

# Newsletter



*Shark Research Institute Global Headquarters*

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## 2011 - A Very Good Year for Sharks!



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**Thanks to you — our members** — 2011 has been a very good year for sharks. Through SRI active participation, advocacy and legislative efforts we have achieved spectacular results. We still have work to do, but look at what has been accomplished this year alone!

- **February:** Guam passes a bill banning the sale, possession and distribution of shark fins.

Spain protects more than 10 species of sharks and rays: Mediterranean populations of white sharks, basking

sharks, giant manta rays, all hammerheads and thresher sharks, prohibiting the capture, injury, trade, import and export of these species, and requiring periodic evaluations of their conservation status.

- **May:** The legislature of the state of Washington passes a bill prohibiting the sale or trade of shark fins or shark fin derivatives and it is signed into law by Governor Gregoire.
- **June:** Honduras announces creation of a 92,665 square mile shark sanctuary in its waters.
- **July:** The Bahamas converts 243,244 square miles of the country's waters into a shark sanctuary, and Chile, bans shark finning in its waters.
- **August:** Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber signs the bill banning the sale, trade, and possession of shark fins in the state.
- **October:** Governor Jerry Brown signs AB-376, the bill banning the sale, trade and possession of shark fins in the state of California. In Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Guam and Palau create a region-wide shark sanctuary that covers 2,000,000 square miles (5,200,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of ocean, making it the world's largest shark sanctuary.
- **December:** Taiwan introduces laws to ban shark finning in 2012, and The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, parent company of The luxury Peninsula Hotel chain, will stop serving shark fin on Jan 1, 2012 at all of its hotels — including its hotels in Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong!

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### **Please help us keep up the momentum.**

By renewing your membership or donating to SRI before the end of the year, 100% of your donation is deductible from your US 2011 Federal Income taxes.

**Donations can be made online at**  
[www.sharks.org](http://www.sharks.org)

## More Good News—The Giant Manta placed on CMS I & II

Bergen, Norway: On November 25, the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) agreed to list the giant manta ray (*Manta birostris*) on CMS Appendix I and II. An Appendix I listing requires that any of the 116 CMS Party nations who have giant manta rays in their waters to protect them along with their habitat, while an Appendix II listing encourages global and regional cooperation.

Manta rays are listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. Female manta rays are thought to produce just one pup after a year-long pregnancy, which contributes to the species' exceptional susceptibility to overfishing. "CMS is an excellent vehicle for facilitating much needed national and international safeguards for this wide-ranging, globally threatened species and its key habitats," said Sonja Fordham, President of Shark Advocates International. "The rays are under increasing threat from East Asian demand for their gill rakers, used in Chinese medicine, which is driving targeted fisheries."

Giant manta rays are found in the tropical, sub-tropical, and temperate waters of the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans, often along coasts and offshore islands. Many of the species' sparsely distributed sub-populations number just a few hundred individuals. The greatest threat to manta rays is fishing; their large size, slow movements, and predictable aggregations make them easy targets.

Manta rays are protected in Hawaii, Maldives, Philippines, Mexico, Ecuador, Yap, Western Australia, and New Zealand, but migrate into unprotected waters of other countries and the high seas. CMS's decision marks the first international agreement aimed at conserving manta rays and should spark new protections in key Range States such as Mozambique, India, Sri Lanka, and Peru.

Manta rays can grow to more than seven meters across. Manta rays feed on plankton filtered through their gills with the help of comb-like projections known as 'gill rakers'. East Asian demand for gill rakers is reportedly resulting in dramatic increases in targeted manta ray fisheries and subsequent depletion of some local manta ray populations.



At the same time, manta ray eco-tourism is increasingly generating significant economic benefits for local communities across the globe, particularly in Maldives, Mozambique, and Hawaii. A new study estimates the worldwide value of manta-based tourism and filming at US\$100 million per year.

