

# Shark Research Institute Newsletter



**Shark Research Institute Global Headquarters**

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## ALIBABA.COM PROMOTES THE SHARK FIN INDUSTRY



Alibaba.com Corporation is China's leading e-commerce company, operating the world's largest online marketplace for both international and domestic China trade, as well as China's most popular online payment system: AliPay. In addition, Alibaba.com also owns and operates Yahoo! China, which it acquired in October of 2005. Alibaba is also encouraging trade in shark fins by providing traders with a venue to buy and sell shark fins.

When SRI member and noted underwater photographer Wolfgang Leander spotted the offers of shark fin on Alibaba.com, he contacted SRI and we alerted other conservation organizations to the Alibaba website, asking for their cooperation. Ocean Realm Society responded by sending 11,000 emails to their members and appointing Leander to head their email campaign. "This effort to convince Alibaba.com that its website contributes to a global problem, could have a positive effect," says Richard Stewart, President of the Ocean Realm Society. If Alibaba.com decides it will no longer facilitate the shark fin trade, the company could instead emerge as a powerful force in the forefront of ocean conservation.

A search of the Alibaba website reveals postings by 335 companies listing 169 shark-related products, primarily fins, and many companies supply other shark body parts as well. "This type of business platform serves only to fuel the senseless slaughter of sharks," said Leander, "further decimating a population that, by some accounts, is being reduced at the rate of one hundred million

sharks per year."

Who is selling shark fins on Alibaba? Suppliers in Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Spain, Thailand, Vietnam, Venezuela and the USA.

To see the scope of global shark buying visit <http://importer.alibaba.com/buyeroffers/Shark.html>

For Alibaba.com management go to: [www.alibaba.com/aboutalibaba/management.html](http://www.alibaba.com/aboutalibaba/management.html)

To locate the Alibaba.com office nearest you go to: [www.alibaba.com/aboutalibaba/contact.html](http://www.alibaba.com/aboutalibaba/contact.html)

To voice your concerns about their shark trade postings go to: [www.alibaba.com/trade/servlet/page/static/help/contact\\_us\\_answer](http://www.alibaba.com/trade/servlet/page/static/help/contact_us_answer) (and please cc your comments to others in your email address book who share your sentiments, asking them to contact Alibaba.com as well.)

"No finning" sheets may also be downloaded at [www.sharks.org/pdfs/nofinching-4topage.pdf](http://www.sharks.org/pdfs/nofinching-4topage.pdf)

Please collect as many signatures as possible and send them to:

Jack Ma, CEO Alibaba  
International Headquarters  
Room 2403-05 Jubilee Centre  
18 Fenwick Street  
Wanchai, Hong Kong



## Town files criminal complaint in whale shark slaying

PHILIPPINES -- The municipal government of Sangay in Camarines Sur province is not letting the killing of the "butanding" (whale shark) on September 7, 2006 go unpunished.

On Sept. 22, the town filed a criminal complaint against three persons for causing the death of a female whale shark, a species protected by law: Joel Abetria, owner of the fishing gear, his brother Joy, leader of the fishing team, and Lauriano Encinas, the suspected attacker, were charged with violating Section 97 of Republic Act No. 8550 of the Philippine Fisheries Code. The law penalizes persons capturing, killing or trading protected and endangered marine species.

San Felipe was the first local official to arrive at the beach of the village of Sto. Niño where the 23-foot female whale shark, estimated to be 30-40 years old, died from a hack wound inflicted at the midsection of her body. He said the owner of the fishing gear and the team leader of the fishing trip were directly responsible for causing the death of the shark.

The complaint, submitted to Assistant Provincial Prosecutor Zhelia Monserate-Manrique, included the testimony of four witnesses. Municipal fisheries officer Hilaria L. Cornelio testified that a concerned resident and member of the Bantay Dagat, who was deputized as a fish warden, sent her text messages about a whale shark caught by fishermen along the shore of Sto. Niño. "I immediately went there and I was so amazed when I saw a whale shark for the first time in my entire life, but I was shocked and disgusted when I realized it was suffering from hack wounds," she stated. The whale shark, trapped in the net of a beach seine, had wounds in different parts of the body as it bled continuously, she said. She interviewed several witnesses who identified Encinas as the individual responsible for hacking the whale shark to death. Encinas fled before police arrived at the scene.

