

# Shark Research Institute Newsletter



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## Two *BIG* wins for Shark Conservation



The white shark was placed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), a United Nations

Treaty Organization convening October 2 to 14, in Bangkok, Thailand. The proposal was sponsored by Australia and Madagascar. During the debate, Ecuador, Thailand, United States, the European Union, and IUCN spoke in favor of the proposal, while Japan, Norway, Iceland, China, Guinea-Bissau, Qatar and the Caribbean nations of St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis voiced strong opposition. Japan called for a secret ballot. Some 87 countries parties (countries) voted in favor of the listing, 34 opposed and nine parties abstained.

CITES convenes every two to three years. The 166 countries that are signatories to CITES have agreed to abide by and implement decisions taken by CITES. Shark Research Institute participates as an NGO (non-governmental organization) where, along with other organizations such as WWF, TRAFFIC and SSN, we meet with delegates to present scientific data in support or opposition of proposals under consideration by CITES.

Under CITES rules, an Appendix II listing allows trade if it does not threaten survival of the species, while an Appendix I listing prohibits all trade in the species. The Appendix II “zero quota” listing that Australia and Madagascar originally proposed, would in fact be similar to an Appendix I listing but a decision to withdraw the “zero quota” was made to improve the proposal’s chance of success.

Australia and Madagascar’s proposal stated that an Appendix II listing for the shark would ensure exploitation of this globally-threatened species is regulated and monitored and that international trade is not detrimental to its survival. The position

statement, issued by Dr. Leonard Compagno, Director of SRI and author of the United Nations *FAO World Catalogue of Sharks* provided strong scientific support for the proposal. White sharks are targeted commercially and by recreational fishermen for their jaws and teeth. Their fins, like those of other sharks, are in demand for shark fin soup.

The white shark is only the third shark species to be afforded Appendix II protection by CITES, joining the basking and whale sharks which were listed at CITES Convention Parties (CoP12) in Santiago, Chile.

At CoP13, Japan’s proposal to commercially hunt minke whales was harpooned; 57 countries voting in favor of the proposal, 67 against and 14 abstaining. The humphead wrasse (also known as the Napoleon wrasse or Maori wrasse), *Cheilinus undulatus*, gained Appendix II protection, and wild African elephants won more protection against ivory poachers following a six-hour debate.

### *ICCAT Bans Shark Finning*

The annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) concluded November 21, 2004 with the consensus adoption of binding measures for sharks taken in ICCAT Fisheries, including a ban on shark finning as well as requirements for shark data collection and assessment.

The winning proposal was co-sponsored by the United States, the European Community, Japan, Mexico, Panama, South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela. Namibia, Brazil and Uruguay made strong statements of support for the proposal. The final Recommendation also calls for research into increasing selectivity of fishing gear and identification of shark nursery areas.

South Korea was the only country to express hesitation with the finning ban; they reserved their right to file an objection to the measure and have six months to do so.



Shark World, a major exhibition, has opened at Iziko-South African Museum. The exhibit was developed over the past three years as a major educational exhibit and display on the Class Chondrichthyes. Shark World traces the evolution of cartilaginous fishes from their origins over 400 million years ago to modern times. It highlights the diversity of living and fossil cartilaginous fishes, using them to demonstrate basic aspects of biology including evolution, anatomy, sensory biology, feeding habits, behaviour and conservation.



Shark World is illustrated by graphics, photographs, and accurate casts of living and fossil sharks and rays, including life-size models of

a white shark, manta ray with her pup, a southern sleeper shark, an immature whale shark, a bigeye thresher, and many more. Shark World was designed and built by the SWH team (Raymond Smith, Hoffman Wenzel, and Terri Haag) and by taxidermists and technical staff at Iziko-South African Museum. L.J.V. Compagno, Director of SRI, served as project coordinator, scientific and design advisor of the exhibit. The Save Our Seas Foundation (Geneva, Switzerland) is the major sponsor of Shark World. Iziko-South African Museum is located at 25 Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town, South Africa, and is open to the public seven days a week, 10 AM to 5 PM, on most days of the year. Everyone interested in cartilaginous fishes is welcome to Shark World.