At CoP10 (Convention of Parties), the giant manta ray listing was proposed by Ecuador. The European Union, Senegal, Madagascar, Australia, United States, Chile, Mozambique, the United States and Uruguay took the floor to express support for the proposal. The host country, Norway, also voiced support while suggesting that the similar reef manta ray (*Manta alfredi*) be listed at the next Conference of the Parties, in three years.

This is a major international legal protection for this species. "A listing under CMS appendices I and II is a welcome first step in the conservation of these gentle giants," says David Shiffman of Southern Fried Science. CMS listed the whale shark at CoP6, the white shark at CoP7, the basking shark at CoP8, and the shortfin mako shark, longfin mako shark, porbeagle shark, and the northern populations of the spiny were listed at CoP9.

## Thank You to Our Supporters!

We are very grateful for the continued support of:

- **The Adikes Family Foundation**
- **Adjacent to One**
- **Adventure Aquarium**
- **Galveston Chapter, American Association of Zoo Keepers**
- **Bite Back Scuba**
- **Reuben Buchanan**
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- **Al Vinjamur**
- **The WAVE Foundation**
- **Kathrin Winkler & Angus Campbell**
- **World Wildlife Fund**
- **Josip Zeko**

### A Major Donation That Costs You Nothing

If you are thinking of buying or selling a home, you can make a big donation to the Shark Research Institute — and it won't cost you a dime.



It is possible through our new partnership with My Broker Donates, which matches our supporters with caring, qualified real-estate brokers who have agreed to donate 15% of their fee to the Shark Research Institute.

The potential donations are impressive: a \$500,000 home would generate a donation of more than \$2,000. That's money we can use to save sharks from destructive fishing practices and to educate people about these magnificent animals.

### Two More Ways to Support SRI

We've teamed up with **Amazon** and created a **wish list** for some much needed supplies. This is a fast and convenient way to show your support. <http://amzn.com/w/3C3HR4MDX1HYH> to select any products you are able to donate and they will be shipped straight to SRI.

Mr. Goody publishes good deals and does good deeds for non-profits. We are happy to report that the prize of a \$100 Amazon gift prize was won by Michelle Seymour. Mr. Goody has also pledged \$500 to SRI if enough SRI members support the pledge at:



<http://www.mistergoody.com/pledge/mister-goody-pledges-to-donate-500-to-the-shark-research-institute/>

## *Shark Fin Soup a Symbol of Modern China*

*By David Peters*

Shark finning is creating irreversible damage to our oceans and our planet, it is damaging shark populations to such an extent that 30% of shark species are at threat of extinction and entire ecosystems may become affected. One of the primary reasons for this is the demand for a tasteless delicacy; shark fin soup. Taking Tangshan a developing Chinese city in Hebei province as an example, it is possible to shed light on why there is demand for shark fins, and how the problem of shark finning will surely only get worse! Rightfully a large emphasis is often placed on the brutal practice of how shark fins are caught. However it seems just as important to look at the problem from a Chinese perspective. How can the mass depletion of shark numbers be translated to, and respected by, the most populous country on our planet?



Stepping onto the Xinhua road and being struck by the smog drifting over the hill from the nearby power station. Seeing a construction site on each side of the street. You are automatically aware that you are in China. The China that is growing and expanding at a break-neck speed, but also the China that still practises age old customs and serves up ancient dishes and delicacies to its ever-growing elite.

Tangshan embodies the ethos of Modern China. After being destroyed by a tragic earthquake in 1976, it has since been rebuilt into a model Industrial city. Just one and half hours from Beijing, its industry is focussed around coal, chemicals, textiles and car manufacturing. The population of over seven million is increasingly flocking towards the city for a share of the 'New Money' which seems to flow through a pipeline from Beijing, wider China and even the world!

Tangshan's main road seems to have been plucked out of an episode of Top Gear with brand new super cars lining the car parks of shiny new shopping malls. Into the picture of Chinese expansion comes the issue of fine dining. The industrialists who meet to discuss the future plans for Tangshan seek to show off new Chinese wealth. This often takes the form of ancient, obscure but most importantly status enhancing dishes.

