

# 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**

## Conservationists Honored

The Shark Research Institute presented two awards to outstanding marine conservationists in Manila, Philippines in June.

Underwater photographer Michael Aw was awarded the 2008 Peter Benchley Shark Conservation Award by SRI president Stan Waterman at *Celebrate the Sea Festival* in Manila. The award, sponsored by Rolex, honors the memory of the late Peter Benchley, a staunch advocate for protection of sharks. Each year the awards spotlight individuals working internationally for shark conservation.

Michael Aw, director of *Ocean Geographic*, won in the Media category. He has been conducting a highly-effective and unrelenting campaign against shark finning in the Asia Pacific region.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, president of the Philippine Republic and a world-leader in protecting the ocean environment, received the prestigious Ocean Heritage award in recognition of her decades



**Stan Waterman presents Gloria Arroyo, President of the Philippine Republic, with the Ocean Heritage Award at the Presidential Palace in Manila.**



**Stan Waterman presents Michael Aw with the 2008 Peter Benchley Shark Conservation Award for Media**

of efforts to protect sharks and the ocean ecosystem as the foundation for a stable, productive and sustainable society. President Arroyo has made unprecedented strides to protect unique marine resources throughout South Asia's Coral Triangle." An avid diver for 30 years, she created and expanded marine parks throughout her island nation of 90 million people, funded marine conservation projects, and hosted marine conservation symposiums in the Asia Pacific region. President Arroyo designated the whale shark (butanding) as the icon for marine conservation, proclaimed the month of June as "Celebrate the Sea" month, and the second Saturday in every June as "Celebrate the Sea" Day. Mr. Waterman was Honorary President of the three-day Festival which drew thousands of divers, conservationists, and photographers, as well as international celebrities such as Emory Krstoff, Daniel Mercier, and David Doubilet.

## New Finding about Basking Sharks



The basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) is the second largest shark after the whale shark and can grow to 12 m (40-ft) in length.

Previous tagging

studies have shown apparently distinct populations of basking sharks migrating south for winter at shallow depths along the continental shelf of Europe and the east coast of North America. The sharks were thought to exist in discrete populations thousands of kilometres apart but it now appears they may mix by migration, say scientists who tracked a female across the Atlantic.

A basking shark tagged by Mauvis Gore of Marine Conservation International in Newton, UK, and her colleagues traveled 9,589 kilometres from the Isle of Man, UK, to a region east of the Newfoundland shelf. The shark's nights were generally spent at depths of 200–300 metres and her days at 400–800 metres, once reaching 1,264 metres. Data provided by the satellite tag shows the species travels thousands of miles and enters very deep waters.

Such long-distance migrations have implications for population genetics. The detailed pattern of movements will aid in protecting basking sharks in British waters and the species has limited protection as a CITES Appendix II animal. But Gore cautions, "basking sharks in the northeast Atlantic may show only limited recovery if mature adults are exposed to exploitation in other oceanic regions."

## Expeditions

Spaces for sport divers are available on the following expeditions. Please note: These are *not* dive vacations; they are research expeditions. All participants will be expected to assist SRI scientists to gather and record data, and thus costs are partially deductible from your US Federal income taxes. To reserve a space or obtain more details, go to: [www.sharks.org/expeditions](http://www.sharks.org/expeditions)

### Whale Sharks

**Tanzania & Northern Mozambique Channel, aboard the oceanographic vessel *Kairos*.** December 2008-March 2009 Expedition leader, Matt Potenski. Ten day segments \$4,496 (\$3,000 for SRI members if reservations made thru SRI).

**Philippines:** April 2009. Watch our website for more information.

### White Sharks

**Guadalupe Island: 5 day** — August 21-25, September 4-8; 10-14 or 16-20; September 30-October 4; October 6-10, 12-16 or 18-22; November 1-5. \$2,750 per diver.

**Guadalupe Island: 7 day** — August 27-September 2; September 22-28 or October 24-30, \$3,150 per diver.

**Guadalupe Island with Amos Nachoum & Alex Antoniou** — September 1-8; \$3,950 per diver.

### Tiger Sharks

**Aliwal Shoal, South Africa** — June or July 2009  
*If luck is with us, we will also experience the sardine run, one of nature's great spectacles.*  
<http://www.wildoceanfilm.com/>

## Tests reveal shark flesh contains 60 times the safe level for human consumption

South Africa's Natal Sharks Board (NSB) is collaborating with the German NGO Sharkprojekt ([www.sharkprojekt.org](http://www.sharkprojekt.org)) in an analysis of methyl mercury in flesh of sharks caught in their nets. Obviously, the bigger [sharks] are, the more methyl mercury they will have consumed," said Jeremy Cliff of the NSB. "But age is also a factor. Some sharks, like the spiny dogfish, may be as old as 50 years, but grow to less than a metre in length."

Wolf Snyckers of Sharkprojekt and co-ordinator of the project in South Africa said the Chinese are very interested in the experiments, given their taste for sharkfin soup. At a seafood safety and toxicology symposium in Chingdao in June 2006, Sharkprojekt presented the findings of two German scientists who developed a method of testing methyl mercury in shark products on European and Australian supermarket shelves. The scientists found that the shark products being sold had methyl mercury levels 60 times the 'safe' level for human consumption, and consumption could result in impotency and death.

In China, shark products are promoted as a cure for impotency. "The sharks will have the last laugh yet, but the reality is without them, the ocean will die," says Andy Cobb, South African shark conservationist.



