

Shark Research Institute Member Newsletter



Shark Research Institute Global Headquarters

70 Heather Lane • Princeton, NJ 08540 • USA • Phone: 609-921-3522 • Fax: 609-921-1505

UPDATE ON ALIBABA.COM & YAHOO!



Alibaba.com, China's biggest e-commerce firm, serves as a conduit for the sharkfin trade, and Yahoo! bought a 40% stake in Alibaba in 2005. Shark Research Institute, Sea Shepherd, Ocean Realm Society, the media,

and thousands of individuals worldwide have approached both Alibaba.com and Yahoo! to induce them to drop the shark fin trade and adopt a responsible corporate attitude toward the ocean environment.

Yahoo claims, as a minority stockholder, it has no control over Alibaba.com. Alibaba, nonchalantly states it does not wish to "take sides" in the "controversy" and hired Hill and Knowlton as its public relations firm, the same firm that designed the tobacco industry's strategy for counteracting scientific evidence which linked cigarette smoking to lung cancer

In early November, Alibaba.com sold 858.9 million IPO shares, or 17% of its enlarged share capital, in a deal handled by Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley. The stock performance raised \$1.5 billion in the largest high tech offering since Google went public in 2004.

Earlier this month Federal lawmakers also lambasted Yahoo! on Capitol Hill for cooperating with a government that denies freedom of speech and cracks down on journalists, accusing it of collaborating with an oppressive regime. "While technologically and financially you are giants, morally you are pygmies," House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Tom Lantos, D-California, said at a hearing. Speaking of investors in China, business professor Peter Navarro of the

University of California, Irvine, said: "They have all crossed a gray ethical line in China with their anything-for-a-buck mentality."

The sharkfin industry profits are second only to the drug trade; we are seriously out-gunned financially. What we have in our arsenal are science and a commitment to end the sharkfin trade.

We urge all of our members to continue the pressure on both Alibaba and Yahoo! Neither firm wants to end the highly lucrative (and often illegal) trade in shark fins. Both choose to ignore evidence that the sharkfin trade is exterminating more than 70 million sharks a year, driving many species to extinction with catastrophic consequences for the biodiversity of the world's oceans.

1000

The 1000th specimen of the world's largest fish, the whale shark, has been identified thanks to global efforts by hundreds



of 'citizen scientists' and eco-tourists.

ECOCEAN has announced the identification of the 1000th whale shark in its online Library which shares data from scientists and ecotourists worldwide. "We can expect there to be substantially more than 1000 sharks alive in the world today. But, even so it is still a very tiny global population that needs close monitoring to ensure its survival," says Brad Norman, project leader of ECOCEAN.

ECOCEAN tracks individual whale sharks throughout the world's oceans using a web-based photo-ID library of the unique spots that pattern

1000 whale sharks, continued from page 1

the animals' skins. Researchers and eco-tourists submit images, which are logged to reveal a picture of whale shark movements and behavior over time.

"It is a major milestone, for science and for conservation, and it was achieved with the help of ordinary people worldwide who want to study and protect this wonderful creature," said Norman. The 1000th shark was a 6.5 m male reported by a major contributor to the ECOCEAN Photo-ID Library, Simon Pierce, a marine biologist studying the sharks in Mozambique.

Participation in the ECOCEAN Library has increased dramatically in recent years. It took three years to reach the 500th shark milestone but only one additional year to reach 1000. This is evidence of willingness by people worldwide to use the Library to study this cryptic giant.

Norman says: "We're calling on the public worldwide to become 'citizen scientists' and help us study this wonderful animal by logging their images on www.whaleshark.org "This will build a better understanding of this threatened species and help save the largest fish in the ocean from extinction," said Norman.

NOTE: Brad Norman won a Rolex Award for Enterprise for this work in 2006. ECOCEAN won a Sun Microsystems Duke's Choice Award for Innovative Use of Java Technology in 2005 and the Peter Benchley Award for Shark Conservation (Science) 2007.

