

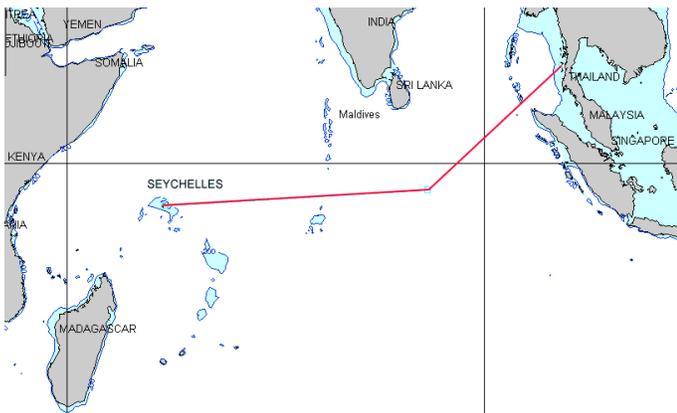
Shark Research Institute Newsletter



**Shark Research Institute Global Headquarters
P.O. Box 40, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, USA**

Seychelles Report

The Seychelles whale shark season is already under way and has been kick-started by an epic migration of one of our satellite-tagged sharks!



The 6.5-metre male whale shark was located on 25th October 2001 off South Point, Mahe, Seychelles by Rob Allen, pilot of the project's microlight aircraft. Then the Whale Shark team attached a SPOT2 position transmitting satellite tag manufactured by Wildlife Computers.

The shark was very active on the surface for several weeks at the end of October and remained off the South Point Police point area. In early November the shark moved northwards across the Seychelles Plateau, then left the plateau north of Denis Island and headed northeast. No transmissions were received for more than a month, then shortly before Christmas, they began again and indicated that the shark was south of the Equator, due south of Sri Lanka. The shark remained in the general area for more than a month, making wide circles until the end of January when transmissions ceased.

There was then a silence of nearly four months which could be explained by a number of factors

including the malfunction of the transmitter, battery failure of the transmitter or simply that the shark had dived below the surface and so the tag was in 'stand-by' mode until the animal went up to the surface again.

It appears that the latter was the case as the shark resurfaced on June 17th, transmitting its position as being off Lampi Island off Thailand's west coast, a straight line distance of some 2720 nautical miles from Mahe.

Transmissions are being monitored and conservation organisations off Thailand have been alerted.

David Rowat, Director, SRI Seychelles

Shark Finning - Louisiana

The U.S. Shark Finning Prohibition Act of 2000 "prohibits any person under U.S. jurisdiction from engaging in shark finning, possessing shark fins harvested on board a U.S. fishing vessel without corresponding shark carcasses, or landing shark fins harvested without corresponding carcasses. The regulations became effective 13 March 2002, but the slaughter of sharks continues. SRI member Lance Ehret took these photos in April at Venice, Louisiana, 30 miles north of the mouth of the Mississippi River. "The fins are usually laid out to dry on the roof of the building or on top of 8' x 42' trailers (as in the photos)," reports Lance. "Today the catch from one of the boats that came in was 700 fins!! That is roughly 12,500 - 14,000 pounds of carcasses, from one boat!"



Shark Fins Drying on the Roof of a Trailer



Global Shark Attack File

BAHAMAS: At noon on April 9, Dr. Erich Ritter, GSAF shark behaviorist, was bitten on his calf by 350-lb bull shark at Walkers Cay, Bahamas. We are pleased to report that Dr. Ritter is on the mend and expects to be back in the water by September.

AUSTRALIA: At 18h30 on April 12, John Schneider, 45, was swimming at Bar Beach, Newcastle, when a shark bit his toes. At 12h30 on April 30, Paul Buckland, 23, was fatally bitten by a white shark at Smoky Bay. Buckland, a scallop diver using surface-supplied air, was wearing a shark repellent device. It was reported that the device was turned on and fully active when he was attacked.

USA: California - On May 31 Lee Fontan, 24, was surfing at Stinson Beach, California, when a white shark bit his left leg.