Granted, Tangshan is a city close to the coast and seafood dishes are a key part of their sustenance, however the array of dishes is astounding. A short walk down the Xinhua road you come to the Kailuan Seafood restaurant, owned by the Kailuan mining company. Tanks in the window display an array of shellfish, lobster and different crustaceans. The first page of the menu presents a plate of sea cucumbers, with little accompaniment, placed on a bed of ice. Next are the two most popular dishes, according to the waitress at the front desk. Firstly, four dried seahorses, with a spicy broth. And then the infamous shark fin soup, served with a mollusc and a chicken broth. Through some gesturing and translation it appears you receive a minuscule amount of shark fin for the 88 Rmb (\$14 US) price tag, but you can have more, if you pay more! What immediately strikes you about this dish how small, almost feeble it is. Granted it is seen as a delicacy, but it makes the slaughter of so many sharks seem even more futile.

The next stop on the Xinhua road is the Kailuan Hotel and its adjoining Dailoo Seafood Restaurant. The main restaurant has a host of tables surrounded by fish tanks full of various fish, molluscs etc. Upstairs is a banquet hall, which often hosts weddings and other major functions. Last weekend was the International Mine Rescue Conference. Turning the corner toward the kitchen there is a large cabinet and behind the glass is the unmistakable fin shape! This dried fin was placed behind the glass as a trophy. And it was huge. This fin was over 1 metre in length. It is hard not to be in awe of the shark it once belonged to. The head waiter boasted that it was real, he didn't know the value. The Kailuan Restaurant does serve shark fin soup, a small rice dish of the soup would cost 50 Rmb (\$8 US).

The final stop is the Grand Hotel Nanhu, a symbol of new Tangshan and developing China. Its neon lit frontage beams across the city. This is a hotel designed to house China's new elite — the Industrialists who will visit Tangshan, and maybe even drive off with a new Audi from the glitzy showroom across the road. Having been open just two months, the marble columns which dominate the lobby create a very grand entrance. Off to the right of the lobby is the exclusive restaurant. As you enter the restaurant an entire wall has been transformed into an aquarium, it houses six juvenile blacktip sharks and two large grouper. Yongjun Di, the Swiss and British educated manager of the hotel, was very keen to boast about his new pets; 10,000 Rmb (\$1600 US) each. On the opposite wall is another cabinet. This houses two massive fins as a centerpiece, but then had almost 20 smaller fins littered around the display. Another status symbol, possibly 20 or more sharks dead for decoration. A browse through the Grand Hotel's menu presents abalone, shell fish of every variety and then the five page 'SHARK FIN' section. The signature dish is a whole braised fin in a broth for 599 Rmb (\$95). There is then a long list of different soups, broths and meat dishes with a shredded shark fin accompaniment ranging between 300-500 Rmb (\$45-80 US). The hotel manager said that shark fins were a very popular and increasingly sought after dish and that 'they taste exactly like glass rice noodles'.

Shark fin soup is clearly not accessible to all Chinese people. Putting it into perspective, unskilled workers earn between 1000-3000 Rmb per month. The Vanguard chain of supermarkets sell shredded shark fins in a dedicated cabinet, away from the rest of the seafood. For just 38 grams of shredded fins, it would cost almost one week's wage for a low earning worker. At most weddings, it is often replaced with the cheaper alternative; chicken broth with glass noodles. Some restaurants even serve a broth with rice noodles and pass it off as shark fin soup, or fail shark fin. It is supposedly so difficult to tell the difference, more evidence of how unnecessary this delicacy is.



China's new found wealth is spreading. Private enterprise and an explosion in consumerism has brought about an emerging middle class of wealthy Chinese. A recent global wealth survey crowned the one millionth Chinese millionaire, and more millionaires are appearing in China than anywhere else in the world. Most Chinese dismiss the idea of eating obscure seafood dishes in high-end restaurants as something reserved for the rich. Yet at the same time they aspire to earn more money: to be rich.

