

Shark Research Institute Newsletter



Shark Research Institute Global Headquarters

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Johnson Toribiong, President of the Republic of Palau Presented with the Ocean Heritage Award



President Toribiong & Jupp Kerckerinck

On September 25, 2010, in New York City, Johnson Toribiong, President of the Republic of Palau, was presented with the prestigious Ocean Heritage Award by SRI for creating the entire Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Palau – 237,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean – as the world’s first shark sanctuary. The award ceremony was sponsored by Dr. Sylvia Earle and Jupp Kerckerinck.

In his historic speech at the United Nations General Assembly exactly a year earlier, President Toribiong called for an end to the pillage of the seas. He urged the General Assembly to listen to the voice of science, and urged an ocean conservation ethic for a healthy planet.

Shark populations around the world are crashing; some species such as scalloped hammerhead sharks have declined up to 99% according to fisheries surveys. Approximately 73 million sharks are slaughtered each year for the shark fin trade, primarily as an ingredient in shark fin soup. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reports that of more than 590 shark species assessed, 21 percent are threatened with extinction,

while another 18 percent are near-threatened. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reports that more than half of highly migratory sharks are depleted or over-exploited.

Sharks, as top predators in the sea, are critical to maintaining the health of the ocean ecosystem, – the life support system of our planet. “If we take away the top of the ocean food chain – the sharks – the whole system will break down,” said Dr. Sylvia Earle, Honorary President of the Shark Research Institute.

Sharks are being killed faster than they can reproduce. All shark species grow slowly (some species take 25 to 50 years to reach maturity) and produce few young, which makes them extremely slow to recover from over-exploitation. Shark populations generally consist of 10 percent sexually mature adults, 90 percent juveniles. The larger fins of the adults have more value in the sharkfin trade; thus the breeding populations are most at risk.

At the United Nations, President Toribiong called for a global ban on shark finning. “The need to protect sharks outweighs the need to enjoy a bowl of soup,” he said. “These creatures are being slaughtered and are at the brink of extinction unless we take positive action to protect them.” When asked what he wanted other world leaders to do, President Toribiong said, “Simply follow suit.”

President Lobo Sosas of Honduras agreed with President Toribiong. On September 23, 2010, the entire EEZ of Honduras was declared the world’s second shark sanctuary.

In late October, at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Japan, Palau announced that its entire EEZ, more than 600,000 square kilometers, would be a sanctuary for whales, dolphins, dugongs, sharks and other species.

Continued on next page....

Ocean Heritage Award...continued

Some 30 dolphin and whale species, including a breeding population of sperm whales, utilize Palau's waters. Despite a global ban on whaling since 1986, Japan has continued to hunt whales, along with Norway and Iceland, and has long tried to overturn the ban, even going so far as putting an embassy in Palau a week before the 2010 International Whaling Commission meeting in an unsuccessful attempt to influence Palau in their bid lift the whaling ban.

"This sanctuary will promote sustainable whale-watching tourism, already a growing multi-million-dollar global industry, as an economic opportunity for the people of Palau," said the Honorable Harry Fritz, Minister of the Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism of the Republic of Palau.

The Republic of Palau is a small island nation, but it chose a wise and visionary giant as its president. The Shark Research Institute honors President Toribiong for his leadership as a steward of the world ocean.

Chagos Archipelago = No Fishing Zone

Commercial fishing around the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean has ended. It is now the world's largest no-take marine protected area (MPA).

Chagos is a group of seven atolls with more than 60 islands and lies 310 miles south of the Maldives. It contains the world's largest coral atoll, The Great Chagos Bank, and has one of the healthiest reef systems in the world. Although tuna was the main target of commercial fishing around the Chagos Archipelago, it was estimated that 60,000 sharks, an equivalent number of rays and potentially countless other species, were legally caught as by-catch from commercial fisheries during the past five years.

Currently, it is estimated that 1.17 percent of the world's ocean is under some form of marine protection, with only 0.08 per cent of these protected areas classified as no-take zones. Scientists are urging governments to establish more MPAs if they are ever to meet the agreed target of 10 percent by 2012, a figure set at the 2002 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Good News From the Philippines!

In 2008, we awarded our Ocean Heritage Award to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines. A long-time advocate for sharks, she also created marine sanctuaries throughout her country. Although her term as president has ended, she continues to work diligently to protect the oceans and sharks.



The former president, now the representative from Pampanga, and her son, Diosdado, representative from Camarines Sur's second district, have filed a bill to conserve and protect sharks and stingrays by banning the selling of their by-products, including fins. House Bill 174 seeks to prohibit any person or corporation from exploiting sharks and stingrays and their habitats by killing, destroying, selling, purchasing, possessing, transporting, and exporting these endangered species. If sharks and rays are accidentally caught, they are to be released immediately unharmed into the sea.

"The government should recognize the significant contributions of sharks and rays in the promotion of Philippine ecotourism and that these predators of the sea help maintain the ecological balance in the marine environment," the Arroyos said.

Under the Arroyos' proposed bill, violators face six to 12 years imprisonment and fines ranging from to P100,000 (US\$2,260) to P1 million (US\$22,606) .

Raja Ampat = Marine Protected Area

Indonesia has declared a 46,000 square kilometres (17,760 square miles) sanctuary for sharks and other marine species. The region includes the waters surrounding the Raja Ampat islands in eastern Indonesia, part of the so-called Coral Triangle region of Southeast Asia. The area is known as one of the world's richest sources of marine biodiversity. Sharks, manta rays, dugongs and turtles are fully protected inside the sanctuary, and destructive practices including reef bombing and the aquarium fish trade are banned.

In Memoriam — J. Arch McNamara, MD

We are deeply saddened to report that J. Arch McNamara, M.D. died suddenly on September 29, 2010 at Truk Lagoon, Micronesia. After surfacing from a dive, Arch was thought to show symptoms of decompression sickness. Following a 4- to 5-hour treatment in a hyperbaric chamber, he collapsed and could not be revived.



We extend our deepest condolences to his family: his best friend and wife, Dr. Judith Melick, daughter Kelly Elizabeth, and son David James. He will be deeply missed by all at SRI and his many colleagues and friends.

Arch was a very special person: an experienced diver who was passionate about sharks, and a world-class underwater photographer. His images appear on many SRI materials. He also kept SRI's education department well-supplied with computers over the years. Arch took care of our eyes (he was a top retinal specialist at Wills Eye Hospital), loved Indian food, and was one of the most caring, charismatic people we knew. Arch was much more than a long-time patron of SRI; he was one of us, a member of our SRI family.

