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...
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.

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.

**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.

**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.
**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](http://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**
- **Craig Grube**
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- **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 finning 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!
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. 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.

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