## TROUBLE IN TAHITI

— and what you can do about it.

In early October Amos Nachoum alerted Shark Research Institute (SRI) to grim news from Tahiti: Some 56 new licenses are being issued for longlining operations in Tahitian waters. French tour operators attending the Antibes Film Festival called an emergency meeting to establish a unified front to approach the government of Tahiti to hold off on the longline permits, citing the irreversible damage that uncontrolled long line fishing would cause to the marine wildlife, and to sharks in particular, and highlighting the loss of income to people in Tahiti who depend on tourism.

SRI member Peter Benchley has been investigating the problem to determine the best course of action. SRI lacks field offices in Tahiti and nobody is certain who is actually in power these days (Tahiti currently has two governments, two presidents, etc), but Tahiti wants to increase tourism by 200%. He suggests that all SRI members (and divers) send emails to Tahiti's Department of Tourism, asking them to raise strong objections to longline fishing in their waters because it will irrevocably destroy their marine environment, cause devastation to their shark population, put an end to dive tourism in Tahiti and result in loss of revenue to Tahitians who depend on tourism for their income. After you've sent the emails, contact everyone in your email address book asking them to do the same, and so on, and so on – as we did with the MasterCard Campaign last year. Here are email addresses of Tahiti's Department of Tourism in the USA, Tahiti and elsewhere: [tahitilax@earthlink.net](mailto:tahitilax@earthlink.net),

[tahiti-tourisme@mail.pf](mailto:tahiti-tourisme@mail.pf), [info@tahiti-tourisme.dk](mailto:info@tahiti-tourisme.dk)

## Update on Galapagos Islands

SRI protested Faustus Cepeda's appointment as Director of the Galapagos National Park and supported the park rangers on strike against the appointment. Cepeda advocated opening the Galapagos Marine Reserve to longline fishing.

Minister of Environment, Fabián Valdivieso, subsequently removed Cepeda and appointed Victor Carrion as Interim Director. Carrion has since been replaced by Marcos Hoyos.

A separate, but related, announcement: IGOTA, the Association of Galapagos Tour Operators, has become an SRI sponsor. IGOTA, too, supports protection for sharks in the Galapagos.

## Field Expeditions

**Utila:** Feb 12 - 19, 2005  
Spaces available.

**LaPaz:** Fall 2005

**Thailand & Burma  
Banks: April 11-21**

4 spaces have become available

All expedition volunteers must be certified divers and pay their own expenses, some of which are deductible from US Federal Income taxes. Contact: [antoniou@sharks.org](mailto:antoniou@sharks.org) for details.

## IUCN Urges Ban on Shark Finning

On November 25, 2004, the world's largest environmental conservation body, World Conservation Union (IUCN), called for an end to shark finning, the practice of cutting off fins and discarding shark bodies at sea. The IUCN, made up of more than 1,000 governmental and non-governmental organizations from 140 countries, adopted a recommendation at its meeting in Bangkok urging all countries to ban shark finning. The practice of shark finning is driven by the huge demand for shark fins for use in shark fin soup, an Asian luxury item which can sell for more than US\$150 per bowl.

Sharks have inhabited the oceans for over 400 million years, and as top predators in the food chain they play a vital role in maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems. The United Nations estimates that more than 100 million sharks are killed each year and studies show that many shark populations around the world have declined by 90% in the last 50 years.

## Thank you to our Supporters

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## GLOBAL SHARK ATTACK FILE

**AUSTRALIA:** October 21, the foot of surfer John Gresham, 59, was lacerated by a bronze whaler shark at Stockton Beach, New South Wales.