A witness, Rosario L. Celestial, was among the residents who helped pull the net to shore with the hope of earning extra income. "Suddenly, I saw a very big tail of a fish near the shoreline. I was so shocked but very happy when a few minutes later, I saw its half body because never in my entire life had I seen such a very large fish." She said that she understood that the whale shark was tied in order to protect it, when suddenly, "Encinas, while

holding a bolo, stabbed the whale shark in its back, causing it to suffer a very large wound." Another witness, Tilasporo C. Buena, also testified that he was made to understand that the whale shark was tied to protect it when suddenly Encinas hacked it.

Tristan C. Paylado, leader of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' stranding team, declared the whale shark dead at 2:20 p.m. After two hours of close observation, it ceased to breathe, he added.

Paylado reported that the whale shark suffered four sets of wounds with the last one, measuring 71 cm long, 23 cm deep, becoming "the fatal wound" that caused a large amount of blood loss.

*Juan Escandor Jr., Philippine Inquirer*

## Shark fishing prohibited in Antarctica

The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) has placed a moratorium on targeted fishing of deepwater sharks in the Southern Ocean. This landmark agreement, initiated by France, places a limit on the amount of sharks that can be taken from Antarctic waters. Unfortunately, throughout the rest of the world's international waters, shark fishing remains a free-for-all, restricted only by limited bans on shark finning and international trade documentation required for three species. Other regional fishery management organizations, particularly the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), are being urged to follow CCAMLR's lead and take a cautionary approach with respect to exceptionally vulnerable marine species such as sharks.

## News from SRI Field Offices

### SRI Seychelles

From July to September 2006, there have been 201 reported sightings of whale sharks. In-water sightings totaled 82. Some 46 whale sharks were identified, and of these 37 shark were sexed (30 males and seven females). Eight whale sharks were tagged, and four sharks resighted from this season.

### SRI LaPaz

The whale sharks were slow to return to LaPaz this year, possibly due to the red tide that prevailed well into summer. Now the sharks are back! Aerial surveys confirm that for the six weeks, the sharks are once again feeding in the Bay of LaPaz.

## Brad Norman wins Rolex Award !

Congratulations to Brad Norman! He has been chosen as one of five Laureates in the 2006 Rolex Awards for Enterprise, which recognizes outstanding contributions to humanity, science and the environment. For the past 14 years, Brad has been studying whale sharks at Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia.



"Ningaloo's whale sharks draw more than 5,000 visitors a year, mainly from April to June, generating ecotourism worth an estimated \$US10 million (\$A13.22 million) annually, and prove that a live whale shark earns far more than a dead one," he said.

Brad plans to use the \$US100,000 (\$A132,000) award money to devote two years to training local authorities, tourism operators and research assistants around the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans to observe, record and protect whale sharks. "The money will help to raise the profile of the world's biggest fish and perhaps save it from extinction," Brad said. "It has been a species that has been hard to get any money to do any work on. Hopefully now we'll be able to encourage more support and resources to get the job done."

To learn more about Brad's project, go to: <http://www.ecocean.org/> or the SRI newsletter archives at: <http://www.sharks.org/newsletters/2003/SRINewsletter%2012-4.pdf>

## Board seeking additional Trustees

SRI's Board of Trustees is seeking additional members. SRI members, sponsors or individuals that are interested in applying for a seat on the Board should send an email to [marie@sharks.org](mailto:marie@sharks.org).

Criteria for a potential Trustee: 1) Actively support and promote the mission of SRI; 2) Have the ability to obtain sizeable annual grants or corporate donations, or make a significant personal financial commitment; 3) Be available to attend (either in-person or by conference call) at least one Board of Trustees meeting each year.

## Ecosystem Collapse Predicted

GLAND, Switzerland, Oct. 24 (UPI) -- The 2006 Living Planet report published by the Switzerland-based World Wildlife Fund has determined Earth's natural resources are being used up 25 percent faster than they can be replenished.

Data gathered regarding forest use, crop yields, carbon-dioxide emissions and fishing reveals that humanity has been using more than it can replace for the past two decades.

The WWF report said United Nations' estimates of human population and economic growth predict a "large-scale ecosystem collapse" is a probable outcome of continued consumption by the middle of this century.