New Marine Mammal Sanctuary

On October 5th, there was good news from the Sixth Meeting of the Contracting Parties (COP) to the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Wider Caribbean Region in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

France officially declared the establishment of the AGOA marine mammal sanctuary. The sanctuary is designed to ensure the conservation of marine mammals in waters under French sovereignty and jurisdiction in the French West Indies: the territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ's) surrounding Martinique, Guadeloupe and its dependencies of Marie Galante, the Saints Archipelago, la Desirade, Petite Terre, as well as those of St. Barthelemy and St. Martin.

Thank You to Our Supporters!

We are very grateful for the continued support of:

- The Adikes Family Foundation
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- Greg Sparks
- State Street Global Advisors
- Barbara & Donald Tober
- Underwater Video Images
- The Verrill Foundation
- Al Vinjamur
- The Wave Foundation
- World Wildlife Fund
- Josip Zeko

Dr Sylvia Earle honored with the America and the Sea Award

Photo by Kip Evans



On November 3rd, world-renowned oceanographer, marine biologist, deep sea explorer, author and Honorary President of the Shark Research Institute, Dr. Sylvia A. Earle was honored with Mystic Seaport's *America and the Sea Award* at a gala held in her honor at the St. Regis Hotel in New York City.

The Award honors and celebrates those who embrace the scholarship, exploration, adventure, aesthetics, competition and freedom the sea inspires. Previous winners include pre-eminent yacht designer Olin J. Stephens II, author and historian David McCullough, President and CEO of Crowley Maritime Corporation Thomas B. Crowley, Jr. and philanthropist William I. Koch.

Sylvia has been at the forefront of deep ocean exploration for four decades. She was the first woman to walk freely on the ocean floor, and currently is an Explorer-in-Residence at the National Geographic Society. Her marine preservation quest has most recently been featured in Time magazine ("Saving Our Oceans: One Woman's Dream to Create National Parks in the Sea") and National Geographic ("My Blue Wilderness"). Sylvia was also honored with the TED Prize in 2009 for her tireless advocacy of the world's oceans, and has also received more than 100 national and international awards and honors.

"Sylvia has significantly contributed to the maritime traditions that Mystic Seaport was founded to cherish, preserve and share," said Mystic Seaport President Steve White. "She is an intrepid voyager whose scientific journey has uncovered vast new terrain. The Museum is honored to present Sylvia, former Trustee and friend, with this distinguished award."

The legendary oceanographer is the former chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and founder of three marine technology companies including Deep Ocean Exploration and Research, a company that designs, builds, supports and consults on piloted and robotic subsea systems and implements solutions for even the most challenging underwater tasks.

She is also the founder of the Sylvia Earle Alliance (SEA) a non-profit foundation committed to the creation and expansion of marine protected areas, otherwise known as "Hope Spots." SEA seeks to raise public awareness about the urgent need for ocean protection and brings together partnerships that foster protection for Hope Spots in the form of policy-based solutions, local conservation programs and public outreach. SEA is a founding partner of Mission Blue (www.mission-blue.org), a multi-year, global partnership initiative aimed at restoring health and productivity to the ocean.

Sylvia has led more than 70 expeditions, including leading the first team of women aquanauts during the Tektite Project in 1970, and has logged more than 7,000 hours underwater. In addition, she has broken several deep-diving records, including solo diving to a depth of 1,000 meters (3,300 feet).

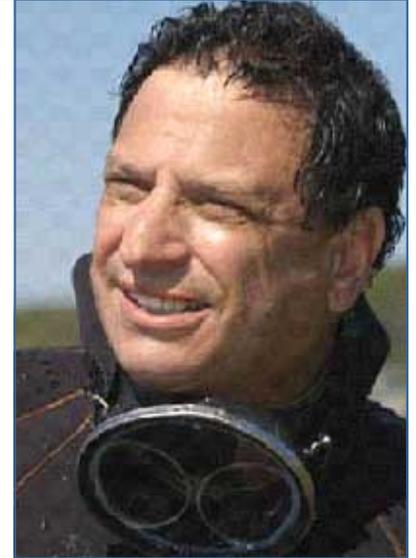
As author of more than 175 scientific, technical and popular publications, she has contributed a prolific and distinguished body of work to the field of maritime studies. Her research focuses on marine ecosystems with special reference to exploration and the development and use of new technologies for access and effective operations in the deep sea and other remote environments.

Mystic Seaport is the USA's leading maritime museum. www.mysticseaport.org Founded in 1929, the Museum is home to four National Historic Landmark vessels, including the *Charles W. Morgan*, the last wooden whaleship on the world.

Welcome to our New Trustees

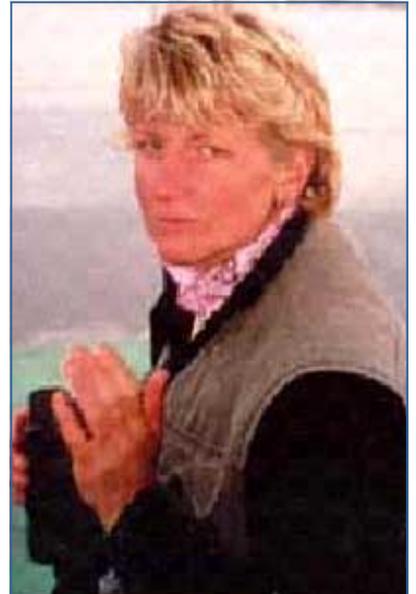
SRI welcomes three new members to our Board of Trustees.

David Doubilet is one of the world's leading underwater photographers. David has shot more than 60 stories for National Geographic magazine since 1972. His undersea reporting has taken him to the Red Sea, Pearl Harbor, the South Pacific, and beyond. Along the way he has captured groundbreaking images of great white sharks, flashlight fish, shark-repelling flounders, creatures of the undersea desert, fluorescent coral (shot with ultraviolet light), World War II wrecks, and much more. In addition to his many articles in National Geographic, David's books include *Light in the Sea: An Undersea Journey*; *Water Light and Time*; *Kingdom of Coral*, *The Great Barrier Reef*; *Fish Face* and *Under Sea from A/Z*, and he co-authored *The Red Sea*, *Living Planet: Preserving the Edens of the Earth*, and *Wild Shores of Australia*. David's honors include the prestigious Sara Prize, the Explorers Club Lowell Thomas Award, and the Lennart Nilsson Award. He is an honorary fellow of the Royal Photographic Society of London, and he was elected to the International Diving Hall of Fame. In 2001 he was named a contributing photographer-in-residence of the National Geographic Society.



