

SHARK RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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From Dean Fessler...

SRI member Dean W. Fessler Jr. moved to California and has become affiliated with the Monterey Bay Shark Research Group. Like SRI, reports Dean, the MBSRG hopes to serve as a resource center for researchers. Some of MBSRG's members want to initiate a tagging program targeting the white shark, *C. carcharias*. Their permits from California Fish & Game and various state agencies are pending.

Dean also reports that he has videotaped and photographed captive great white sharks at Sea World San Diego. The facility has a permit allowing the capture of six white sharks. Two juvenile females have been caught to date: one shark did not survive; the other was released due to "severe public outcry."

Since we last saw Dean at HQ he has been diving with blue sharks, mako and hammerheads along the California and Baja coast. He also was diving with sand tiger sharks off North Carolina, and diving in the Bahamas with Caribbean reef sharks and bull sharks. He extends his sympathy to Maurice Coutts for his finger injury and adds, "I always knew that lobsters were more dangerous than sharks!"

From SRI's Whale Shark Study Team...

The Whale Shark Study Report for the 1993-1994 season has been printed. Copies of the document were sent to researchers working on similar projects, 170 research facilities throughout the world, and members who have requested a copy.

Sue Smith met with John French, of Mariner Radar, who manufactures transmitters to Argos satellite specifications. Satellite tags, complete with French's transmitters and capsule housing, cost ca. 1,200 British pounds per unit. Dr. Frank Carey is also assisting our whale shark tagging team in the design of a whale shark satellite housing.

Permission for SRI to fly along the Mozambique coast during the coming season has been officially requested from the Mozambique government. Their decision is still pending.

From Africa...

Grant Thompson, one of the world's premier shark taxidermists, has sent photos of his latest work and a sample to HQ. Grant is an avid spearfisherman, which may explain why his sharks are so life-like that you sense they may flick their caudal fins and disappear.

Andrew Gifford and Sue Smith have been in contact with Kenneth Watterson, Project Director of the Basking Shark Study off the Isle of Man. They have offered SRI resources to assist him in tagging basking sharks. Mr. Watterson has been given SRI's whale shark tag specifications, as well as a copy of the team's 1993-1994 season's research report.

Public education...

On June 6th Marie Levine gave a talk to Mrs. Cohen's Brown Bag Forum at Ethel McKnight School in Hightstown NJ. Sixty children, mostly 3rd, 4th and 5th Graders, signed up for the lunch-hour presentation and wore wide variety of shark T-shirts. The kids were true 'shark nuts'; some of the group had constructed a six-foot shark that was proudly displayed in the school's library! It is was a delight to interact with a knowledgeable and enthusiastic audience.

On August 11 Maurice Coutts presented his video 'Mantas of Kona' to the Princeton Scuba Club. On September 22nd he gave a presentation on bull sharks to the 55 Plus Club, and on October 6th he will give a lecture to the 50 Something Club at Princeton YMCA.

The Sunday August 21st edition of the New York Times (front page, New Jersey section) ran a feature story on the Shark Research Institute.

Global Shark Attack File ...

Case 2246: March 1994 - A young crew member of a research vessel was attacked by a white shark as she was treading water alongside the ship. The boat was in the Pacific Ocean, 30 miles from land, and the crew was having a noontime swim. First, the shark bit the thigh of a crewman, then it turned its attention to the young woman and severed her leg at mid-thigh. She survived. SRI has Jason Walker, producer of the Leeza Gibbons Show, to thank for uncovering this case. He learned of it while researching an upcoming show. He contacted SRI, provided contact numbers for the victim and witnesses, and we followed up the lead.

Cases 410 & 411: July 1994 - Two surfers, Andrew Carter and Bruce Corby were attacked by a white shark at Nahoon Beach, RSA. Mr. Corby's leg was severed and he died of his injuries the same day. The cases were investigated fully by Andrew Gifford. SRI member Kenny Doudt (who was attacked by a white shark in 1979) has been corresponding Mr. Carter.

Like other predators, a shark usually concentrates on a single prey animal. It is highly unusual for a feeding shark to select an initial target, then break off the hunt and intensify its efforts on a second target. On the other hand, just because a shark removes tissue from a target, it doesn't necessarily consume the tissue. Not all attacks are motivated by hunger.