The way Tangshan's and China's 'New Money' is being spent is the problem. A foreign worker who has lived in Tangshan for the last eight years describes how radically the city has changed. As little as five years ago there were hardly any cars, everyone wore the same bland grey or blue coats. Now western fashion is ever present and the six o'clock rush hour is a cacophony of horns, cars, and buses are five abreast on the three lane road. Construction sites appear on every corner. Curiously the investment in new housing blocks seems to lag behind. The priority appears to be spending money on overt expressions of wealth. For example a Chinese work colleague recently came into the office wearing a nice new suit jacket. "Nice jacket", I said, "... but you should take the label off". Apparently it is a fashion to leave labels on new clothes; "so everyone can see the designer name... and the price!!!", she said. Improving ones status amongst one'speers seems to be the priority. The most extreme example of this new opulence is eight ivory tusks on sale in the Tangshan department store, one is almost 80 centimetres in length, placed on a carved wooden plinth and costs 85,000 Rmb (\$14,000 US).

Therefore, it is easy to see why shark fin soup is only likely to increase in popularity. This dish is not bought for taste or for any ancient medicinal values, it is bought as a symbol of wealth and status, bought because I can! In many ways it symbolizes the ever-expanding wealth in twentieth century China. As Tangshan's elite grows, hosts more family weddings or invites more business partners to the city there is little evidence to suggest that shark fin soup will not be on their menu.

There appears to be little regard or appreciation of the wider impacts this dish has on the world's oceans. China is living for today, Tangshan's current growth is fuelled by a massive power station and factories which churn out a thick smog onto city streets. There is little regard for long term well being. The preservation of the ocean is an even more alien concept. Conservation groups are trying to remove the aura surrounding shark fin soup. A recent Wildaid advert starring retired basketball star Yao Ming, who is revered across China, is a ploy to dissuade wealthy Chinese from ordering shark fins. Although it is questionable how this message can be broadcast to the hundreds of millions of the Chinese elite. The more cosmopolitan cities such as Shanghai, Hong Kong and Beijing, which are more open to western influence are likely to receive the message. Some Beijing restaurants have already banned the dish. However developing cities, who have very little interaction with the west and have little access to uncensored information are far less likely to receive or respect such messages

Tangshan is classed as a prefecture level city; it has a population of seven million. There are several hundred prefecture level cities in China, and a population nearing 1.4 billion. If the trends followed in Tangshan are mirrored across China, and all economic data suggests they are, then wealth and the Chinese middle classes will continue to grow. So, too, will demand for goods which express this new found Chinese wealth - few things are more effective at this than shark fin soup.

If demand is not likely to fall, then surely the supply of shark fins needs to be addressed. External pressure from conservation groups but also foreign governments could pressure China to halt the supply of fins, and preserve shark populations and ocean ecosystems for future generations.

**Ecocide:** *adjective* The destruction of large areas of the natural environment especially as a result of deliberate human action .

**Ecocatastrophe:** *noun* A major destructive upset in the balance of nature especially when caused by the action of humans.  
*From Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

## White Shark Poaching

In 1991, South Africa became the first country in the world to protect the white shark, making it illegal to catch, kill, harm or disturb a white shark. They also made it illegal to be in possession of, sell or distribute any part of a white shark.

South Africa's record of conservation makes it all the sadder that for the past three months rogue fishermen have been catching these highly endangered sharks. The fisherman engaged in poaching the white sharks have so little respect for the law that they openly display their trophy photos on the internet.



<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150316871445755.334618.19135095754&type=3>

<http://news.discovery.com/animals/graphic-photos-great-white-shark-111019.html>

The photographs posted on Facebook were taken by Ryan Johnson in Mossel Bay. They were sent to Dr. Monde Mayekiso of South African's Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) more than three months ago, and to the Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). Aside from an email from Mike Meyer, who said an investigation was going to take place, there has been no response from the authorities on this matter. Chris Fallows is leading the conservation strategy on this problem, and Ryan Johnson, Neil Hammerschlag, Lesley Rochat and other SRI members in South Africa are working with him. We will keep you updated our progress.