Jennifer Hayes is an aquatic biologist, writer and photographer specializing in natural history. She is the author of numerous articles on marine environments, with images appearing in countless books, magazine publications and advertising campaigns. Her work has appeared in DIVE, National Geographic Magazine, National Geographic Traveler and The Best of National Geographic, Science, Skin Diver, Sports Illustrated, Stern, Terre Sauvage, Sport Diver and Sport Diver magazine where she is a feature contributor. Her contract advertising clients include Mercedes Benz and Rolex Watch Company.

In 1999, Jennifer and David Doubilet formed their own studio and stock photography company, Undersea Images, Inc, located on the St. Lawrence River in Clayton, New York, where they collaborate on project development, story production, featured articles and books. David and Jennifer recently collaborated on a new book *Face to Face with Sharks*.



Georgienne Bradley is the founder and executive director of the Imaging Foundation and co-owner of Bradley Ireland Productions. Georgienne uses her education as a biologist and her professional background as a photographer/producer to leverage the power of media to educate. "Young people are turning increasingly to Internet communities, pod casts and other new media as their source of information and inspiration. If we want to reach a young audience, we need to embrace this technology." Georgienne, a graduate of Princeton, has worked closely with the government of Costa Rica for more than 16 years on projects protecting Cocos Island and the shark populations around the island. She has authored two books and hundreds of magazine articles about the ocean, published multiple scientific papers and created productions with, among others, Paramount, Disney and National Geographic. Georgienne is the chair of the ASMP Underwater Specialty Group, and in 2006 she was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame. Before joining SRI's Board of Trustees, Georgienne served on SRI's Advisory Board for several years.

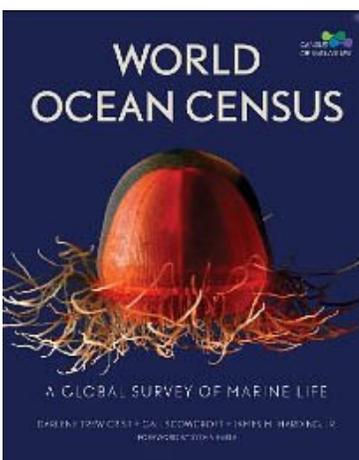


Members Bookshelf



Man and Shark by Paul Hilton & Alex Hofford. This powerful book shows the evil and brutality of the shark trade. It bears witness to the butchery of sharks in places as diverse as Mozambique, Yemen and Sri Lanka. But Hofford reports that he had seen nothing until he went to Japan. "Then I walked into this warehouse and saw 75 tonnes of blue shark laid out across the dock at 8:30 in the morning, with workers silently moving among them, cutting off their fins." The tableau is the same every morning, except on Sundays, when the market is closed. Hilton calls it "shark genocide". "At the rate sharks are declining, they could all be wiped out in 10 to 15 years," says Hofford. Tiger,

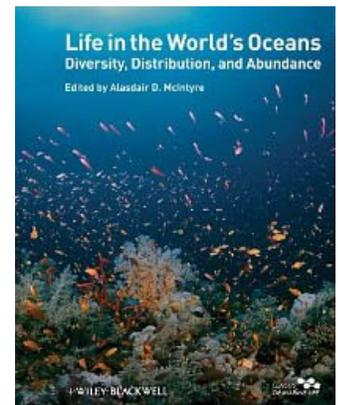
bull and dusky sharks are particularly at risk, with shark populations down to just 5 percent of 1970s levels.. The reason for this decline? A lust for shark-fin soup. Use this book to inform others about the sharkfin trade! \$35, at Amazon.com



World Ocean Census: A Global Survey of Marine Life by Darlene Trew Crist, Gail Scowcroft, James M. Harding Jr., and Sylvia Earle. This is the only officially sanctioned book to bring discoveries of the 10-year Census of Marine Life (2000-2010) to the general reader. Readers will learn how the mystery of new life forms are revealed, how CoML research was planned and executed, how animals are tagged and tracked, and about the cutting-edge technologies that enabled this mammoth endeavor. Hundreds of breathtaking, full-color photographs plunge one deep into the ocean to see some of the millions of species — from the smallest microbes to the largest whales — that dwell beneath the waves. \$40, at Amazon.com.

Life in the World's Oceans: Diversity, Distribution, and Abundance, edited by Alasdair McIntyre. This landmark publication from the Census of Marine Life represents 10 years of research by 2,000 scientists from 80 nations, and is one of the most important

marine science books ever published. Divided into four broad sections the title explores the oceans of the past, reveals the oceans of the present day and considers the oceans of the future. The final section explains how the vast amount of data was collated, integrated and utilized through the Ocean Biogeographic Information System. 384 pages. \$199.99, at Amazon.com.

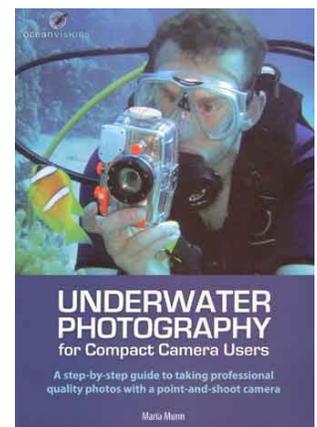


The World is Blue, How our Fate and the Oceans are One by Sylvia Earle. This book is a wake-up call for anyone who still doesn't get that humanity is committing suicide by despoiling the oceans. \$17.16 at Amazon.com.



Underwater Photography for Compact Camera Users by Maria Munn. This step-by-step guide to taking professional-quality photos with a point-and-shoot camera by SRI member Maria Munn is the first book dedicated to help both beginners and more advanced digital compact camera users to achieve excellent underwater photographs. 177 pages. Available at Amazon.com. If you'd like an autographed copy, Maria plans to be signing copies of her book at Beneath the Sea. Note that a portion of the proceeds of the sale of this book will be donated to

organizations which help divers with disabilities to experience the underwater world.



Sherman the Shark helping SRI's Sharkfin Campaign



A dynamic and creative working group in SRI, headed by Barbara Beck, is developing multiple strategies to end the demand for sharkfin soup. But conservation requires more than passionate commitment. Funds are needed to document what is happening in the ocean, bring it to the public's attention, and change cultural practices that severely damage the ocean ecosystem, such as the unprecedented slaughter of sharks for soup.

We have been offered a \$50,000 matching grant for an advertising campaign in Hong Kong. One method we are using to raise the needed funds is with the **Give a Fin to Save A Fin** program. Jim Toomey, creator of the nationally syndicated *Sherman's Lagoon* comic strip, has enlisted Sherman the Shark to help the cause.

We still have a long way to go, but with Sherman, Jim and your generosity, we will match the grant offer.

