**LEGACY OF JAWS**

* Tagline: **DON’T GO IN THE WATER**
* Giant, man-eating Great White Shark terrorizes seaside community
* Struck fear in moviegoers across the U.S. in summer of 1975.
* *Jaws* became the biggest box office hit at the time; remains 1 of the top box office hits

**MISCONCEPTIONS**

* People thinkall sharks are stalking, killing machines
* Sharks want to eat people (humans are not part of sharks’ normal prey)
* Shark attacks are frequent **(They are** **RARE**. You’re more likely to be killed by a lightning strike or a dog attack than a shark attack.

**DAMAGE TO SHARKS**

* U.S. shark populations declined
* Thousands sought out trophy sharks photo of shark for mantle); Kill tournaments
* 1980s: commercial fisheries began to focus on sharks; overfished shark populations
* As shark populations declined, marine **ecosystems suffered**: e.g. overpopulation of prey
* **Since large-scale fishing began, many shark populations have decreased by 90%**
* **Ca. 100 million sharks are killed by commercial and recreational fisheries each year**
* **Sharks = endangered species; 1/4 of shark species threatened with extinction**
* **Discovery Channel’s *Shark Week***: since 1987: melodramatic, frightening shark documentaries that perpetuate myths about sharks.
* **shark fin soup** (Asia) several million shark die per year for shark fin soup: fins are cut off of live sharks & thrown back into the ocean to drown—**shark finning**
* ***Jaws* played a major role in all of the above**

**BENEFITS OF JAWS**

* Increased study of sharks. Before *Jaws,* scientists knew little about sharks—not “important” commercial species > low funding for research. Post *Jaws*, interest in sharks & funding for shark research skyrocketed. **Over 500 species of shark exist**
* Scientists have learned that sharks are top predators; they balance the ocean’s ecosystem.

**WHAT DID THIS EXERCISE TEACH YOU? IMPORTANCE OF…**

* **Objectivity:** ability to consider information without being influenced by personal feelings or opinions
* **Agenda:** the underlying intentions or motives of a particular person or group
* **Bias:** prejudice – preconceived opinion not based on actual experience or facts
* Ask hard questions of your sources; challenge your opinion based on what you learn.
* Consider the content & author/source; quantity as well as quality
* QUESTION AUTHORITY

**QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS: 1.** What is the very first step you take when you start working on a research project? **2.** What resource do you most often use first, and WHY?