## Canadian Bill to Protect Sharks



MP Fin Donnelly announced the introduction of Bill C-380 in the House of Commons to ban the import of shark fin into Canada. If passed, the legislation will make Canada the largest country in the world to ban the importation of shark fins and move designed to inspire other countries to follow suit in addressing the plummeting shark populations worldwide. Canada could become a world leader in shark conservation if we were to adopt this legislation to protect sharks," he said.

Donnelly's bill would amend the Fish Inspection Act, which includes provisions for jail terms or fines upwards of \$100,000 for those in violation of the act. The bill does not address sale or use of shark fins, Donnelly noted,. "This bill addresses the shark fins coming into Canada only."

In Canada, most bills are proposed by the government, not by individual members of the legislature, and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper opposes C-380. "Canada does not favour a ban of shark fins," says Harper. "However we've been very clear that Canada supports only the humane harvesting of sharks."

Private Member's Bills, such as C-380, don't usually become law unless there is considerable public support, and support for the bill is growing. In Ontario, the cities of London, Brantford, Pickering and Oakville have already banned the sale and possession of shark fins, as has Toronto, Canada's largest city. (The city of Mississauga did as well, but recently revoked its ban.) "It's time for the federal government to listen to their municipal counterparts and take action," said Donnelly. "They can demonstrate real leadership on this global issue and institute an import ban of shark fins to Canada." The federal import bill will help prevent international trade of shark fin where illegally sourced fins are abundant and difficult to detect. You can follow the bill at: <http://openparliament.ca/bills/41-1/C-380/>

## More Wins for Sharks



When the Agriculture Ministers of Central America met in Panama in late November, they agreed to ban the capture of sharks for their fins. At the meeting, there was consensus in the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) to approve the regional regulations of **Ospeca (Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola de Centroamerica)** – i.e. Organization Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of Central America) to prohibit shark "finning" in the countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA): Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. The minister from the Dominican Republic also participated in the meeting.

Mario González Recinos, regional director of Ospeca, said, "from Belize to Panama, finning practice in the sea will be punished and governments will take steps to establish sanctions."



The large Singapore-based Cold Storage Supermarket company has agreed to stop selling shark fin and shark products in all their 42 outlets. Victor Chia, CEO of Cold Storage Supermarket, said, "We want to play our part towards caring for the environment. Our team is committed to sourcing for quality, sustainable seafood and other products in our efforts to achieve long-term sustainability and marine conservation."

The **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission** has decided to add four more shark species to the list of sharks protected in Florida waters. As of January 1, 2012, only catch-and-release fishing will be allowed for tiger sharks, great hammerheads, smooth hammerheads, and scalloped hammerheads.

Florida has long been a leader in shark protection and protects more than 20 shark species. The state enforces its regulations of a one-shark-per-person, and two-sharks-per-vessel daily bag limit. Florida was also one of the first states to ban shark finning.

**The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)** has mandated that if silky sharks are accidentally caught, they must be returned to the sea. Cutting sharks loose when they are still alive if caught in fishing gear gives them a real chance to survive. Unfortunately, ICCAT failed to make progress on requiring gear alternatives that limit the number of sharks caught, despite available options to prevent this from happening, and they did not adopt measures to protect porbeagle sharks.

Shark products are now off the shelves in **Foster's Food Fair** supermarkets in the Cayman Islands. Foster's is also assisting research by sponsoring a tag for Coco the tiger shark to better understand movements of sharks in local waters.

**The Pacific Islands Conservation Initiative (PICI)** is working with local fishery authorities to craft the Cook Islands Shark Sanctuary to extend over the Cook Islands Exclusive Economic Zone which covers almost 2 million square kilometers of ocean. Of the 18 species of sharks known in the Cook Islands, 15 appear on the IUCN Red List.



## JOE ROMEIRO



SRI welcomes Joe Romeiro as our new Director of Film Productions! Growing up in and around the water, Joe developed a love for the ocean at a young age. He saw his first shark when he was just five years old, and he has been captivated by them ever since.