Racecar of SRI Trustee, Al Vinjamur



Jessica Gilbert



SRI welcomes Jessica Gilbert, our newest intern. Jessica is in her Junior year at Rutgers University where she is majoring in Environmental Policy, Institutions, and Behavior. Upon graduation, she plans to focus her efforts on protecting shark populations worldwide, as well as conserving their habitats. A New Jersey native, Jessica is also an avid surfer.

A special 'Thank You' to Jenkinson's Aquarium in Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey, for their tremendous support of our No Finning Campaign. To date, more than 830 aquarium visitors have signed SRI's No Finning cards.



NEC Birmingham UK 30-31 October 2010

by Suzy Quasnichka, SRI-UK

Great news for the current SRI shark anti-finning campaign! Almost £2000 (\$3,200) was raised at the UK Birmingham Dive Show, bringing us closer to our total target of \$50,000 (£43,000). SRI has been pledged an exceptional private donation of \$50,000 if the same in funds can be raised. The money will be used for a multi-media campaign in Hong Kong – at the centre of the shark fin trade – to raise public awareness in order to put a stop to the barbaric, inhumane and wasteful practise of shark finning. The SRI campaign was supported by celebrities such as TV presenter Monty Hall's, underwater cameraman John McIntyre, Bite Back organisation, Leslie Rochat and Sea Shepard.

Visit www.manandshark.com for information and to see the powerful film made by shark conservationists Alex Hofford and Paul Hilton who are based in Hong Kong and supported the SRI dive show stand with their powerful images.

The SRI stand at the UK dive show was sponsored by Africa Diver, a company which prides its self with a long standing affiliation with SRI. Company director Suzy Quasnichka has worked in the field of shark conservation for many years and represented SRI as their whale shark ambassador, contributing to research and eco-tourism for this enigmatic species. She has also worked in South Africa filming many species of sharks, whilst free diving with great whites, tigers and bull sharks. Africa Diver promotes trips with diving operators who are actively involved in shark research, conservation and supports SRI. Africa Diver can cater for all shark enthusiasts needs whether it be non-divers or professional camera crews alike. Stan Waterman, SRI President Emeritus, will be selecting the winning raffle tickets. All the winning ticket holders will be contacted directly by Africa Diver and announced on the website www.africadiver.co.uk

The money raised would not have been possible without the generosity of Africa Divers clients.

- Jeffs Resort donated a five-day accommodation and diving package in Mozambique where you can explore pristine coral reefs and take ocean safaris with whale sharks, manta rays and humpback whales! www.jeffsmoz.com.
- Deep Blue stepped up with a similar package in Utila where Steve Fox is actively involved with identification of the whale sharks as they migrate through the Bay Islands of Honduras. www.deepblueutila.com
- In South Africa Marine Dynamics donated a white shark dive for two people. Marine Dynamics has an acoustic tagging project run by marine biologist Alison Towner, monitoring the inshore movements of white sharks. www.sharkwatchesouthafrica.com
- In Kwa-Zulu Natal, home to the infamous shark nets, shark conservation and awareness is high on the agenda. Debbie Smith of Diving with Sharks donated a tiger shark/blacktip shark dive to the SRI raffle. Debbie is one of the only people qualified to teach all of the PADI Shark Specialty courses. www.divingwithsharks.co.za



Lesley Rochat, SRI Director of Media Productions, was a presenter at the show.

Additional prizes were kindly donated by Apex Predators and David Rowat.

For all SRI supporters in the UK or those who would like to become a member, look for the SRI stand at the dive show at the Excel centre in London, March 26/27th 2011.



Maria Munn and Suzy Quasnichka



The SRI stand at the show





The DEMA Show, hosted by the Diving Equipment & Marketing Association, is the only international trade event for the diving and adventure travel industries. More than 10,000 professionals gathered from November 17 to 20, 2010 at Las Vegas Convention Center to combine business, pleasure, education and dive industry advancement. And, as always, it was a chance to re-connect with other conservation organizations, sponsors and old friends.

Visitors included diving retailers & staff, equipment technicians & shop owners, live-aboard boat operators, safety/search and rescue divers, dive resort operators, divemasters, instructors and assistant instructors, dive training agencies,, environmental organizations, professional underwater photographers and videographers, travel agents, tour operators and cruise lines.



Exhibitors included manufacturers of scuba and ocean sport gear, underwater communications equipment, boats, subs and ROVs, dive and adventure travel destinations, dive training and instructional materials, airlines and charter services, and the latest and greatest in underwater still and video cameras and housings. In addition to the exhibitors, the event featured dozens of seminars by industry and national business leaders. And there were many events: WDHO's Kool Karibbean Extravaganza, the NOGI Awards presented by the Academy of Underwater Arts & Sciences to Michele Hall (Arts), Michael A. Lang (Science), Paul Humann (Sports and Education) and Hillary Hauser (Distinguished Service). The DEMA Awards were presented to Chuck Nicklin and Dr. José Jones followed by the Hat Party.



Among the SRI trustees, board and staff that attended were Dr. Sylvia Earle, David Doubilet, Jennifer Hayes, Jerry Beaty, Marty Snyderman, Marie Levine, Georgienne Bradley, Stan Waterman and Mike Tichenor. While Marie gathered data from dive tour operators about their local shark populations, Mike and Georgienne collected info for potential field research sties and regions where sharks are at greatest risk.

A restaurant at the the Las Vegas Hilton, the host hotel, offered sharkfin soup on their menu. We are happy to report that throughout the show, numerous parties of divers, including SRI members, went to the restaurant, sat at tables, then left without ordering after telling the management that they would not eat there because they served sharkfin soup.



Dr. Charlie Lumpkin



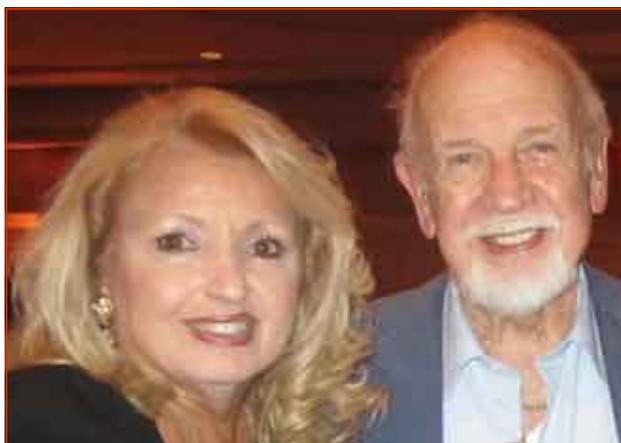
Steve Fox



Stan Waterman & Mike Tichenor



Michelle Hall & Dr. Sylvia Earle



Joanne (Ocean Pals) & Zig (Beneath The Sea)



Howard Hall & Chuck Nicklin

The DEMA Awards ...



