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# Kevin Thompson (pastor)

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**Kevin Thompson** (born 1958) is the incumbent pastor (for more than 15 years) of the Bay Area Family Church, a [Unification Church of the United States](#) congregation located in [San Leandro, California](#).<sup>[1]</sup> In 2006, he was indicted by a [grand jury](#) for violating the [Lacey Act](#), a [federal](#) law which criminalizes the sale and purchase of certain protected species.<sup>[2]</sup> On January 22, 2007, Thompson was sentenced to a year and a day in prison and<sup>[3]</sup> also ordered to pay \$100,000 in [restitution](#).<sup>[4]</sup>



Kevin Thompson



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## Lacey Act [\[ edit \]](#)

The Lacey Act prohibits selling or purchasing wildlife which was captured in violation of an underlying law or regulation.<sup>[5]</sup> In January 1994, it became unlawful under California state law to capture [leopard sharks](#) (*Triakis semifasciata*) of less than 36 inches in length.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Shark smuggling [\[ edit \]](#)

From 1992 through 2003,<sup>[7]</sup> Thompson enlisted several young men to catch and sell juvenile leopard sharks (leopard sharks which were less than the minimum legal length) from the [San Francisco Bay](#). During that period of time, at least 465 leopard sharks were sold to companies in [Miami](#); [Chicago](#); [Houston](#); [Romulus, Michigan](#); [Milford, Connecticut](#); the [Netherlands](#); and the United Kingdom.<sup>[3]</sup> Federal authorities learned of Thompson's involvement when pet dealers in Florida and Chicago were arrested and gave evidence against him.<sup>[8]</sup>

In a 2003 sermon, Thompson mentioned that his fishing crew had spent a decade catching and selling juvenile leopard sharks to local pet stores.<sup>[9]</sup> Spokespeople for the church have denied that the church knew of or condoned Thompson's activities.<sup>[10]</sup> In a non-prosecution agreement with the government, the Unification Church agreed to pay \$500,000 to a \$1.5 million

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fund set up for the purpose of rehabilitating and restoring marine wildlife habitat in the San Francisco Bay to further protect the leopard shark. \$900,000 was added to the fund by the State of California and private environmental foundations.<sup>[11][12]</sup> By 2013 leopard sharks were again flourishing in the San Francisco Bay. This was largely credited to these environmental restoration efforts.<sup>[13]</sup>

## References [ edit ]

- ↑ United States Attorney for the Northern District of California, "Press Release"<sup>[↗]</sup>. Archived from the original on December 24, 2007. Retrieved 2007-03-13., January 23, 2007.
- ↑ Los Angeles Times, "Moon's Church to Pay in Shark Poaching"<sup>[↗]</sup>, February 13, 2007.
- ↑ <sup>*a*</sup> <sup>*b*</sup> January 23, 2007 Press Release, *supra*.
- ↑ The Journal (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), "The Minister, the Sharks and \$1.2m"<sup>[↗]</sup>, January 29, 2007.
- ↑ See 16 U.S.C. § 3372.
- ↑ 1993 Cal. Legis. Serv. 1100, § 8, *codified at* Cal. Fish & Game Code § 8388.5.
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- ↑ National Public Radio, "Prosecutors Net Leopard-Shark Smugglers"<sup>[↗]</sup>, February 13, 2007.
- ↑ L.A. Times, "Moon's Church to Pay in Shark Poaching," *supra*.
- ↑ NPR, "Prosecutors Net Leopard-Shark Smugglers," *supra*.
- ↑ San Diego Union Tribune, "Shark Poaching Will Cost Moon's Church"<sup>[↗]</sup>, February 13, 2007.
- ↑ Leopard sharks flourishing in south San Francisco Bay as wetlands are restored<sup>[↗]</sup>, *Contra Costa Times*, July 23, 2013

## Further reading [ edit ]

- Six Indicted in Scheme to Poach and Smuggle Protected California Leopard Sharks<sup>[↗]</sup> at the Wayback Machine (archived October 14, 2006), United States Department of Justice
- Prosecutors Net Leopard-Shark Smugglers<sup>[↗]</sup>, *National Public Radio*
- Unification Church to Pay \$500,000 Into Wildlife Fund Over Pastor's Shark Poaching Conviction<sup>[↗]</sup>, *Associated Press*
- Shark poaching will cost Moon's church<sup>[↗]</sup>, *Union-Tribune*
- Thompson Shark Case<sup>[↗]</sup>, Account by a first hand observer.



Wikisource has original text related to this article:

**\$1.5 Million Partnership Formed to Rehabilitate and Restore Leopard Shark Habitat in San Francisco Bay**

## External links [ edit ]

- Bay Area Family Church<sup>[↗]</sup>

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