Florida - On April 1 at Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, Matthew May, 29, was bitten on the arm by a shark. On April 24, at St. Augustine, Robert Stinson was standing alongside his surfboard when a shark bit his foot. On May 31, at St. George Island, Matt Tichenor, 16, was swimming when a shark bit the his left foot. At 13h00 on June 9, Corey Brooks, 10, was swimming at Jensen Beach, when a shark bit his calf. On June 16, Craig Taylor, 50, was surfing at New Smyrna Beach, Florida when a shark bit his foot.

Notes from the Field

Mexico

LaPaz Field Station: On June 27th Pedro Aguilar tagged a 35' female whale shark that appeared to be pregnant, as did the four other whale sharks seen swimming with it. Jackie Guccione also reports that the giant Pacific mantas have arrived in the waters off LaPaz.

Seychelles

SRI Seychelles will be conducting whale shark research onboard the Indian Ocean Explorer in the Inner Islands. Expedition dates are July 15-22, July 29 – August 5, August 5 – 12, August 19 – 26. For more information contact divezey@seychelles.net

SRI Interns & Volunteers

Special thanks to SRI Intern Susanna Silverstein who provided valuable assistance to us throughout the spring semester. The previous issue of our newsletter was stamped and mailed by our youngest volunteer: Caroline Webber (11).

White Shark Photo Expedition

Photo expeditions led by Nikon School w/w. photographer Amos Nachoum are usually booked several years in advance. Due to a last minute cancellation, there is one space on the June 17- 30 expedition and another on the July 1-15 expedition to South Africa. These expeditions are limited to three divers and usual cost per diver is \$6,200, but has been reduced to \$4,200. Airfare is additional and the cost is based on shared occupancy. This is a rare opportunity to refine your skills under direction of a world-famous photographer and with magnificent subjects. Participants will join legendary Andre Hartman in Gansbaai and Chris Fallows (Air Jaws) in False Bay. SRI can reserve your space, or you can book directly through <http://www.biganimals.com> and tell them SRI sent you. If you want to join any of the other expeditions on this website, book your space through SRI to obtain a special discounted rate for members only.

Dates of SRI expeditions to study whale sharks, mantas, sandtiger and hammerhead sharks are posted on our website at www.sharks.org or contact SRI at expeditions@sharks.org and we will mail a brochure to you.

SRI Receives Continued Support

SRI thanks the following sponsors for their continued support:

- **Amphibico**
- **JBL Enterprises Inc.**
- **PADI Foundation**
- **Project AWARE Foundation**
- **Microwave Telemetry, Inc.**
- **C2 Educational Expeditions**
- **Galapagos Adventures**

CONSERVATION NEWS

Costa Rica Update

Illegal fishing continues in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Costa Rica, threatening fishery resources and endangered marine species. On June 19, the Sea Turtle Restoration Project (STRP) of Costa Rica formally requested information from the National Coast Guard regarding actions taken against the Taiwanese vessel, *Shen 1 Tsay 3*, a pirate fisher photographed May 19 operating within the limits of Costa Rica's EEZ (7.32" N, 86.04" W), between Cocos Island and the national territory. According to the STRP, the illegal fishing vessels are attracted to Costa Rica because they have already depleted the fishery resources of other areas of the Eastern Pacific. For example, Pacific leatherback turtles are on the brink of extinction as result of their high mortality rate from incidental capture during high seas longline operations.

For more information, visit:

www.tortugamarina.org, or www.seaturtles.org,

Galapagos Update

The situation in the Galapagos is becoming very tense. Last month, the *Maria Canela II*, the confiscated Costa-Rican vessel caught with sharks and shark fins in its holds, escaped. A \$10,000 reward has been offered for information leading to her recapture. If you have information, contact Alexandra Bahamonde of the Park Service at alex@spng.org.ec

The Ecuadorian Navy decided not to renew the inter-institutional cooperation agreement through which the Park Service's patrol vessels are given the right to patrol the Galapagos Marine Reserve waters, and sea-cucumber fishermen have moved en-masse into the restricted areas. The National Park rangers have been told by the Navy that they have no authority to arrest illegal fishermen, and the Navy informed the fishermen that the Park rangers can no longer prevent them from fishing.