Dr. A. José Jones

...And the Hat Party



Bonita Chamberlin, Dick Long & Laurie Wilson

Shark-Human Interaction - an Essential Tool for Conservation

By Erich Ritter, Ph.D. and Leonard J. V. Compagno, Ph.D.

An overwhelming amount of today's shark research deals with telemetric, biochemical, physiological or fisheries studies. But nearly completely missing are studies of interactions between sharks and humans, including how sharks react to the presence of humans, factors influencing encounters, and similar studies. Are such topics not relevant to our understanding of sharks? They are, more than ever.

Interactive research on predators has a long history — but not with sharks. When scientists studying mammalian predators spent extensive time in the field among their study objects, including apical terrestrial predators, shark experts of the 70s and 80s generally saw their animals as being too dangerous to do the same except for certain exceptional researchers. Such a predetermining attitude confirms the philosopher Bertrand Russell's observation that "... all animals that have been carefully observed have behaved so as to confirm the philosophy in which the observer believed before his observations began..."

But contrary to those biased and often erroneous beliefs preconceiving the impact of sharks on humans, there are no 'dangerous' sharks, merely the situations created by humans - knowingly, unknowingly or by third parties, and it is defensible and highly appropriate to do what Jane Goodall and George Schaller started with their animals decades ago. The way with sharks was long started by SCUBA and skin divers who routinely encountered sharks and discovered that, contrary to popular belief, the sharks didn't conform to the 'dangerous man-eater script' and were in fact highly accessible and safely viewable, leading to the development of a vast world-wide network of places where thousands of divers routinely view dozens of species of sharks without shark cages including the largest and most formidable species such as tiger and white sharks.

Unsubstantiated fear of shark attack, promoted by the news and entertainment media for often pecuniary purposes, still prevents sharks from being seen as they truly are. A change of attitude by the general public, the media, and the shark research community is urgently needed. Although efforts are taken to implement laws on shark fisheries to protect their populations, the general public has to be energized and motivated to create the outcry and political pressure needed against the large-scale slaughter that proceeds daily, but which could be stopped by existing parties with the political will to engage the resource-pirates. But this will only happen if the present undeserving prejudice against sharks can be altered towards animals to be cared about, not feared and hated, and that needs a united effort from the hitherto disunited and partly-uncaring scientific community. This makes the research of shark-human interactions more important than ever. It is this very field that reveals the true nature of sharks among humans - and not the personal and erroneous opinion that is still too often following the observer bias that Russell so clearly described many years ago.

Fact is that people hardly inquire about a fishery's impact, or an anatomical feature, but want questions answered like "if it is safe to swim here or there", "what to do when a shark shows up", and other activity or location-related questions. And it is not just the correct answering of those questions that helps to reimage sharks but the conscious eradication of the false Jaws image still lurking in the subconscious minds of people that should know better. And that requires education, to counter an image that is highly profitable to the media that promote it, that denigrates animals that never were equivalent to the Jaws killer shark. The Jaws shark is the most successful example (with over 200 million US dollars profit on a 12 million dollar motion picture) of a Hollywood animal monster, based as certain others on a real animal species, the white shark, which at the time we knew little about behaviorally but which turned out to be anything but Jaws: intelligent, complex, and deliberately treating humans not as prey.

This fear is the result of not knowing how to predict, interpret or deal with a shark encounter, and the inability to correctly read a shark's body language, environmental factors or situational circumstances. Shark-human research deals with the very effects and influences between sharks and humans expressed through behaviors and body language, action and reactions from both sides.

It hardly needs pointing out that shark conservation rises and falls with human sympathy, and that what you fear and hate you don't want to protect. This is very evident when looking at what species of large animals are protected and cared for: panda bears and other large terrestrial predators, elephants, dolphins, seals... for all of those animals sympathies can easily be created, and if a little push is needed, their offspring are always a potent factor to drive the point home. Perhaps not for sharks. So if one can't reason using pups [although this hasn't been tried to any extent, although shark pups do inspire sympathy in fishing competitions], or the cruelty of shark finning, or the ecological time bomb the eradication of sharks represents, one needs to tackle the very reason itself: selachophobia - the fear of sharks — which is apparently a generational and media pumped phenomenon that can be conspicuously absent in young people who often show selachophilia - the love of sharks.

Where to start? Do we tackle the rare incidents with sharks, still the ultimate reason why 'Jaws' stays alive in our subconscious minds along with insistent greedy media pumping of the Jaws image and shark fear for obvious pecuniary purposes. Do we spread recommendations of the Dos and Don'ts so we can safely interact with sharks, or do we just try to reason with people on a larger scale? The latter is hardly the way to success as the past has shown, leaving the analysis of incidents, their reconstructions and recommendation testing the way to go. Knowing what to do and how to react in an environment has always proven to be the safest way to behave in a situation and under varied circumstances, in the water, on land, or even within one's own and known walls. This starts with erasing all the old assumptions why sharks supposedly do this or that. It is never the sharks or the species of sharks that does anything but individuals within a particular situation under a combination of factors. Remember that a unitary concept of 'the sharks' is a taxonomic fallacy, and there are over 600 species most of which never bite people.

Also, media and the general public tend to behaviorally equate 'sharks' with 'white sharks' and by extension the fictitious Jaws monster, which is patently erroneous. And this is where a combined effort must be taken, even by shark biologists whose field is not shark-human interaction. The general public believes the scientific community to a large extent, and as such an expert interviewee should be careful when labeling a shark. But all too often Bertrand Russell's statement sees itself confirmed. It remains the perspective one has when addressing an issue that always affects how one sees the very situation one is dealing with. With this background, efforts need to be taken to change this imbalance. As much as every shark biologist is aware of the situation regarding fisheries, or destruction of nursery grounds, everybody should likewise be aware of sound recommendations on shark-human interactions. Incident files should be taken to the next level — and into the field. Accident reconstructions are established disciplines in many professions but when it comes to sharks, some shark researchers have labeled reconstructions 'not real science', which is sheer nonsense. Science means looking for something, searching for answers, detecting connections; what it does not mean is to conform to a research community's or public prejudices.

To understand how sharks act, react or function when encountering humans needs more attention than ever, and agencies concerned with the plight of sharks should be sensitive to this issue, even if it means leaving familiar territory and consulting with other experts such as physicians and forensic investigators working with the Global Shark Attack File.

Selachophobia is not inherited but learned, and as such can be avoided or eliminated, or replaced by selachophilia — a liking of sharks! Proven techniques to tackle the former exist, but why let fear spread in the first place? Although most of today's children are not only better educated about sharks and more sympathetic towards them than their parents, we need to find new and better methods of re-educating adults.