The large scale of consumption has caused a sharp decline in biodiversity, the report said. It said data gathered on 1,313 species of vertebrates around the world revealed that overall wildlife populations have decreased by 30 percent since 1970.

"Populations of species in terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems have declined by more than 30 per cent since 1970, a rate that is unprecedented in human history," said one of the study authors, Jonathan Loh of the Zoological Society of London. "In the tropics the declines are even more dramatic, as natural resources are being intensively exploited for human use."

To read the full 2006 report and archived reports, go to:

[http://www.panda.org/news\\_facts/publications/key\\_publications/living\\_planet\\_report/index.cfm](http://www.panda.org/news_facts/publications/key_publications/living_planet_report/index.cfm)

## Thank you to our Supporters

We are very grateful for the continuing support and encouragement of:

- **Freeman Foundation**
- **Mr. & Mrs. Craig Grube**
- **IGTOA**
- **JBL Enterprises Inc.**
- **J. Arch McNamara, M.D.**
- **Microwave Telemetry, Inc.**
- **Project AWARE Foundation**
- **The Philanthropic Group**
- **The Rohauer Collection Foundation**
- **Underwater Video Images**
- **Westcliff Foundation**
- **World Wildlife Fund**



**WE'RE ON THE WEB**  
**WWW.SHARKS.ORG**

### *For Sport Divers*

Willing to use your diving skills to assist scientific research? Consider joining one of SRI's field expeditions.

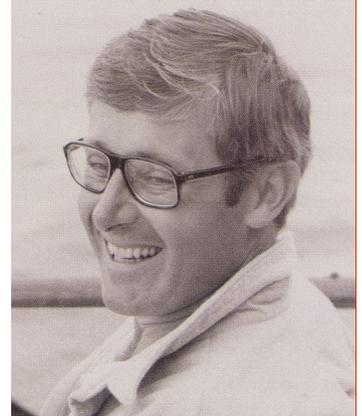
- **LaPaz** (with Dr. Alex Antoniou): December 16-23, 2006. \$1,200 per diver.
- **Tanzania** (liveaboard) (with Matt Potenski): November 10, 2006 to March 3, 2007, \$3,157 per diver, per 10-day segment.
- **Cocos Island & Malpelo** (with Sylvia Earle, Katherine Sullivan & Amos Nachoum): May 18 to June 2, 2007 & May 22 to June 4, 2007, \$7,400 (*\$7,150 for SRI members only*).
- **North Carolina** (with Dean Fessler): June 22-24, 2007, \$750 per diver.

See the **Expeditions** page at [www.sharks.org](http://www.sharks.org) for details about these and other expeditions. For some expeditions, most of your costs can be deducted from US Federal income taxes

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** As of January 2007 the Member Newsletter will be sent to you via email unless you specifically request the print version. Email newsletters reduce costs, get info to you faster & save trees. If you are receiving this newsletter as hard copy it may be that we do not have your email address on file. If so, please contact [marie@sharks.org](mailto:marie@sharks.org) (Please note that your email Member Newsletter will always contain much more info than the free newsletter available to website visitors.)

### *Peter Benchley* *Shark Conservation Award*

As a memorial to the late Peter Benchley, who was an eloquent spokesman for the conservation of sharks and one of our major supporters, SRI has instituted an annual cash award in his honor. The award presentation, hosted by SRI President, Stan Waterman, will take



place on May 8, 2007 at the Explorers Club in New York. The award will be presented to an outstanding individual or program that has achieved significant results in the field of shark conservation. SRI projects are not eligible. Applications are due by February 2, 2007. Applications may be downloaded at: [www.sharks.org/BenchleyAward](http://www.sharks.org/BenchleyAward), or contact SRI Headquarters if you'd like to receive an application by mail.

The European Elasmobranch Association will hold its annual meeting in Hamburg, Germany November 11-12, 2006 at the Zoological Institute and Museum of the University of Hamburg. To register, go to: [www.elasmo.de/](http://www.elasmo.de/)

SRI President, Stan Waterman, will be receiving the prestigious *Legend of the Sea* award at Beneath the Sea in March 2007. [www.beneaththesea.org](http://www.beneaththesea.org).