The Republic of the Marshall Islands, a Micronesian nation of atolls and islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, has created the world’s largest shark sanctuary by passing legislation that ends commercial fishing of sharks in 1,990,530 square kilometers (768,547 square miles) of the central Pacific country’s waters.

“We salute the Republic of the Marshall Islands for enacting the strongest legislation to protect sharks that we have seen,” said Matt Rand, director of global shark conservation for the Pew Environment Group, part of the group that is working to establish shark parks around the world. “As leaders recognize the importance of healthy shark population to our oceans, the momentum for protecting these animals continues to spread across the globe.”

Key provisions of the Marshall Islands' law include:

- A complete prohibition on the commercial fishing of sharks as well as the sale of any sharks or shark products. The law bans the sale, trade and possession of sharks, shark fins, or any other part of shark.
- Any shark caught accidentally by fishing vessels must be set free.
- Significant fines, between US$25,000 to US$200,000, for anyone who is found to be fishing sharks or in possession of shark fins. In addition, violators would be fined the market value of the product in their possession.
- A ban on the use of longline fishing.
- Enforcement that requires all fishing vessels to land their catch at one of the country's ports and bans at sea transfers.

“In passing this bill, there is no greater statement we can make about the importance of sharks to our culture, environment and economy,” said Senator Tony deBrum, a representative from Kwajalein Atoll who was a cosponsor of the measure that created the protected zone. “Ours may be a small island nation, but our waters are now the biggest place where sharks are protected. We hope other Micronesian leaders will join with us to make good on our collective of a regional sanctuary.”

In 2009, Palau President Johnson Toribiong created the world’s first shark sanctuary. At the United Nations, he called upon all nations to join Palau in protecting the oceans by protecting sharks. As a world leader, he raised awareness among leaders of nations as to the precarious state of the ocean ecosystem. In early 2010, the Maldives followed suit, then Indonesia set aside the waters around Raja Ampat as a shark sanctuary. Honduras protected sharks in its 92,000 square miles of ocean, followed by the Bahamas with 250,000 square miles.
**AB376 Update**

Why is California AB 376 so important? Because California is the accumulation point for fins from Central and South America that are shipped to the Pacific Rim. The states of Washington, Oregon and Hawaii have already closed their ports to the shark fin traffic. Passage of AB 376 will seriously disrupt and damage the world shark fin trade.

The California State Assembly approved AB376, which bans the sale, trade or possession of shark fins. The bill’s author, Assemblyman Paul Fong, D-Cupertino, and its supporters say the sharks are mutilated and the practice puts them at risk of extinction, which would wreak havoc on underwater ecosystems. Assemblyman Jared Huffman, D-Marin, who co-authored the bill, said shark populations have been on the decline for two decades. “The science is unambiguous: Sharks are in trouble,” he said.

The bill then went to the Appropriations Committee which passed it and sent it to the Senate. In the Senate, the most vocal opposition came from Senator Leland Yee, who claimed that it discriminates against Asians. Polls of the Asian community, however, showed overwhelming support of AB 376. Some 70% of the Asian community supported the bill while those objecting to the bill were for the most part the shark fin traders who hired big-money lobbyists to oppose the bill. The Senate passed the bill by an overwhelming majority.

Now the bill now languishes on Governor Brown’s desk. According to his aides, the governor hasn’t decided if he will abide by the expressed wishes of his constituents, as well as the Assembly and the Senate. Please call Governor Brown at (916) 445-2841 and remind him who he was elected to serve.

**SHARK DAY: August 15, 2011**

Mountain View, California: SRI, and many other supporters of AB 376, the bill to ban trade and possession of shark fins, met with California State Senators, testified and endorsed the bill before the Senate.

Georgienne Bradley, SRI Board of Trustees, and actress (left) with Assembly Fong, one of the sponsors of AB 376. and actress Bo Derek who spoke eloquently in favor of AB 376.

A special thanks to actor Leonardo DiCaprio and actress Anne Archer who gave freely of their time and resources in support of this bill and shark conservation.
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
- William Bunting, Jr.
- Patricia Chock
- Dr. Sylvia Earle
- Evinrude Motors
- Ben Fackler
- Max & Victoria Goodwin
- Edmund Grainger
- Grant Giuliano
- Greater Than One, Inc.
- Craig Grube
- Patrick Haemmig
- The Horgan Family
- The Hun School of Princeton
- The Imaging Foundation
- Lauren Hutton
- Jenkinson’s Aquarium
- Jupp Baron Kerckerinck zur Borg
- The Martin Revson Foundation
- Beth & Tom McKenna
- Microwave Telemetry, Inc.
- Nicole Miller
- Amos Nachoum
- Shark Bite Scuba
- Stephen Nagiewicz
- OceanBlue Divers
- Ocean Geographic Society
- The Philanthropic Group
- Ted Przybokci
- The Rohauer Collection Foundation
- Rolex Watch USA
- RPX
- Wiltraud Salm
- San Diego Shark Diving
- Sea Save
- The Shark Finatics
- Greg Sparks
- State Street Global Advisors
- The Barbara & Donald Tober Foundation
- Underwater Video Images
- The Verrill Foundation
- Al Vinjamur
- The WAVE Foundation
- Kathrin Winkler & Angus Campbell
- World Wildlife Fund
- Josip Zeko

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.

Please visit www.mybrokerdonates.com to learn more.

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.