We have also learned that the battle against the overfishing of sharks can not be won by implementing regulations or setting of quotas alone - if at all - it requires the overlapping and synergizing efforts by scientists, educators and conservationists, and a profound empathy for these animals.



ICCAT Protects Six Species of Sharks, but Fails to Protect Tuna

PARIS, November 27: Six species of endangered sharks, hunted on the high seas to satisfy the escalating Asian market for sharkfin soup, are now protected in the Atlantic. Scalloped, smooth and great hammerheads, along with oceanic whitetip, cannot be targeted or kept if caught accidentally, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)* decided. ICCAT is charged with ensuring that commercial fisheries are sustainable, and has the authority to set quotas and restrictions.

Some 72 shark species are defined under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as "highly migratory," consequently falling under the jurisdiction of ICCAT, and of the 21 species found in the Atlantic, three-quarters are threatened with extinction.

After considering a record number of proposals, the ICCAT Parties agreed to prohibit retention of oceanic whitetip sharks, and restrict exploitation of hammerheads. North Atlantic populations of the oceanic white tip have declined by 70 percent, and by 99 percent in the Gulf of Mexico, while hammerheads fell by more than 99 percent in the Mediterranean.

The fins of oceanic whitetip and hammerhead sharks are prized for use in the Asian dish "sharkfin soup." While the oceanic whitetip shark protection agreed is broad, the new ICCAT measure on hammerhead sharks includes exemptions for developing coastal states to fish for the species for food and report catches by genus instead of species. To balance these exceptions, the measure calls on those countries to ensure that hammerheads do not enter international trade and prevent increases in hammerhead catches.

A US proposal to limit catches of North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks in line with previous agreements and scientific advice was amended after objections to catch limits were raised by Japan, Korea and China, countries with commercial interests. Instead, Parties adopted a measure penalizing any member country that does not submit data on its catch of shortfin mako sharks by 2013. Those nations will be prohibited in the future from fishing shortfin makos, which are second only to blue sharks in terms of the total number caught in the Atlantic.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies scalloped and great hammerhead sharks as Globally Endangered. Smooth hammerheads, porbeagles, shortfin makos, common threshers, bigeye threshers, and oceanic whitetip sharks are categorized as Globally Vulnerable. Species included in the Vulnerable, Endangered and Critically Endangered IUCN categories are considered by IUCN to be Threatened with Extinction. IUCN classifies one-third of oceanic sharks and rays as Threatened.

"ICCAT has taken significant steps toward safeguarding sharks, but much more must be done to effectively conserve these highly vulnerable species," said Sonja Fordham, President of Shark Advocates International who serves on the US ICCAT Advisory Committee and has participated in ICCAT meetings since 2004. "We are particularly pleased with the agreements aimed at protecting oceanic whitetip sharks and reducing international trade in the fins of hammerhead sharks, as well as US efforts to conserve mako sharks."

A proposal to strengthen the ICCAT ban on shark finning by prohibiting the removal of shark fins at sea and which would have curtailed fishing for the shark-fin market failed after Japan objected.

The European Union (EU) failed to achieve consensus on a proposal to prohibit retention of porbeagle sharks, a species which has declined by more than 50 percent in much of the Atlantic and critically endangered in the Mediterranean, due primarily to opposition from Canada, the only ICCAT Party with a targeted porbeagle fishery. The EU was also unsuccessful in attempts to protect common thresher sharks, although Mexico announced the end of its exemption for the ICCAT prohibition on retaining bigeye thresher sharks won by the EU and Brazil in 2009.

"We urge ICCAT Parties to promptly implement the shark measures and to build upon this progress by proposing complementary international safeguards for other oceans and additional shark protections at next

year's ICCAT meeting," added Fordham.

Norway and Iceland took reservations on the ICCAT oceanic whitetip protection because "it conflicts with their national bans on discarding dead fish". Russia also announced a reservation on the oceanic whitetip prohibition. Norway reiterated its reservation during the final discussions on the hammerhead measure.

Although putting a ban on fishing for some species of sharks, ICCAT once again failed to significantly cut back on the catch of eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna off Europe or shut down the tuna's spawning grounds in the Gulf of Mexico and Mediterranean.

The 2011 tuna quota in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean was set at 12,900 metric tons (reduced by only 4%). In the western Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, the quota was cut from 1,800 to 1,750 metric tons. The decreases are insufficient to ensure the recovery of the species and there is very real risk of taking the fish to commercial extinction. The quotas will have little effect in practice because of rampant illegal fishing and the inability or unwillingness of fishing and consuming nations to track trade in the species accurately.

Most of the Atlantic bluefin tuna consumed in the world, 80 percent of which goes to Japan, is caught by France, Italy and Spain from fishing operations in the Mediterranean Sea and eastern Atlantic. France was one of the foremost nations in pushing for the status quo to be maintained.

Bluefin tuna, one of the sea's most valuable species, is a highly migratory fish that can weigh more than 500 kilograms and live 40 years. One large fish can fetch \$175,000 in Japan, which consumes around 80 percent of the global bluefin market. Atlantic bluefin spawning stock in the Eastern Atlantic has plummeted by nearly 75 percent during the last four decades, with more than half of that loss occurring between 1997 and 2007, according to ICCAT's own figures. Atlantic bluefin populations are less than 15% of their historical high, and only 30% of their "mass sustainable yield" — the hypothetical balance between the natural state and commercial fishing. Some experts are concerned that the tipping point may already have passed, and also cite that the average size of the slow-maturing species has dropped below prime spawning age.

A massive black market in bluefin tuna was uncovered by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. The ICIJ seven-month inquiry uncovered waste, fraud, and rampant mismanagement in the reporting of bluefin catch totals. "The ICIJ report states. "Between 1998 and 2007, more than one in three bluefin was caught illegally, creating an off-the-books trade conservatively valued at \$4 billion."

"Fishermen blatantly violated official quotas and engaged in misreporting catch size, hiring banned spotter planes, catching undersized fish, trading fishing quotas, and plundering tuna from North African waters where EU inspectors are refused entry," the ICIJ reported. "Sea ranches, in which wild-caught bluefin are fattened to increase their value, became epicenters for 'laundering' tuna in the Mediterranean and North Africa," according to the ICIJ. Many ranches grossly underreported the fish they had in their pens and faked releases when forced by authorities to let go of illegally-caught bluefin. "A widespread, off-the-books trade in bluefin tuna has existed in Japan since at least the mid-1980s," the report states.

The ICCAT decision on Atlantic bluefin tuna leaves no doubt that the institution has failed and simply panders to short-term interests of the commercial fishing industry. "This outcome confirms that the bluefin's days are numbered and has demonstrated ICCAT's inability to act on its own mandate," said Greenpeace International oceans campaigner Oliver Knowles. "The word 'conservation' should be removed from ICCAT's name."