## Update from Tanzania



SRI Field Researcher, Matt Potenski had a very successful second season in Tanzania. Matt conducted field surveys and

tagged 21 whale sharks from November 2007 through March 2008. Thirty-five different individuals were differentiated using spot-pattern recognition software applied to digital images. A number of the sharks tagged last season were resighted, and the satellite tags deployed yielded a wealth of data that will assist in regional management of the species. To enable year-round monitoring of the sharks, Matt also trained a survey team from the Mafia Island Whale Shark Conservation Society (WHASCOS).

This study is funded by World Wildlife Fund-Tanzania, The Wave Foundation of the Newport Aquarium, and The Kairos Company.

## Thank You to our Supporters!

We are very grateful for the support of:

- **The Adikes Family Foundation**
- **Adventure Aquarium**
- **Craig Atkins**
- **Craig Grube**
- **The Freeman Foundation**
- **Edmund Grainger**
- **Lauren Hutton**
- **Kairos Company**
- **J. Arch McNamara, M.D.**
- **Microwave Telemetry, Inc.**
- **Minnesota Aquarium**
- **Newport Aquarium**
- **OceanBlue Divers**
- **Project Aware Foundation**
- **RPX**
- **Rolex Watch USA**
- **The Philanthropic Group**
- **The Rohauer Collection Foundation**
- **San Diego Shark Diving**
- **Greg Sparks**
- **Underwater Adventures Aquarium**
- **Underwater Video Images**

## Jupp Kerckerinck

Jupp Kerckerinck has become a very hot item on German television! In April, Jupp, who is on SRI's Board of Trustees, appeared in three shows on German television. A dashing aristocrat who was born in a castle that was his family's home since the 15<sup>th</sup> century (read his bio on [sharkprotect.com](http://sharkprotect.com)), Jupp is an articulate and powerful advocate for sharks.



(l to r) Jupp, shark activist Wolfgang Leander, and Folkart Schweizer

On June 24, Jupp and well known German entrepreneur Folkart Schweizer were special guests on Germany's popular ZDF Markus Lanz Talk Show which regularly attracts two million viewers. The subject: Sharks: why people fear them, their worldwide decimation, and the alleged 'dangers' sharks pose to humans. Jupp eloquently described the perils these beautiful and still misunderstood animals face due to the ever increasing demand for their fins, and the crucial role they play as apex predators in the marine food chain.

## More sharks added to Threatened list

June 27: The OSPAR (Oslo-Paris) Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Northeast Atlantic announced its decision to add the six species of sharks to their list of *Threatened and Declining Species and Habitats*: porbeagle shark (*Lamna nasus*), spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*), gulper shark (*Centrophorus granulosus*), leafscale gulper shark (*Centrophorus squamosus*), Portuguese dogfish shark (*Centroscymnus coelolepis*), and the angel shark (*Squatina squatina*).

The OSPAR Convention provides a mechanism for international cooperation to protect the Northeast Atlantic marine environment and promote measures to conserve regionally threatened species.



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



Non-Profit Organization  
POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 390  
Princeton, NJ 08540

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

**Lauren Hutton**  
**Lauren Hutton Good Stuff**  
**504 Broadway, Room 1102**  
**New York, NY 10012**

### Feds tighten shark quotas, finning rules

To curb the illegal practice of removing shark fins at sea, U.S. officials have announced that all sharks caught in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico must be brought ashore with their fins attached.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also lowered the sandbar shark annual commercial quota from 1,017 metric tons to 87.9 metric tons, reducing the quota by 85 percent. The porbeagle shark quota is lowered from 92 metric tons to 1.7 metric tons per year. The new regulations will take effect on July 24, 2008.

### ...as Australia grants shark finning permits!

Queensland, Australia recently issued permits for shark finning along the Great Barrier Reef. This development, in a country widely regarded as having high levels of environmental awareness at government level, comes at a time when Global Shark Assessment says that nothing short of a total global ban on shark finning will be able to reverse the depletion trends.

### SRI SUMMER AUCTION

Our annual summer eBay auction will begin on July 21. We will send out an email alert when it starts and have a link to it on our website. Many cool items have been donated. If you have unused dive vacations, services, books, photos, or anything weird and wonderful you'd be willing to donate, please call Marie at 609-921-3522 or email her at [marie@sharks.org](mailto:marie@sharks.org).

### WEAR IT TO SHOW YOU CARE

Our 'No Finning' design has proved so popular that the design is now available on T-shirts, mousepads, mugs and many other items in the Shark Shoppe on our website.



### Costa Rica's Congress recommends closure of private docks to end shark finning

On June 25, the Permanent Special Environment Commission of Costa Rica's Congress issued a report: *Investigation on Shark Finning in Costa Rica, File N°16.890*. The Commission reported the use of private docks for the landing of shark products by foreign fleets is legally inadmissible, a key issue for marine conservation and fisheries management, and recommended the immediate closure of these illegal landing sites.

"The Congress has just confirmed what we have known for years," said Jorge Ballesteros of PRETOMA, a Costa Rican NGO that has led a battle against shark finning since 2001. "It's that neither Customs nor any other public entity is in the legal capacity of authorizing their use."

Miguel Gómez, campaign coordinator of PRETOMA, remains cautious: "In spite of the good news, we still can't celebrate. Since January of 2006, the Constitutional Court ordered the aforementioned institutions to halt all landings at private docks that were not provided with public installations, an order that was seconded by the Comptrollership's Court a year later, but they still fail to abide by the rulings," he said.