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# WEEKEND BREAK



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**GLAMOUR BOY  
OF THE WEST COAST**

Maybe they used to cuss him and throw him back . . . but not any more. Because the soup-fin shark has earned Pacific coast fishermen more money than they've ever seen before. Somebody exposed the fact that his abnormally large liver has the highest Vitamin "A" content of any other in the fish liver oil industry . . . making him a bonanza to the nation . . . as well as a gold mine for the fishermen.

This discovery was aptly timed. The original source of Vitamin "A", namely halibut, is becoming scarce, and the military as well as civilian demand for it is increasing. Our fighting pilots will be outstanding consumers, for Vitamin "A" greatly improves night vision.

We are telling this story because the Sharples Super-Centrifugal Process has proved the fastest and most economical method of recovering fish oil from the liver.

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Representatives throughout the world

A 1940s advertisement highlights the importance of shark liver oil to the war effort.

## SHARKS IN SIGHT

Reflecting on an era of coastal shark liver fishing

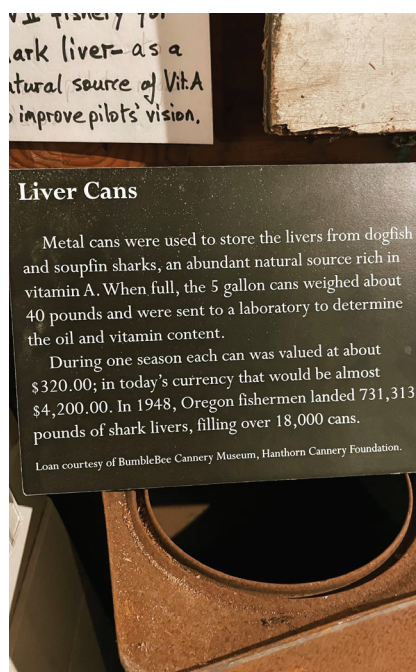
By JULIA TRIEZENBERG  
*For The Astorian*

A great rise in demand for shark liver, lasting from 1939 to 1950, brought the Northwest to the forefront of a global trade, providing a source of vitamin A during World War II.

Considered a crucial resource during the war, the vitamin was believed to help pilots prevent night blindness.

In fact, much of the mythology about carrots being a so-called superfood for eyesight originated from this period. Some have also suggested that wartime propaganda promoting carrots was merely a cover to hide new radar technologies the Allies were using against the Axis powers.

While neither carrots nor shark liver will make you magically see in the dark, it's proven that vitamin A is good for eye health. When demand skyrocketed during



Julia Triezenberg  
A liver can label highlights the trade of shark livers by the numbers.

the war, many communities on the West Coast stepped up to help. Fisheries adapted assembly lines and boats set their sights on the catch.

Before the shark fishing industry hit its stride, most of the United States imported vitamin A from Europe in the form of cod liver oil. When the cod fishing industry was nearly shut down because of the war, the shark fishing industry boomed.

Instead of cod liver oil, people began looking to shark liver oil to provide vitamin A. Fisheries along the Oregon Coast in Astoria, Depoe Bay and Newport expanded efforts to address the demand.

More than 30 species of sharks have been recorded near the Pacific coast of North America, but only a few were sought after for commercial purposes during the trade.

The spiny dogfish and soupfin

*See Sharks, Page B5*