*ICCAT and other regional commissions regulate fishing. Trade bans are managed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Proposals to list oceanic whitetip, porbeagle, and hammerhead sharks at CITES in March 2010 — despite studies showing their numbers had fallen by up to 85 percent because of the booming fin trade — were defeated primarily due to opposition from Japan and China (see SRI Newsletter 19.2).

Shark Study in the United Arab Emirates

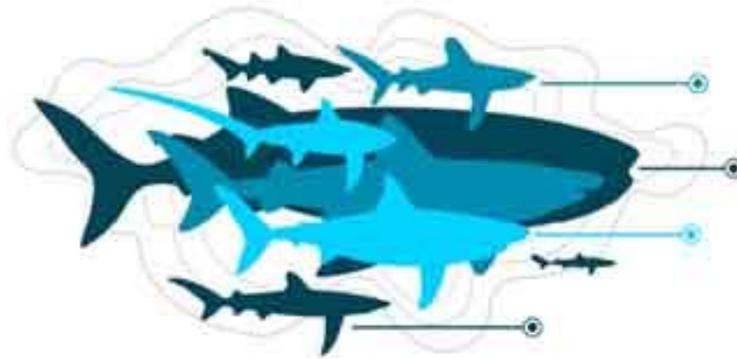
Fisheries statistics indicate that 80 per cent of the worldwide shark reserves have already been fished out, but until recently there had been virtually no research on shark populations in the Arabian Gulf. A study of sharks in the Gulf has been launched by the UAE University in Al Ain in collaboration with fishermen. "The state of sharks in the Arabian Gulf is a blank," reports Rima Jabado, marine biologist and a doctoral degree candidate at UAE University. "Attention should be given to sharks — they're the apex predator and their demise could lead to the collapse of the marine ecosystem."

Rima's three-year research will monitor the shark population in the UAE and focuses on species diversity, distribution and abundance, as well as feeding ecology and the fin trade. She has so far interviewed 126 fishermen from landing sites all over the UAE.

Data from the Food and Agriculture Organization showed that between 1985 and 2000, shark landings in the UAE were relatively stable with between 1,300 and 1,950 tonnes per year. Then, just a decade ago, the UAE had already become one of the main exporters of shark fins to Hong Kong with 400 to 500 tonnes per year being sent to East Asia to meet demand for shark fin soup.

Ecosystem Collapse

- √ In Australia, it's been reported that low numbers of sharks have led to an increase in the number of octopuses, who without the predators to keep them in check, are devouring the entire lobster population.
- √ With fewer sharks along the US Atlantic coast, the numbers of cownose rays have increased so much that they've wiped out bay scallops.
- √ This summer, Spain's Ministry of the Environment said the decline in natural marine predators was likely the cause of jellyfish blooms that led to the closure of several beaches along the Costa Blanca.



Shark Observation Network®

The Shark Observation Network is a partnership of the Greenland Shark and Elasmobranch Education and Research Group (GEERG), the Shark Research Institute (SRI), and the BIOAPP. The network supports the collection and organisation of data as well as the development and dissemination of information concerning the state of shark and elasmobranch populations and their worldwide distribution.

The information serves to support environmental awareness, assessment and policy making, and public participation at a global level. You can help us by reporting your own shark observations on a regular basis. This service is free and it is accessible to the general public at all times: For more information or to upload a photo, go to: www.sharksonline.net

Afuera Aggregation *by Dr. Jennifer V. Schmidt*

Whale sharks are pelagic (open ocean) animals, and are believed to spend most of their lives in deep waters far from shore. At certain times of the year, however, in certain parts of the world, large numbers of whale sharks gather in near-shore aggregations. These gatherings coincide with rich feeding opportunities, typically coral or fish spawning events. How whale sharks know when and where a spawn will occur is not understood, but these animals show up each year just as spawning begins. Photo-identification of individual whale sharks using spot patterns has shown that many animals return to the same aggregation site year after year.



Most whale shark aggregations number 10, 20, perhaps 50 animals - large numbers for a species that is otherwise seen only singly. For the past two years, however, an aggregation that has occurred off the eastern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula is arguably the largest ever seen. In the summer of 2009, aerial

photographs documented numbers reaching 600 animals east of Isla Mujeres, in the deep waters of the Caribbean Sea. This aggregation was termed the "Afuera" by local researchers; Afuera means "outside" in Spanish, and this region lies outside the ecological protection zone established by the Mexican government. Scientists waited eagerly for the summer of 2010. Would the Afuera recur?

It did in fact occur again this past summer, with whale sharks numbering in the hundreds gathering to feed on the eggs of a small tuna species. I was able to spend a few days in Mexico last August, and the magnitude of this whale shark feast was obvious — the water was thick with fish spawn. Though I've had the opportunity to observe whale shark aggregations in several countries, none have approached the concentration of sharks within the Afuera. The enormous whale sharks circled slowly in the water, vacuuming tuna eggs with their mouths open wide. Totally engrossed in feeding, the sharks were oblivious to swimmers in the water, providing an unforgettable experience for many lucky tourists out on the local whale shark sightseeing boats.



Will this aggregation happen again in 2011? Like any wildlife phenomenon, the Afuera cannot be predicted with certainty, but it is likely the tuna will return to spawn, and the whale sharks will return to feast at this banquet.

Expeditions

At present, no spots are left on most of our research expeditions, however some spaces are available on the expedition to **Isla Mujeres** with **Dr. Jennifer Schmidt**, in July 2011 and **Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras** with **Mike Tichenor**. For details or to reserve a space, call SRI Headquarters at 609-921-3522, or go to: www.sharks.org/expeditions

From time to time we also list dive trips that may be of interest to our members, such as:

Maldives with the Imaging Foundation

February 6-16, 2011 or February 17-27, 2011
\$3,765 per diver per segment, based on double occupancy in each cabin on the liveboard *Maldives Aggressor*. There are only a few spots left. For more information call 310.458.0700 or email earthimag@aol.com

False Bay, South Africa with Chris Fallows

These are the sharks of 'Air Jaws' fame, known for spectacular aerial displays. Call HQ for dates.

One Company Making a Difference

Shark conservation is spreading throughout the sport fishing industry, thanks in part to Gray Taxidermy, Inc, the world's largest marine taxidermist.

Gray Taxidermy is the originator of molding fiberglass replicas from fish, and with thousands of molds the company hasn't needed to make a cast from a dead shark in many years. Instead, the Pompano, Florida, company tells charter fishing boat captains that it will make fiberglass replicas for their clients from measurements of the live shark before its release.



