

SHARK RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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THE GREAT SHARKS – REVIEWED

Janet and LeRoy Neiman urge all members to visit the traveling exhibit, "Sharks: Fact and Fantasy" currently at the Natural History Museum in New York City. It is superb! While you are there be sure to take in the NatureMax show that is on now. The film follows marine scientist Eugenie Clark and Rodney Fox in a round the world expedition from the Coast of California to remote beaches of South and Western Australia in search of The Great Sharks. The action includes encounters with white sharks and a 40-foot whale shark.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Andrew Gifford reported six strandings of whale sharks in the past few weeks along the Cape Coast, including one at Kommetjie on May 1, 1994.

The Floy tags that SRI HQ sent to the whale shark taggers did not work well, nor did the placard tags. Rob Allen has designed a new tag and will report on its success in the next newsletter.

To fund the Whale Shark Study the team has gathered Mandela election posters. They are already collectors' items in Africa and HQ-Princeton has a number of them for sale. Andrew has had white shark charms cast in nine carat and 18 carat gold, and whale shark charms cast in silver. He hopes that sales may offset some of the team's expenses. The charms are exquisitely detailed; contact HQ if you wish to order any from Andrew.

VIDEOTAPE AVAILABLE...

The scars may fade on Kevin Anderson's leg, the surfer who was bitten by a white shark on February 12th, but he is not likely to ever forget the incident. His mother happened to be videotaping him when the shark attacked. (She was testing a new videocam on a tripod, and happened to have it trained on her son when the attack took place.) Mrs. Anderson has sent us a copy of the tape; it is a unique visual document!

GLOBAL SHARK ATTACK FILE...

Andy Gifford has been investigating the death of a spearfisherman who was lost at Arniston, RSA, on April 2, 1994. Although the body was not recovered, a fragment of the diver's neoprene hooded T-shirt was found a few days later and taken to the police. The Medical Examiner asked Mark to

examine the garment. According to Andy, both T-shirt and hood had been bitten, repeatedly, by a white shark, and if the spearfisherman was alive when the garment was bitten the injuries would have proved fatal. However, neither Mark nor the Medical Examiner was able to determine if the diver was alive or dead when the garment was bitten.

We recently received a report of an attack that took place in 1992 at Campbell Island, south of New Zealand. A SCUBA diver, Mike Frazer, was bitten by a 15' great white shark, and sustained major injuries. Rescuers, in a long-distance Aerospatiale Squirrel helicopter, flew 917 km to the southern tip of New Zealand. Then they flew across 370 miles of open ocean to Campbell Island, reaching the victim 15 hours after the attack. When the diver's condition was stable the rescue team transported him to a hospital in New Zealand. The diver survived.

SHARK TAGGING TRIP...

The American Littoral Society is running shark tagging trips on July 13th. If interested in participating, contact ALS for departure times and locations at: ALS, Sandy Hook, Highlands NJ 07732.

ON THE ROAD...

SRI's Dr Maurice Coutts joined forces with Dr. Eugenie Clark to survey the sharks of the southern Red Sea from April 25th to May 14th. Plasticized ID cards with drawings and descriptions of each whale shark tagged by our team along the South African coast were assembled. The sets of cards were distributed by Maurice to dive boat captains and dive operators in all of the areas that he visited.

SAMBR TAGGING PROGRAMME...

The South African Association of Marine Biological Research (SAMBR) has sent SRI their tagging statistics. In addition to tagging teleosts, during the past 20 years they have tagged a variety of sharks: 10 Java sharks, 1 recapture; 13 mako sharks, 1 recapture; 14 Galapagos sharks, 0 recaptures; 12 grey reef sharks, 1 recapture; 3,575 dusky sharks, 278 recaptures; 123 tiger sharks, 7 recaptures; 106 Zambesi sharks, 13 recaptures; and 64 white sharks, 7 recaptures. They have never tagged any whale sharks, but have offered to assist us in recording data during our aerial surveys.

CONGRATULATIONS...

...To SRI Financial Officer Kendrick McMahan and SRI Director of Education Marcia Bair. They were married May 15th!

PUBLIC EDUCATION...

Thank you, to Carl Oerke, Jr., who contributed a number of articles on sharks to SRI's library.