The *El Dorado*, a Colombian tuna seiner associated with the Ecuadorian tuna company INEPACA was apprehended on 31 May while engaged in illegal fishing within the Galapagos

Marine Preserve just 11 miles from Española Island. At least 50 dolphins were killed in its net, but the judge fined the captain only 4 cents (yes 4 cents). The judge ruled that video documentation of the dolphins in the net was not admissible in court and that the statements of the National Park rangers were not valid as evidence because the National Park is the accuser and thus were not impartial. It is reported that the *El Dorado* is a supply boat for Van Camp seafoods.

Desiree, Sea Shepherd

European Conservationists Call for Ban on Shark Slaughter

Conservationists have launched a Europe-wide campaign for a ban on slaughtering sharks for their fins. The 16-member European Network of Sea Life Attractions aims to collect a quarter of a million signatures for a petition on behalf of the Shark Trust to present to the United Nations within two years. They will also press for a worldwide prohibition on finning. Network spokesman Mark Oakley said that the demand for fins is contributing to the rapid demise of sharks in European waters. "The numbers of blue sharks, once common to waters in the south west of England, and of basking sharks, are diminishing, he said. "We believe that 90% of blue sharks that die in European waters are being killed for their fins." He added: "We hope to have 250,000 signatures within two years that we can take to the UN headquarters to persuade them to take action."

Spain Bans Shark Finning

Spain, a leading supplier in the international shark fin market, has adopted legislation to ban the finning of sharks, citing the United Nations' "International Plan of Action for Sharks" as foundation for its new law. The legislation requires ships landing shark fins in Spain to also have corresponding shark bodies on board. In 2000, Spain exported approximately 970 metric tons of fins to Hong Kong alone, many from finned sharks. The new legislation, if enforced, is a hopeful sign for shark conservation efforts worldwide.

Shark Research Institute
Global Headquarters
P.O. Box 40, Princeton,
New Jersey 08540, USA

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WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.SHARKS.ORG

SRI Fundraiser - July 26, 2002

Please help SRI expand its conservation efforts by attending this event, and meeting some of our researchers. The event will also be a lot of fun.

Date: Friday, July 26, 2002

Time: 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Location: Sonny Werblin Center, Rutgers University, Piscataway, New Jersey (Directions will be sent to all attendees)

Program: Reception at 7:00 PM
Shark Film Festival at 8:00 PM
Silent Auction throughout the evening

Cost: \$30 tax deductible donation. If you are unable to attend, consider supporting this event as a sponsor.

RSVP by email to: antoniou@sharks.org
Phone: (609) 921-3522

Samoa Marine Sanctuary

Samoa has established a National Marine Sanctuary for whales, dolphins, turtles and sharks covering its entire 128,000 square km Exclusive Economic Zone. The announcement was made by the Minister of Lands and Environment, Hon. Tuala Sale Tagaloa. The Minister said "the sanctuary promotes the conservation and sustainable management of whales, dolphins, turtles and sharks in all Samoan waters, all of which have social and cultural significance to all our people"

Credit Cards

SRI is now accepting credit cards, MasterCard and Visa, for donations, memberships, lifetime whale shark adoptions, and expedition registrations.



SRI Presents Papers at Taiwan Shark Conference

SRI presented two papers at Shark Conference 2002 held in Taipei May 13-16. "Aerial Survey of Whale Sharks along the South African Coast" by Andrew Gifford and Dr. Leonard J.V. Compagno presented results of SRI's five-year aerial study. Dr. Antoniou also presented a paper titled "Satellite Tracking of Whale Sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) in the Galapagos Islands". The conference, sponsored by WildAid and the University of Taiwan, focused on fisheries management, conservation of sharks, and regional and international cooperation.



Shark Fishery in the Fishing Village of Suao, Taiwan