As marine conservationists, Gray Taxidermy leads by example says Bill Dobbelaer, Sales Manager. For more information, and to see casts of shark species and game fish, go to:

www.graytaxidermy.com

Whale Sharks as Lures for Tuna

The commercial tuna industry has been accused of setting their nets around whale sharks, using them as lures to increase their catches, after obtaining photos showing a juvenile whale shark being hoisted off a boat.



Photo by Tony Hymer

A juvenile whale shark hauled onto the deck of a Taiwanese purse seine fishing boat.

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) is the decision making body for management of tuna fishing in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, and their conservation and management measures (CMMs) are legally binding to their members.

The WCPFC found nets were being set around whale sharks 13 times more often than captains were reporting in their log books and that 60 of the 180 whale sharks caught in the giant purse seine nets had died. Research uncovered that tuna boats were targeting whale sharks more often than reported. As result, the WCPFC will debate banning the practice at their meeting December 6-10 in Honolulu.

Australian Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke said the practice of using the sharks as tuna lures was "unacceptable". Whale sharks are listed as vulnerable to extinction by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, listed on Appendix II of both CITES and CMS, and are protected in the territorial waters of a number of countries, including Australia.

Shark Massacre Protest

Some 1,000 black cardboard shark fins were assembled on Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach by *Divers for Sharks*, a coalition of divers from 128 countries and based in Brazil. The event was the first in a series of demonstrations and awareness activities to call public attention to the slaughter of sharks around the world during Brazil's shark preservation week which coincided with the ICCAT meeting. The fins on the famed beach were accompanied by shark sculptures.

Approximately 20 per cent of all shark species are now endangered as demand grows for sharkfin soup. The protest condemned the finning of sharks – cutting the fins off a live shark and tossing the mutilated creature back into the sea where it suffocates, bleeds to death or falls prey to predators. The wholesale slaughter of sharks leads to deterioration of marine ecosystems, causing irreversible damage to the sea and damaging the diving industry.

“Sharks are a major diving attraction for divers and are fast disappearing from dive sites, endangering jobs in both the dive and tourism industries, while ICCAT and other international forums only protect the interests of the industrial fishing corporations,” said Paulo Guilherme Alves Cavalcanti, a co-founder of *Divers for Sharks*.

“It is shameful that ICCAT is presiding over the demise of the Atlantic sharks and that other regional fisheries agreements are doing the same the world over,” said *Divers for Sharks* co-founder and marine conservationist José Truda Palazzo, Jr. “Industrial fishing has become a criminal mining industry, and it's time the people to learn about it and stop its abuses before it's too late.”

Brazil, with unregulated and scarcely enforced fisheries and border controls, has become a major target for the shark fin contraband mafias, and also supplies shark fins legally for export by the thousands. Fins from an estimated 280,000 sharks were confiscated by Brazilian authorities from a contraband shipment bound to China from the Northern State of Pará.



Work for the Ocean Still Needed in DC

The November 2nd election in the USA gave the Republican Party control of the U.S. House of Representatives and increased their seats in the Senate. Although coastal and ocean conservation has historically been a bipartisan topic, many moderate Republican Congressmen and Senators who were key advocates for marine protection have been replaced by others who distrust any regulation of land or sea. Even some democrats such as Barney Frank (MA) are supportive of commercial fishermen who are reluctant to use science-based quotas and are strongly opposed plans to limit or stop overfishing.

In the 112th Congress we are likely to see President Obama's National Ocean Council come under attack. On July 19th, by Executive Order, it established a comprehensive, integrated National Policy for stewardship of the ocean, coasts and Great Lakes. The Council is an attempt to coordinate more than two-dozen federal departments and agencies to reduce conflict and redundancy at the national level while managing the uses of our publicly-owned seas through regional initiatives. The effort to also incorporate an ocean conservation trust fund into a Senate oil spill response bill, if not passed during the 111th Congress's lame duck session, will likely die at the hands of those who aim to cut government spending.

The new Senate may become even more immovable when it comes to a confirmation vote for the Law of the Sea treaty that has been languishing in the Senate for years. While nearly all ocean should participate in this United Nations convention that determines global actions on ocean issues, a handful of senators myopically claim it attempts to undermine U.S. sovereignty.

Finning in the Gulf of Mexico?

On September 19, SRI member Cindy Johnson was walking along Clearwater Beach in Florida when she discovered this recently-severed shark fin. Afraid that it was indicative of finning in the Gulf of Mexico, she contacted SRI Headquarters, and we called local authorities in the Clearwater-Tampa area. If any members can provide further information, please contact SRI at 609.921.3522 or info@sharks.org



Mark your Calendars

March 25-27, 2011: Beneath the Sea. American's largest consumer Scuba and Travel Show, Meadowlands Exposition Center, Secaucus New Jersey. www.beneaththesea.org



NOTE: There are many dive shows and surf shows throughout the USA in 2011. For a complete listing of shows, go to the Dive Industry Association website at: www.diveindustry.us



March 26-27, 2011: LIDS (London International Dive Show). Excel, London.



May 13, 2011: Fintastic Friday: Giving Sharks a Voice by WhaleTimes.org

May 21-23, 2011: Blue Vision Summit. The third Summit, held in Washington, D.C., will follow the annual Blue Frontier/Peter Benchley Ocean Awards, taking place on Friday, May 20th. For the more than 400 of us who participated in the March 2009 second Blue Vision Summit, it was both an inspiration and a practical chance to develop strategies and begin solving ocean problems early in the new administration. Themes for this summit will include Gulf Restoration, Moving Ocean Policy Forward, and Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change.



Shark Conservation Act

Thank you to all our members who contacted their senators, urging them to support the Shark Conservation Act. Special thanks are due to Edward Dorson for his compelling article in the Huffington Post, and to the wonderful the Shark Finatics who sent their drawings and letters to many senators.

Are you ready for Sharktopus? Yeech!

Think no Sci Fi flick could be sillier than *Deep Blue Sea*? Then you haven't seen *Sharktopus*!



When this genetically engineered super weapon of the Navy escapes, the crazed hybrid chomps bikini-clad girls off Mexico until destroyed by explosives embedded in its brain.

Looking for a Gift for Someone Special?

The holiday season is almost here, and SRI may be able to make gift shopping much easier. The Shark Shop on our website for some super books and DVDs. After you've made your list and checked it twice, you can cross off everyone on your list by giving them a whale shark. SRI has tagged more than 600 sharks. Each adoption includes a personalized adoption certificate with the name of the guardian, the shark, and when and where it was tagged. Not only is your gift tax-deductible, it makes a great present, especially for those hard-to-buy-for loved ones.



Seasons Greetings!



From all at SRI