A self-taught filmmaker, Joe founded 333 Productions in 2007 with fellow producer and shark conservationist Bill Fisher. Since then, 333 Productions has created four award-winning films: "Silent Requiem", "Death of a Deity", "A Lateral Line" and "Shark Culture". Notable awards received include: the Prestigious Blue Ocean Film Festival's "Best New Filmmaker" and "Best New Cinematographer" in 2009, ADEX "Underwater Video of the Year Award" in 2010, and the "Ocean Inspiration Award" in 2011, awarded by a panel of esteemed judges and industry professionals in a video competition sponsored by Celine Cousteau honoring the life of her grandfather, Jacques Cousteau.

As Joe pursues his quest to travel the world to capture images of sharks in ways that no one else ever has, he portrays them as beautiful creatures that are a critical element of our ocean's ecosystem. He has worked with renowned film and television media industry professionals, marine biologists and shark behaviorists to bring to light little known shark actions and activities that astound audiences worldwide, bring that special 333 Productions touch. His mission: To protect sharks by educating the general public and dispelling the negative myths surrounding sharks through film and personal interaction with the sharks.

A member of the Explorers Club and Ocean Artists Society, Joe's work has been featured on Discovery Networks, National Geographic and in a variety of television productions.

### *Q & A : When was SRI Founded, Why and How?*

In the mid-1980s, SRI's founder was working in South Africa as Senior Liaison Officer of the Natal Sharks Board, the organization that "protects" swimmers from sharks using gill nets. Her job included diving with sharks, interacting with the media, investigating shark accidents, and along with two other researchers, dissecting the 1,500 sharks caught annually in the nets. The large numbers of sharks that were caught enabled her to identify problems that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. Particularly worrisome was that some species of sharks were becoming sexually mature at smaller and smaller sizes, an indication that their populations were under severe stress. By 1991, the situation had become critical, but 20 years ago there was no organization anywhere in the world whose sole focus was the research and conservation of sharks.

Despite the critical role sharks play in maintaining a healthy marine ecosystem, in 1991, sharks were of little concern to fisheries, and even less so to foundations that funded marine research. The exception was the famed Explorers Club, an international organization of field scientists and explorers. When SRI was incorporated in 1991, many of SRI's board and members were Club Members and they soon brought in colleagues from Princeton University, Harvard, MIT and Raytheon. Like the Explorers Club, SRI's greatest strength is that it has remained multidisciplinary: Physicists, physicians and pilots, marine biologists,

*Continued on next page*

oceanographers and molecular biologists, engineers, educators, artists, photographers, filmmakers, lawyers, young and old. All who shared a shared passion to protect sharks and the marine environment were welcomed. Their mix of viewpoints, expertise, and skills enriched all SRI projects and programs.

Back in 1991, although white sharks were being studied in South Africa by SRI researchers, colleagues in academia insisted that “whale sharks can’t be tagged; they are too large”. But the species was vulnerable and their global movements needed to be determined, and so the combined expertise of SRI staff and scientists devised a methodology to tag the giant plankton-eating sharks. Then, SRI was criticized for taking sport divers on research expeditions. “Sport divers can’t be trained to collect scientific data,” we were told. But the results proved otherwise and within a few years most of those same scientists followed suit.

We took heavy flak because we encouraged people to dive with sharks, but shark ecotourism has proven to be a powerful force in securing protection for sharks and provides a steady revenue to fishermen who might otherwise slaughter the sharks for immediate gain. Soon diving with sharks had become so popular that we were able to quantify the value of sharks as economic resources to be legally protected. For example, In 1999, after SRI presented data to the government of Honduras showing the revenue generated by whale shark tourism to the Honduran economy, that government promptly passed legislation protecting the species. Quantifying the value of shark ecotourism has served as a powerful tool in securing protective legislation for sharks in many other countries throughout the world.

