

Shark Research Institute

Member Newsletter



Shark Research Institute Global Headquarters

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CITES Update



Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) adopted a landmark proposal to ban international trade in sawfish, shark-like rays with elongated, tooth-studded snouts considered Critically Endangered around the world. The proposal was

made jointly by the United States and Kenya, and was weakened slightly by an annotation from Australia to allow limited trade in live specimens from one Australia species for conservation purposes. Six of the world's seven sawfish species were listed on Appendix I.

Sawfish fins are among the world's most valuable for use in shark fin soup. Their saws (or "rostra") are also valued for traditional medicines, ceremonies, and as curios. Rostral teeth are highly prized for use as cockfighting spurs. Sawfish grow slowly, mature late, and produce few young. Sawfish are thought to take 10 to 33 years to reach sexual maturity and females give birth to fewer than 20 young, likely only every second year.

Unfortunately, CITES declined to restrict trade in the porbeagle and spiny dogfish, two critically endangered species of sharks.

CITES is an international agreement, which aims to ensure the survival of individual species by managing their trade across international boundaries. It provides an international legal framework for preventing trade in endangered species and regulating trade in species at risk. Currently, 171 countries are parties to CITES and about 32,000 animal and plant species are afforded protection as a result. CITES Parties convene every

two to two-and-a-half years to amend three Appendices under which species at risk are listed. Proposals to list, down-list or de-list species are proposed by Member governments and require a two-thirds majority for adoption. *Appendix I* is reserved for species threatened with extinction that are or may be affected by trade and bans all international commercial trade.

Appendix II listings serve to monitor and limit trade to sustainable levels through requirements for export permits and justification that export will not pose a detriment to wild populations.

The resolutions adopted by CITES enter into force on September 13, 2007 for all Parties, *except those which make reservations*. Of the three shark species on Appendix II, reservations on whale sharks were taken by Palau (2004), and Indonesia, Japan, Norway and Republic of Korea (2003). Reservations on white sharks were taken by Palau (2004), and by Iceland and Japan (2005). Reservations on basking sharks were taken by Iceland, Indonesia, Japan, Norway and the Republic of Korea (2003).

Congratulations to Sea Shepherd!



On June 13, 2007, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and operatives of the Ecuadorian Environmental Police seized a total of 19,018 shark fins and arrested four suspects in a sting operation.

Many of the sharks were finned in and around the Galapagos Marine Reserve which is having a direct impact on Ecuador's tourism industry. The fins, valued at \$86,895.30, were incinerated. Great Work, Sea Shepherd!

Action to Save Atlantic Sharks

The U.S. Federal government's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has proposed to dramatically cut fishing for overfished Atlantic shark species and improve the existing ban on shark finning. Measures proposed by NMFS would close fisheries for sandbar sharks, protect porbeagle sharks, and require that sharks be landed with their fins attached to ensure full compliance with the finning ban.

"After fourteen years of inadequate limits, the government is at last heeding scientific advice and taking bold steps to safeguard vulnerable Atlantic sharks," said Sonja Fordham who serves on the NMFS shark advisory panel. "Cutbacks and closures are urgently needed to ensure the survival of these critical ocean predators."

NMFS predicts that reducing annual catch of sandbar sharks, the dominant species in the Atlantic coastal shark fishery, to roughly 100 tons can rebuild the population within 70 years. The porbeagle shark, a large, oceanic species related to the great white, needs a full century to recover from an 85% decline and would be off-limits under the NMFS plan. Conservationists and scientists have long promoted landing sharks with fins attached as the only sure-fire way to prevent finning; most finning bans are enforced with generous fin to carcass weight ratios that allow fishermen room to fin sharks.

"These changes would give Atlantic sharks a fighting chance and position the United States to lead the world toward an effective, global ban on shark finning, thereby potentially saving millions of sharks," added Fordham. "Public support is essential to ensuring that strong fishing limits are included in the final shark plan and implemented before it's too late."

The proposal is open for public comment until mid-October. SRI's Dianna Mercuri attended the meeting earlier this month at Manahawkin, NJ, and Mercuri, Fordham, and Dean Fessler will attend the public meeting at 6 p.m. on August 29 at Ocean Pines Public Library, 1107 Cathell Road, Berlin, Maryland. All members in the area are encouraged to attend the meeting. Final measures are expected in early 2008.

Sharks are exceptionally vulnerable to overfishing because they generally grow slowly and produce few young. As top predators, sharks help keep ocean ecosystems in balance.

Guy Perrotta = SRI Connecticut



Guy Perrotta, SRI's representative in Connecticut, has been actively involved with SRI for many years. He is also a two-time Emmy-Award winning producer and writer. Guy served as Co-Producer, Co-Writer and Artistic Director for the award-winning PBS film *Mystic Voices:*

The Story of the Pequot War, and served as Director of Promotions and Special Events and juror for various film festivals in the United States. With Haverland Film/Video Productions, New York, he wrote, produced, and directed educational works, including oral histories and test pilots for proposed television series. Guy also participates in shark tagging and education for field researchers in New England, and has made presentations to local colleges and universities including Brown University and Yale University. One of his goals is to work with fellow mediamakers to help educate the community regarding shark research and conservation.