OCEAN SUMMIT

SRI was one of the sponsors and presenters at the first State of the Oceans Summit, held on Thursday, November 1, 2007 during DEMA, the annual dive industry convention.

The program featured updates from environmental organizations on specific issues ranging from shark finning, mantas and whale shark projects to coral reefs, and the introduction of new eco resort standards.

SRI Board member Dianna Mercuri presented information on SRI Projects to the attendees. All briefs presented at the conference will be published in the next issue of Ocean Realm Journal.

Tin House, a rock band with an environmental message, introduced its *Don't Destroy Our Future* at a networking social following the Summit.

Welcome to new SRI Trustees!

Five new Trustees have been elected to SRI's Board: Ben Fackler of Lazard Freres; Jupp Kerckerinck zur Borg of sharkprotect.com; Dianna Mercuri, a NJ business woman; John A. Scarlett, M.D., underwater photographer and CEO of Tercica, Inc., a publicly-traded biotechnology company; and Rob Stewart, producer/director of Sharkwater.



All are passionately committed to shark conservation and seek to expand SRI operations. The new Trustees join Leonard J.V. Compagno, Ph.D., Director of SRI; Stan Waterman, President of SRI; Captain Stephen D. Nagiewicz, Chairman; D.W. Bennett; William L. Bunting, Jr. Esq.; and Al Vinjamur on SRI's Board of Trustees.

Good News from China

A Chinese Governor is moving to protect whale sharks in response to a request from the Western Australian Government.

Western Australian Premier Alan Carpenter wrote to Lu Zushan, the Governor of Zhejiang province earlier this year after hearing that a six-metre whale shark had been caught off the province's coast by local fishermen. "In my letter, I explained to Governor Lu that the whale shark is much-loved by Western Australians and is one of our best tourist attractions," Mr Carpenter said. "I also said that the whale shark is a protected species in Australia, and requested that the Governor encourage Zhejiang fishers to join us in protecting this endangered animal.

Mr. Carpenter said the Governor advised local fishermen to release any whale sharks caught in future, and may include the animal on the province's list of protected species.

Expeditions

Spaces for sport divers are available on the following expeditions. Please note: These are *not* dive vacations; they are research expeditions. Divers will assist SRI scientists to gather and record data. To reserve a space or obtain more details, go to: www.sharks.org/expeditions

Whale Sharks

December 15-22, 2007 LaPaz, Mexico. Expedition leader: Dr. Alex Antoniou. \$1,350 per diver

December 2007-March 2008 Tanzania & Northern Mozambique Channel, aboard the oceanographic vessel *Kairos*. Expedition leader, Matt Potenski. Ten day segments, €2,600 (currently \$3,409) See our website for availability

March 3-13, 2008 Donsol, Philippines. Expedition leader, Marie Levine. \$1,887 per diver

July 3-7, 2008 Holbox, Mexico. Expedition Leader, Paul Anes. \$1,500 per person

Thank You to our Supporters!

We are very grateful for the support of:

- **The Adikes Family Foundation**
- **Adventure Aquarium**
- **Craig Atkins**
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- **The Rohauer Collection Foundation**
- **San Diego Shark Diving**
- **Greg Sparks**
- **Underwater Video Images**
- **Wave Foundation**
- **World Wildlife Fund**

Largest Shark Fin Penalty In Palau History

Taiwan fishing boat captain Tsai Wuen Teng will spend 32 days in jail for attempt to bribe officials over an illegal shark finning case in Palau. The remainder of his two year sentence is suspended.

Tsai must also pay a civil penalty of \$160,000; \$20,000 in cost recovery to Palau's Marine Enforcement Bureau; forfeit \$5,643 in fish sales monies and forfeit his fishing equipment of hooks, lines and leaders after being caught with 650 shark fins, 94 shark bodies and ten shark heads on August 15. He has also been fined \$1000 and will have to forfeit the \$2,392 he offered in an attempted bribe of Marine Law Enforcement Officer Earl Benhart. Assistant Attorney General Christopher Hale who prosecuted both cases involving Tsai has included in the guilty plea agreements a prohibition of Tsai from fishing or having any financial interest in a fishing venture in Palau waters. Tsai must leave Palau within five days of serving his jail time and is permanently banned from returning to Palau.

