

SHARK RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

Vol. 4, No. 1

© SRI, January 1995

In Passing...

The Shark Research Institute is a dynamic blend of disciplines. Our successes are due to the rich diversity of expertise that our members bring to our organization, but the death of Frank Carey in December is deeply felt by everyone who knew him.

Dr. Frank Carey, a senior scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution inspired all of us. His work tracking individual sharks using telemetry and satellite tags remains on the cutting edge of science. He brought out the best in us.

From Africa....

The whale sharks began arriving off the Natal coast in October 1994. SRI pilot Pieter Gent achieved his microlight rating the same month. SRI's microlight also made its maiden flight and checked out AOK. Our microlight is bright red with SRI's logo on its right wing -- it is dazzling in the blue African sky! The Whale Shark Study team has designed new Data Capture sheets for use in aerial surveys, and the Natal Sharks Board has been invited to participate in our tagging programme this season.

A fleeing miscreant, while being chased by the police, crashed into the side of our Cape Vidal vehicle. No injuries were sustained by our team, but the vehicle suffered damages totaling R4,500.

News from the South Pacific...

In November 1993, SRI Director Marie Levine traveled to the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia, with short stops in Fiji and New Zealand. She filmed gray reef sharks and whitetip reef sharks in the Solomons and Vanuatu, and a manta ray in New Caledonia. She established contacts on Guadalcanal, Gizo and Uepi Islands in the Solomons, New Caledonia, and Bokissa, Espiritu Santo, and Port Vila in Vanuatu. Marie gathered extensive information on shark attacks at all sites and left SRI Shark Attack Information Questionnaires with local authorities. In addition, she personally interviewed a number of victims. With Col Morrow serving as translator, she interviewed families of two victims on remote Uepi Island, located in the far reaches Morovo Lagoon in the Solomon Islands. She brought back photos of the shark callers in the Solomons, and would like to return to do more research on *nakaimos*, the shark sorcerers of Vanuatu. Apparently, on the island of Paama, each village

has at least one sorcerer who, so the inhabitants believe, has the ability to change himself [the shark sorcerers of Paama are always males] into a shark. The former curator of the Cultural History Museum in Port Vila, Kirk Huffman, also mentioned that in 1985 three men, thought to be shark sorcerers, were actually arrested by the police for a series of shark attacks.

On the road again...

As we go to press, Marie Levine is in South Africa with Nikon International Award Winner and National Geographic photographer Amos Nachoum. They are working with great white sharks in Shark Alley, the site where Marie began her behavioral research with this species in 1987. Afterwards, they will visit the SRI Whale Shark Study team in Natal and record their tagging operations.

Needed Urgently...

Field Researcher Mark Marks desperately needs a 35mm camera with data back, motor drive and telephoto lens to record predatory behavior of white sharks on Cape fur seals at Dyers Island, RSA. Please, call HQ if you can help.

Global Shark Attack File...

Case 414: On November 25, 1994, spearfisherman Anton Bosman's lower leg was bitten by a raggedtooth shark in Mossel Bay, RSA. The injury consisted of small puncture wounds, and the diver made a full recovery. This was Anton's second negative encounter with a shark; in 1984 he was spearfishing at Arniston when he was rammed and flung out of the water by a shark (Case 327).

Public Education...

Maurice Coutts gave a presentation on sharks to the Nassau Club, Princeton. His topic: How to film sharks without getting bitten.

Members' Bookshelf...

Questions & Answers - Sharks, by Marie Levine, New Holland (Publishers) Ltd. London, 32 pp. Its magnificent full-color illustrations and informative, technically up-to-date text serve as an exciting introduction to sharks. The book is available in the UK, Africa and Australia – New Holland has no distributor in the USA. Copies can be ordered direct from the publisher, or through HQ at \$20 each, postage included.

Discovery Channel's interactive CD-ROM, SHARKS!, challenges myths and reveals some fascinating truths about nature's most efficient predator. Compare the diverse species – from the 6" cookiecutter shark to the 45' whale shark, play a game, or ask questions of some experts. It features articles, 30 minutes of video, and 200 photographs – many of them taken by Marie Levine, Andrew Gifford, and other SRI members. It is available in Nature Company stores for \$40.