Debbie Smith = Mozambique



Wyand, of SRI's Advisory Board, and Debbie Smith

Long time member Debbie Smith is now heading up SRI's work in Mozambique. As a PADI Master Scuba Diver Trainer (MSDT) Instructor, she has been instrumental in the complete setting up of top dive centers at upmarket resorts, from

mapping and naming sites to full operational status, winning top international awards. A native of South Africa, Debbie was one of the first women to free-dive with white sharks and has published articles on diving with white sharks. She is also a member of the Women Divers Hall of Fame and a founder of an ecotourism company, "Diving with Sharks."

WELCOME to RPX!



RPX, the premium express delivery service from Cathay Pacific Airlines, is now sponsoring SRI's research in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

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 2008 Holbox, Mexico

White Sharks

October 12-18, 2007 Guadalupe Island aboard the *Sea Escape*. Expedition leader: Dean Fessler \$2,900 per diver

Thank You to our Supporters!

We are very grateful for the support of:

- **The Adikes Family Foundation**
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- **San Diego Shark Diving**
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- **Wave Foundation**

SHARKFEST

The annual "Sharkfest" festival and art show was held July 16 at the Matawan, NJ, to mark the 90th anniversary of the 1916 shark attacks in Matawan. "This is one particular piece of history that has a lot of notoriety," said Sharen Laporta, event chair for SharkFest.

History, shark education and conservation were the theme of Sharkfest 2007. Richard G. Fernicola, M.D., author of "*Twelve Days of Terror: A Definitive Investigation of the 1916 New Jersey Shark Attacks*," conducted tours of the attack sites and signed copies of his book.



Richard Fernicola, Dianna Mercuri & Dean Fessler spoke with hundreds of visitors at SharkFest 2007

Visitors learned about sharks and the need for their conservation in tents featuring Shark Research Institute, Jenkinson's Aquarium, Sharks as Art, and vendors sold everything from lemonade to fossil shark teeth. Documentary films on sharks ran continuously, SRI provided speakers for the event, including SRI President, Stan Waterman and Dean Fessler, while Dianna & Peter Mercuri, Tori, Christina & Marco Romo, and Marie Levine staffed the booth. The day included wreath-laying ceremony at the graves of two of the victims.

August 18-19, Suzy Quashnichka educated children about sharks at the White Shark Festival in Gansbaai, South Africa.



During Discovery Channel's Shark Week, Education Director, Dean Fessler, was featured guest at the Adventure Aquarium.

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WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.SHARKS.ORG

Laptops Needed!

WANTED: Laptop computers. Upgrading your notebook or laptop computer? Consider donating your old laptop to SRI's Education Department (MAC or XP preferred).

WANTED: Items for Fall Auction. Trips, books, art, posters, jewelry, etc. All donations are fully tax-deductible.

Board seeking additional Trustees

SRI's Board of Trustees is seeking additional members. SRI members, sponsors or individuals that are interested in applying for a seat on the Board should send an email to marie@sharks.org.

Criteria for a potential Trustee: 1) Actively support and promote the mission of SRI; 2) Have the ability to obtain sizeable annual grants or corporate donations, or make a significant personal financial commitment; 3) Be available to attend (either in-person or by conference call) at least one Board of Trustees meeting each year.

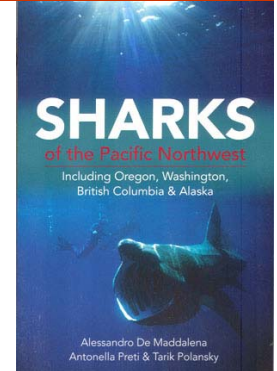
News from Palau

The Palau Attorney General is calling for the forfeiture of a Taiwanese fishing vessel caught last week in Palau's economic zone with 650 shark fins and 94 shark carcasses, as well as the vessel's cargo and equipment. The Supreme Court of Palau has charged the owner with 30 counts, and its captain and representative in Palau. The captain is also being charged with attempted bribery.

Members' Bookshelf

Sharks of the Pacific Northwest by Alessandro De Maddalena, Dr. Antonella Preti and Tarik Polansky focuses on 18 species of sharks that inhabit Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and Alaska and brings to the surface surprising facts. Dr. Alessandro De Maddalena, in addition to being one of the world's top shark experts, is a superb marine life illustrator!

Available for \$19.95 plus shipping from Harbor Publishing www.harbourpublishing.com



An unexpected treat!

Divers on the July expedition to Holbox expected to meet dozens of whale sharks, and they certainly did! But the sea had another surprise for the divers: they also encountered legions of magnificent golden rays! The photo at right was taken by expedition member Sandra Critelli, http://www.pbase.com/worldphotos/whale_sharks_2007&page=1