The case is just one of a number pending before the Supreme Court for shark fining and other regulatory violations but the size of this penalty is the largest in Palau history. The previous highest penalty was a mere \$50,000.

Although Palau is to be congratulated on its stand against shark finning, Palau has also taken reservations on CITES Appendix II sharks and 2 species of whales, which means the country will not be bound by the provisions of CITES relating to international trade in those species.

SRI Florida

SRI's new South Florida Chapter is a powerhouse, thanks to SRI members Neil Hammerschlag, Cassandra Clark, Sabrina Garcia and Daniell Washington! They have already submitted a proposal to the Miami-Dade Community Foundation for their outreach program for local schools. They also assisted at a screening of Sharkwater at City Hall in Miami on November 30, and hosted an event afterwards at Scotty's Landing in Coconut Grove. As an incentive for new members in South Florida, all who join at \$100 levels or higher will receive a limited edition 2008 calendar by Rogest, valued at \$50. And together with SRI president Stan Waterman and Dianna Mercuri, they promoted SRI programs at the Florida Dive Show!

Shark Research Institute
P.O. Box 40
Princeton, NJ 08540
U.S.A.

Non-Profit Organization
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Princeton, NJ 08540



WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.SHARKS.ORG

Calendar of Events

- Adventures in Travel Expo
www.adventureexpo.com
Pier 94, 755 12th Avenue
(b/t 54/55th Sts)
Public Show Hours:
Saturday, January 12: 10:30 am-6 pm
Sunday, January 13: 11am-4:30 pm
Free tickets may be downloaded on our website
- Texas Dive Show www.seaspace.org
This new show will be held January 26-27,
2008, at the J.W. Marriott Hotel/Convention
Center near the Galleria in Houston, Texas.
- Beneath the Sea
www.beneaththesea.org March
28, 29 & 30 at Meadowlands
Convention Center, Secaucus,
NJ. This is the largest consumer
dive show in the USA.
- Join SRI members and staff on a dive to NJ
shipwrecks. Captain Zero has made his 50-foot
dive boat *John Jack* available as a fundraiser for
SRI. www.captainzero.com/home.html
Watch our website for more details.



For Holiday Gifts, visit the Shark Shoppe



If you're searching for unusual gifts this holiday season, check out the Shark Shoppe on our website, or go to www.sharks.org/adopt.htm and adopt an SRI-tagged whale shark. It's a simple way to show a loved one you care about them, and support shark conservation.

From Monterey Aquarium

For the third time since 2004, we have a young white shark in the Outer Bay exhibit of the Monterey Aquarium. He arrived on August 28, and



will remain in the million-gallon exhibit as long as he's in good health and hasn't grown too large for us to return safely to the wild.

Like our first shark in 2004, he was caught accidentally in commercial fishing gear. Like our second shark in 2006, he's a young male: just 4'9" long and weighing 67.5 pounds. As with both of the other young white sharks, he was kept in an ocean holding pen off Malibu in Southern California until we observed him feeding and navigating well in the confines of the pen.

Our first shark was with us for 6.5 months; our second, for 4.5 months. Both were successfully returned to the wild, and the tracking tags they carried documented their journeys back in the ocean. We've tagged 10 other young sharks in the wild in Southern California waters as part of our white shark field project, and support research to track the migrations of adult white sharks tagged off the Farallon Islands and Point Año Nuevo on California's central coast.

You can meet the white shark in person when you visit, or try to spot him on our Outer Bay Cam as he swims in the exhibit. We'll post regular online updates on how he's doing. ...*Monterey Aquarium*