DISNEY vs. OCEAN CONSERVATION

Disney Corporation spent decades building and nurturing its image as an advocate of conservation and defender of wildlife. For most of us Disney was special. It always could be counted on to do the “right” thing and as result became so beloved by children and parents worldwide that it grew to become a massive multi-national corporation, an icon for family values and wildlife preservation. But somewhere along the line Disney lost its founder’s vision and now (sadly) Disney’s image has been irreparably damaged.

When Disney World Hong Kong, due to open September 2005, announced that shark fin soup would be available for Wedding Banquets, conservation organizations worldwide appealed to them to eliminate the dish from their menu, citing steep declines in shark populations.

As result of world-wide global pressure from conservationists, parents, children and concerned citizens, Disney World Hong Kong said they would only serve shark fin soup “on request”, insisting that it is a “cultural tradition”. Although many other negative cultural traditions, including cannibalism and binding women’s feet, have been abandoned, a spokesperson for Disney said while the company takes environmental stewardship seriously it also respects “local cultures” - perhaps a hint that a Disney World Africa will offer elephant and rhino meat and Disney World Japan will soon serve whale meat.

On June 6th, Disney claimed to have reached agreement with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to purchase fins only from sharks harvested legally. (Were they originally planning to buy fins from animals illegally caught and/or poached from marine reserves?). On June 10th, Disney announced plans to offer leaflets to those ordering shark’s fin, explaining “environmental concerns”. In other words, Disney plans to send the message: “We are aware that the demand for shark fin soup is damaging the ocean ecology, but making a profit is more important to us than the environment.”

Disney continues to ignore the core issue: Shark populations can no longer sustain ANY harvesting, legal or otherwise. The serving and consumption of shark fin soup has directly resulted in the depletion of sharks worldwide, thereby negatively affecting the ecology of the entire marine ecosystem.

Serving shark fin soup is hypocritical and totally unacceptable behavior for a corporation that seeks to promote itself as being environment-friendly; there is no “middle ground” here. Disney Corporation is either pro-conservation or it is not.

Contact emails for Disney corporation executives are on our website: www.sharks.org
GLOBAL SHARK ATTACK FILE

SRI maintains the Global Shark Attack File (GSAF) as a resource for researchers, physicians and the media who require accurate information about these incidents.

AUSTRALIA: Queensland: On May 15, the lower leg of spearfisherman Ben Edelstein was injured by a blacktip shark. NSW: April 16, the board of surfer Simon Letch was bitten by a bronze whaler shark. Northern Territory: April 16, at Bremer Island, spearfisherman Clayton Deane, 20, sustained minor cuts above his eye from a copper shark. South Australia: August 24, marine biologist Jarrod Stehbens was killed by a white shark off Glenelg.

MEXICO: On June 20 a surfer was bitten on his left foot at Baja.

SOUTH AFRICA: Eastern Cape Province: The left buttock and legs of surfer Jay Cataral, 32, were lacerated by a raggedtooth shark. Western Cape Province: June 4, spearfisherman Henri Murray was fatally injured by a white shark.

SOUTH KOREA: On June 12, a diver was bitten on the knee at Kaeui Island by a 10' white shark.

USA: California: On August 24, the leg of surfer Tony Simmonson was lacerated by a juvenile white shark off LaJolla. Florida: April 6, a small hammerhead shark injured the left calf of Jessica Abe at Jacksonville Beach. April 16, the lower leg of Jessica Lynch, 70, was bitten by a 6' blacktip shark as she was wading at Sarasota. May 17, Michelle Smith was bitten on the right arm at Sand Key Beach by a small shark. May 28, Alfonso Garcia, 33, was swimming at Daytona Beach Shores when his foot was bitten by a small shark. June 16 a shark’s tooth was recovered from a 20-year-old male in Brevard County. June 25, boogie-boarder Jamie Marie Daigle, was fatally bitten by a bull shark at Crystal Beach. Vanuatu: On June 22, Alysha Webster, 7, was fatally injured by a shark at Atchin Island.

Field Notes

SRI-LaPaz Field Station, Mexico: The ongoing aerial survey indicates large whale sharks returned to the Bay of LaPaz in early June.

SRI-Seychelles: Whale Shark Sightings January to March 2005: 74 reported sightings, 43 in-water encounters, one shark identified, 16 sharks sexed (nine males and one female), and one shark re-sighted from last season. Aerial Sightings, three flights, two hours flying time, four sharks sighted, maximum of three sharks seen on a single flight.

SRI-Australia: Suzy Quashnichka filmed what may be courtship behavior of whale sharks at Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia.

Thank you to our Supporters

SRI is very grateful for the support of:

- San Diego Shark Diving
- Freeman Foundation
- IGTOA
- Microwave Telemetry, Inc.
- The Kathy & Tom Miller Family Foundation
- Project AWARE Foundation
- The Philanthropic Group
- The Rohauer Collection Foundation
- Underwater Video Images
- Westcliff Foundation
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**Members’ Bookshelf**

*Sharks of the Adriatic Sea*, by L. Lipej, A. De Maddalena & A. Soldo, Published by Knjiznica Annales Majora, Koper, 254 pp. This book includes everything that is known about shark species inhabiting the Adriatic Sea. It is the first complete reference on sharks of this area, and provides information on the study area, generalities on the biology and ecology of sharks, status of sharks in the Adriatic, doubtful species, a comprehensive key to all species, and a glossary of measurements. Individual accounts of 38 species are given which include drawings, photos, scientific and vernacular names, morphology, reproduction, diet, habitat, distribution, behavior, danger to man, importance to the fisheries of the Adriatic, status in the area, museum specimens, similar species and references. The text is supported by many pictures, including 43 rare photographs from the Adriatic and 65 drawings. The cost is 24.70 EUR plus S&H (approx. 6 to 8 EUR) and the book can be ordered via fax at: 00386 5 663-77-10.

*Field Guide to the Great White Shark* by Aidan Martin, Director of SRI-Canada and founder of ReefQuest Centre for Marine Research. This is a “must-have” for anyone fascinated by this apex predator. It is an invaluable aid to everyone who wants to learn more about this charismatic and fascinating animal. 208 pages, 123 black-and white illustrations, and photos. Order direct from ReefQuest: www.elasmo-research.org/books.htm

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**SEASPACE 2005**

SRI was one of more than 200 exhibitors at SEASPACE 2005 on the weekend of June 4-5 at the Reliant Center in Houston Texas - The event, the largest underwater exposition in the southwest, featured a host of seminars, workshops, photography gallery and a film festival. SEASPACE is a non-profit corporation, with proceeds from the event funding marine-related scholarships and grants. Joan David, Manager of the SRI Texas office reports that many of our members stopped by to say “Howdy”, and other exhibitors donated items for an SRI auction to be held later this year.

**Whale Shark Conference - Australia**

The First International Whale Shark Conference was held May 9-12 in Perth, Western Australia. Delegates from 23 countries, representing governmental agencies, research facilities and program, the eco-tourism industry and the public attended. A number of SRI staff & members presented papers: Jason Holmberg & Brad Norman (the Ecocean project), Marie Levine (satellite telemetry, results of a 5-year aerial study of whale sharks) Aidan Martin (behavioral ecology of whale sharks, management of whale shark ecotourism), David Rowat (migration and movements of whale sharks in the Seychelles), Jennifer Schmidt (whale shark DNA study), and Suzy Quasnichka (UK) presented videos of her study at Ningaloo Reef.