



# SANDTIGER SHARK EXPEDITION

Experienced sport divers are invited to join the Shark Research Institute on an expedition in the Gulf Stream waters of the North Carolina to study sandtiger sharks, *Carcharias taurus*.

The shipwreck-laden waters off North Carolina offer world-class wreck diving and sandtiger sharks aggregate on specific wrecks. As with many shark species, the sandtiger shark plays a critical role within its oceanic ecosystem, and also provides a unique and valuable resource for sport divers.



Sandtiger sharks are perhaps the most common shark species seen in public aquariums. Although ferocious in appearance, these sharks feed on fish and present little danger to humans. The numbers of sandtiger sharks, as with many other populations of sharks worldwide, are dwindling rapidly due to bycatch and habitat destruction. Sandtiger sharks are a protected species along the east coast of the United States and no longer in danger of being fished, but the current size of the population is unknown. They are an inshore species with segregations of sexes at various times during their life cycle.



## Objectives

- Identify critical habitats that are important to the species throughout its life-cycle
- Record water temperature at depth on aggregation sites.
- Log the numbers, sexes and sizes of sandtiger sharks at specific of wreck sites
- Continue tagging the sharks (by the expedition leader) in order to determine their movements along the coast.

This project is field-oriented. Sport divers are urgently needed to assist SRI with data collection. If you are an Advanced Open-Water certified diver, consider joining this important research project.

# FAQ

**Location:** Morehead City, North Carolina.

**Skill level:** This expedition is for advanced open water certified divers only due to currents, depths, and location of the wrecks where the sharks are found. You should also have made at least one dive to 70 feet in your diving career, been on at least 2 boat dives and made at least 2 dives in the past 12 months.

**Number of Dive Days?** 3 days - 2 tank dives per day - May 15, 16 & 17, 2009.

**Operator:** Olympus Dive Center, 713 Shepard Street, Morehead City, North Carolina  
Tel: 252-726-9432, www.olympusdiving.com

**Boat:** The 48-foot *Midnight Express*.

**Lodging included in Price?** Yes, 3 nights - May 14, 15 & 16, 2009 at Olympus Dive Lodge.

**Is airfare included?** No.

**Trip Cost:** \$660

**What deposit is needed and when is the balance due?** A non-refundable deposit of \$350 is required to hold a space, and the balance is due February 15th. Although this expedition is scheduled before the start of the hurricane season, because weather and seas are always uncertain and no refunds are given, trip cancellation insurance is required. If you have DAN or DiveAssure, check to make certain you have trip cancellation coverage.

**Is any of the cost tax-deductible?** 20% of the cost is deductible from your 2009 Federal Income taxes. Because the divers are active participants in the research, the IRS allows a percentage of your cost as a tax-deductible contribution.

**What is expected from each diver?** If you are an underwater photographer or videographer, filming shark behaviors. All other divers will log environmental data. Each expedition member will be sent a booklet describing this research project 6 weeks prior to departure.

**Are Meals included?** No.

**Is Scuba gear included?** No, please bring your own gear. If you need to rent anything, call the Dive Center and make arrangements with them before departure.

**Tanks included in price?** No, you will need to rent them from dive center.

**Air fills included in the price?** Yes.

**Is Nitrox available?:** Yes it is, in both 80's and 100's. The dive center charges extra for Nitrox.

## Expedition Leader: Dean Fessler

Dean encountered his first shark (a four-foot nurse shark) in 1978 while snorkeling off the Florida Keys as a marine biology student at the University of Miami. Dean joined the Shark Research Institute in 1991, and began studying bull and Caribbean reef sharks off the Bahamas, and sandtiger sharks off North Carolina. In 1992, he relocated to San Diego to work with blue and mako sharks, and studied hammerhead sharks and whale sharks in the Sea of Cortez. In 1995, Dean joined the Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institute of Oceanography where he fed and lectured about resident shark populations. In 1998, Dean relocated to South Africa to study great white sharks and worked with other scientists, underwater photographers and documentary filmmakers on board white shark ecotourism vessels. Dean is also a NAUI Divemaster and a member of the Explorers Club.

**May 15, 16 & 17, 2009**  
**\$660 per diver**

To reserve a space, contact  
Dean at 609-921-3522,  
or  
expeditions@sharks.org  
or  
send your deposit to:

**Shark Research Institute**  
**PO Box 40**  
**Princeton, NJ 08540**