SRI’s research tends to address conservation issues such as population structures of a species, determining a species migratory route, or population surveys such as those that we conducted for the Galapagos Marine Park for many years, providing data needed to formulate management plans for the Park.

While raising public awareness of the plight of sharks is important, securing legal protection for sharks is crucial. Over the past two decades, SRI scientists have attended countless regional, national and international meetings to fight for sharks, including United Nations treaty organizations such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) where we successfully advocated for protection for whale sharks, basking sharks and white sharks.

The reason for our success at these forums is SRI’s solid peer-reviewed science presented in support shark protection. As example, at CITES 2002, when our scientists presented data from a five-year aerial survey by SRI-South Africa documenting a sharp decline in whale shark, CITES delegates voted to protect whale sharks. SRI is one of the few NGOs recognized by the United Nations, and one of a handful of NGOs in the world granted ‘Observer’ status at CITES.

SRI scientists continue to conduct bleeding-edge research, field-testing equipment for manufacturers and employing the latest technology. When the needed technology didn’t exist, SRI helped design and build it. As our field research uncovers the migratory patterns of a number of species, that knowledge, in turn, allows us to concentrate conservation efforts in areas where the sharks are at greatest risk. Using DNA, our molecular biologists have been uncovering relationships between shark populations, important in determining if a species consists of discrete populations or a single worldwide stock that could face extinction by overfishing.

In the early 1990s, we agreed to maintain the Global Shark Accident File, the database and case files created by and for the medical profession. To help dispel the negative hype created by JAWS, GSAF allowed us to place their incident file online ([www.sharkattackfile.net](http://www.sharkattackfile.net)) so visitors to the site and the media could see just how rare shark accidents truly are. And the individual case files have been of benefit to our researchers by providing unexpected insights into shark behaviors.

These days — we are happy to report — we are no longer working alone to protect sharks; there are dozens of shark conservation groups. Some are very effective and we are grateful to have them at our side. Most of all, we are thankful to you — our members — many of you have been supporting us for two decades. SRI successes are due to you and your determination to make certain the ocean and sharks survive for future generations.

....*Laura Morris, Shark Research Institute*

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## Mark your Calendars



**March 23, 24 & 25, 2012: *Beneath The Sea International*.** BTS is the world's largest consumer dive show. Booths, workshops, film festival, Ocean Pals and imaging competitions. Visit SRI at Booth 221, meet some our staff and hang out. *Venue:* Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, NJ — only 10 minutes from New York City.

Tickets available at [www.beneaththesea.org](http://www.beneaththesea.org)



**March 31 & April 1, 2012: *London International Dive Show (LIDS 2012)*** LIDS, the first of 2012's two UK Dive Shows, has been a firm pre-season fixture for divers for many years. *Venue:* ExCeL Centre in London. Tickets available at [www.diveshows.co.uk](http://www.diveshows.co.uk)

**May 11, 2012: *Fintastic Friday 2012: Giving Sharks a Voice*.** WhaleTimes and SRI have teamed up to raise awareness of the plight of sharks through a new holiday: Fintastic Friday is celebrated annually on the second Friday in May.

**May 17-19, 2012: *World EcoSummit*.** This two-day event hosted by the World EcoAlliance will present forums on the State of the Oceans, ECONomic Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism and the Rainforest Initiative. *Venue:* San Jose Costa Rica. For more information go to: [www.worldecosummit.com/](http://www.worldecosummit.com/)

**March 3-15, 2013: CoP16: *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) 16th Conference of the Parties*.** *Venue:* Bangkok, Thailand

## Expeditions

### WHALE SHARKS — Cancun, Mexico

**July 30 to August 3, 2012 : August 4 to August 8, 2012.**

Dr. Jennifer V. Schmidt, the project leader, will be taking divers to the Afuera Whale Shark Aggregation. Cost is \$1,200 per person. Call SRI HQ at 609.921.3522 to reserve a space.

### WHITE SHARKS, BLUE WHALES, ORCAS and More.

Although not SRI expeditions, legendary underwater photographer and animal behaviorist Amos Nachoum often takes individuals with him as he ranges throughout the world photographing large marine animals.

