport, and is done chiefly by big game fishermen when they see a shark after their catch. Many fishing launches carry pistols or rifles and if a shark follows a boat too closely or attempts to molest the catch, the skipper may dispatch it with a shot in the head.

The Enigma

So much fact and fancy have been woven together about sharks that it is hard to separate the two. The Hawaiians call the *haoles* "shark bait" because they say that sharks prefer "white meat" to that of the dark-skinned local people. While a fish which swallows anchors, tin cans and valises would hardly appear discriminating enough to care, still the saying has a basis of truth. During the war, when the Air Force was developing a shark repellent to use on life rafts, it was found that sharks have a negative reaction to dark colors but are attracted to white. Shark repellents are therefore made of a black dye combined with a copper acetate which dulls the smell of the shark.

The shark is such a tempting subject for tales of the heroic that, thanks to the movies, a kind of tradition has grown up that no South Sea native is really worth his *poi* if he doesn't occasionally meet and kill a shark in underwater combat. There are also a number of references to shark wrestling, and to heroes who fought and killed sharks, in some of the old books on Polynesia. But Hollywood and legends to the contrary, it is impossible. The skin of a shark is almost impenetrable to a hand-wielded knife. Even on land it takes full strength to puncture and rip the shark's grainy, tough hide. In