



## 'Catch and release' shark tournament held

Published: May 21, 2010 at 7:38 PM

PUNTA GORDA, Fla., May 21 (UPI) -- A Florida shark tournament adds a conservation twist to the traditional form -- the sharks are released live after being measured and tagged, organizers say.

Traditionally, caught sharks are brought back to dock, where the dead animals would be weighed and measured to determine a tournament winner, The Washington Post reported Friday.

In the Guy Harvey Ultimate Shark challenge, a chase boat rushes to contestants' boats when there is a catch, and the live shark is quickly measured, tagged and released back into the sea, the newspaper said.

The new twist on an old sport is an effort by conservationists and scientists to protect dwindling shark populations, decimated by the demand for their fins and meat.

Brothers Sean and Brooks Paxton say they came up with the idea of transforming a traditional "kill" tournament into a live spectator sport.

"It's a labor of love that's involved all of us, to change people's attitudes about the use of resources," Sean Paxton said.

"Sharks need help, and kill tournaments vilify sharks," U.S. Humane Society Senior Vice President John Grandy said.

"What we need now is for people to understand that sharks are in serious trouble," Grandy, whose group has endorsed the contest, added.