**March 7-20, March 17-27, March 27-April 9, 2012,** Blue whales in Sri Lanka.

**April 17-May 1, 2012,** Polar bears in the high arctic

**June 2-24, 2012,** the Big 7 animals in Africa

**July 27-August 5, 2012,** Blue sharks in the Azores

**August 11-27, 2012,** Whale sharks in the Galapagos

**August 19-25, 2012,** Blue whales, USA.

**August 20-September 2, 2012,** Humpback whales in Tonga

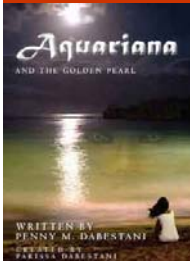
**October 5-12, October 12-18, 2012,** White sharks in Mexico



*Aerial photo of whale sharks in the Afuera*

For a list of his photographic expeditions, go to the Expeditions page on our website — [www.sharks.org](http://www.sharks.org)  
And if you'd like to join Amos, please contact SRI HQ at 609.921.3522.

## Shark Shop



### *Aquariana and the Golden Pearl* by Penny M. Dabestani

An enchanting book! This is the first of a series. A wonderful gift for the young girl who dreams that she can make a difference in the world. \$10 at Amazon.com.

A limited number of autographed copies available at SRI headquarters for \$25 each.

When Donald Shultz, host of Animal Planet's *Wild Recon*, met artist Ryan Steely, he asked him design a shirt for SRI. You can order the shirt directly at

[http://nadabrand.3dcartstores.com/Respect-the-Fin\\_p\\_120.html](http://nadabrand.3dcartstores.com/Respect-the-Fin_p_120.html),

For every 'Respect the Fin' shirt purchased, Ryan Steely and Nadabrand are donating \$9 to SRI.



Women Divers Hall of Fame's Anita George-Ares models a new SRI T-shirt produced by John Ares. Men's shirts are very faithful to typical shirts sizes. If you wear a Medium, a Medium should fit very well. Women's shirts run small; if you normally wear a Medium, order a Large.

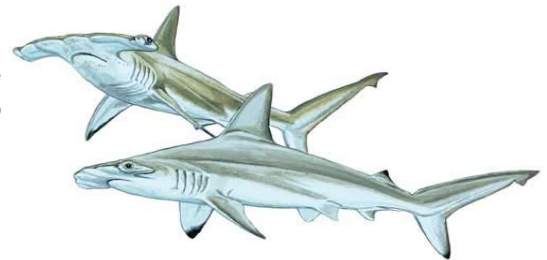
Shirts can be ordered on our website.

## Scalloped hammerheads considered for ESA

On November 28, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced a 90-day finding on a petition to list the scalloped hammerhead shark for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. NMFS is soliciting scientific and commercial information pertaining to this species from any interested party. Information and comments on the subject action must be received by January 27, 2012.

The scalloped hammerhead shark, which can reach lengths of up to 14 feet, lives in warmer waters throughout the world. In the western Atlantic, it lives from New Jersey south through Florida to Brazil. The primary threat to the scalloped hammerhead comes from commercial fishing — particularly the practice of finning in which the valuable fins are cut from the live shark. The various hammerhead species command high prices for their fins due to their long fin needles that make excellent 'noodles' for the soup.

In the Hong Kong seafood market, where they trade under the category Chun chi, fins from up to 2.7 million smooth and scalloped hammerheads are sold every year, according to the Federal Register notice.



Specifically, NMFS is soliciting information in the following areas: (1) Historical and current distribution and abundance of this species throughout its range; (2) historical and current population trends; (3) life history in marine environments; (4) shark fin trade data; (5) any current or planned activities that may adversely impact the species; (6) ongoing or planned efforts to protect and restore the species and their habitats; (7) population structure information, such as genetics data; and (8) management, regulatory, and enforcement information. All information must be accompanied by: (1) Supporting documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, or reprints of pertinent publications; and (2) the submitter's name, address, and institution.