**REUNION:** October 6, Vincent Motais, 15, was body-boarding at St. Pierre, when his leg was severed by a shark. Motais is France's Junior

Body Board Champion. **SOUTH AFRICA:** October 9, surfer Wayne Monk, 35, sustained puncture wounds in his foot at Jeffrey's Bay. It was thought the incident involved a raggedtooth shark.

October 30, Andre Hartman, 52, was bitten on the foot by a two-metre white shark at Gansbaai. November 15, Tyna Webb, 77, was swimming at Fish Hoek in False Bay when she was killed by a six-metre white shark.

November 26, Arno de Bruyn, 16, was playing in the shallows at Gonubie when a shark lacerated his lower leg and foot, and next day Llewellyn Maske, 20, sustained three lacerations on his foot while surfing at Nahoon.

**USA: California** – October 1, surfer Chuck Wilson, 40, was bumped by a shark at Huntington Beach and on October 9, surfer Ben Ikola, 16, was knocked off his surfboard at Pismo Beach. Neither surfer was injured, but next day Paul de Jung was surfing at Limatour Beach, Point Reyes National Seashore, when his lower leg was bitten by a six metre white shark.

October 11, the hand, knee and thigh of surfer Brian Kang, 38, was injured by a white shark at Bunkers. **Hawaii** - October 9, Davy Sanada, 34, was spearfishing at Molokai when his shoulder was bitten by a shark.

## LOOKING FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS?

SRI will be auctioning items donated by members on E-Bay (Carolyn will notify members via email when the auction starts). There will be some terrific and unusual items for Christmas, Hannukah & Kwanza gifts. SRI-tagged whale sharks up for adoption make wonderful stocking stuffers and are a great way to get kids involved in ocean conservation. Adoption forms are on our website at [www.sharks.org](http://www.sharks.org).



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

### ***Equipment Needed...***

Field researcher, Joan David, needs a housing for a SONY TRV900 video camera. Although Gates Underwater Housing no longer manufactures a housing for that model, if SRI can locate one they will recondition it for us.

SRI-HQ also needs a microfilm reader/printer or a microfilm scanner.

If you have either of these items and would be willing to donate them to SRI for a tax credit, please contact SRI at (609) 921-3522

### ***White shark tracked across the Indian Ocean***

A female white shark has been tracked, via satellite tag, from Gansbaai, South Africa to Western Australia. She swam 10,000 kilometres in just three months! This is the first solid evidence that female white sharks cross the Indian Ocean. Previous genetic studies of white shark populations found a male shark from South Africa in Tasmania, but females were thought to stay in their "home range." In another study, a tiger shark tagged in Hawaii was caught a year later in the Sea of Cortez; the shark had traveled 3,000 kilometres.

### ***Megamouth #24***

On November 4, a giant shark stranded alive in barangay Namocon, Tigbauan, Philippines. Locals were unsuccessful in pushing the huge animal back into the water. Some hours later a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) representative arrived on the scene and told the villagers to bury the shark when it died. The next



day, the creature was identified by a Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) official as one of the rarest sharks in the world, *Megachasma pelagios*, first discovered in 1976. The shark was named Megamouth No. 24 because it is only the 24th specimen of its kind recorded in the world. Megamouth No. 24 was an adult female that measured 504 centimetres in length and weighed about a ton. She was the third megamouth recorded in the Philippines. The first and second recorded megamouths in the county were sighted at Macalajar Bay off Cagayan de Oro in 1998 and 2003, and both were eaten by fisherfolk. No. 24 is the only intact specimen in the Philippines.

### ***Upcoming Events***

Meet SRI staff at Adventures in Travel Expo-New York, **January 14-16** at the Jacob K. Javits Center, and attend a seminar by J.P. Botha, *White Sharks of South Africa*.



SRI will also have a booth at Adventures in Travel Expo-Washington, DC. **January 28-30** at the Washington Convention Center where Dean Fessler will present two seminars: *Great White Sharks - A Global Perspective*, *Current research and preservation efforts on Carcharodon carcharias*, and *Whale Sharks of La Paz*.