**SRI Fall Auction:** Do you have any books, unused dive vacations, dive buddies, shark jewelry, prints, posters, paintings, sculpture, maps, pieces of eight, doubloons, shipwreck artifacts in the back of a closet, gift cards, theater tickets, restaurant vouchers, anything weird, wonderful or shark related that that you’d be willing to donate? Items for the auction can be mailed to or dropped off at 70 Heather Lane, Princeton, NJ 08540. All donors will be given a tax receipt for the retail value of their donation. Thank you to all our members who have already donated materials. *We greatly appreciate your creativity & generosity!*
July 9th, 2011: 1,000 children (ages 7 to 15) in Hong Kong — the epicentre of the shark fin trade — took a pledge not to eat shark fin soup. This is a definitive campaign to empower children and inspire the citizens of Hong Kong and communities around the world to end the consumption of shark fin soup. The event was organized by Michael Aw of Ocean Geographic, and sponsored by Rolex, Ocean Geographic, Shark Research Institute and the Hong Kong Shark Foundation. SRI’s Honorary President, Sylvia Earle, and Board members David Doubilet and Jennifer Hayes, attended as SRI representatives.

4th Annual City of Water Day Festival, a celebration of the NY/NJ waterfront. Hundreds of organizations participated, including SRI. There were boat rides, games, films performances, readings, crafts and much more — and thousands of people joined in. Dean and Melissa staffed our table on Governors Island, while the Canabal and Romo families talked with hundreds of people at Liberty State Park.
Summer is a great season in the northeast to get out and mingle with neighbors and spread the word about shark conservation. The summer started with blast in mid-May at Pennington Day. From then on, SRI was at events almost every weekend. Here are just a few of them.

**August 8th, 2011: The Camden Riversharks Club**, our local South Jersey minor league baseball team based in Camden, NJ, hosted an evening with the Shark Research Institute — while beating their rivals, the Road Warriors. SRI videos and images played on the scoreboard and $5 of every ticket was donated to SRI. Adventure Aquarium joined SRI, bringing a touch tank and a small live shark. It was a wonderful summer evening, a very enthusiastic crown and a terrific baseball game. The new state-of-the-art Campbell stadium has plenty to offer families, plus a great view of Philadelphia and the Delaware River. It was such an enjoyable experience for everyone that Riversharks and SRI decided to make it an annual event!
Secaucus held its first Green Summer Festival at Mill Creek Point on Saturday, Aug. 20th. The event, geared toward educating area residents about taking responsibility for the impact they have on the environment, featured Shark Research Institute, Tenafly Nature Center Turtle Back Zoo, Liberty Science Center and Home Depot. “Going green’ is a phrase that needs to have real meaning for people,” Mayor Michael Gonnelli said. “This event gave people a chance to learn a little bit more about how to take an active role and make a difference when it comes to conservation and preservation.”
Our annual Shark Celebrity Auction was a huge success!

More than 50 shark celebrities & scientists from around the world allowed themselves to be auctioned to raise funds for our shark conservation programs.

Winning bidders will be taking their celebrity to lunch or dinner and have the opportunity to "talk shark" with one of the world’s experts.

We thank all of you, celebs and bidders alike, for making the event so much fun for everyone!
On September 14th, South Jersey Business Alliance, The National Association of Women Business Owners South Jersey, African American Business & Professional Network, South Jersey Business Networking Group, and The Business Mingle, hosted an evening of “Networking with Sharks” as a fundraiser for Shark Research Institute at Adventure Aquarium. More than 500 professionals and business owners attended to network and show their support for shark conservation. Guests had cocktails on the promenade with a spectacular view of the river and Philadelphia skyline, then dined in the Conservation ballroom with its wall of live sharks. It was a wonderful event and we gained many new members!

We are especially grateful to the team at Adventure Aquarium and Scott Jones, President and Founder of the South Jersey Business Alliance for organizing the event.

The cool waters of New England are home to 33 species of sharks. Accurately illustrated and meticulously researched, this book aims to provide solid information on sharks in general and profile the species inhabiting New England waters. For each species, this handy field guide gives classification, morphology, color, shape of teeth and dental formula, size, age, embryonic development, diet, habitat, distribution, behavior and threat (if any) to humans. The authors’ goal is encourage the understanding, admiration and protection of sharks.


“Riveting...An elegantly written, intelligent homage of diving — a romp through history, a round-up of fascinating characters and an investigation into why breathing compressed air underwater is so, so marvelous. A modern classic”. Dive Magazine.

“Non divers will be captivated by Tim Ecott’s engaging mix of personal odyssey and hard science”... The Times Literary Supplement.

I would like very much to help the SRI spread the message about the plight of our apex predators and dispel the inaccurate information that the media oftentimes uses to sensationalize sharks and draw readers and viewers. Ultimately, sharks die as a result of these media activities.

Here’s my story: from 1974 (before the book "Jaws" came out) until 1999, I fished solely for sharks around the world. I fished with the late Frank Mundus out of Montauk, Long Island; out of Freeport, Long Island; I fished out of Bimini where Hemingway stayed; off Miami Beach's old Castaways' dock; out of Nassau in the Bahamas; off of Acapulco and Cancun, Mexico; off Bermuda with Captain Allen DeSilva; out of Kona, Hawaii; off the Farallon Islands near San Francisco; off of Key West; out of Tampa, Florida; and I spent 2 1/2 days on the water fishing for the White Pointer in South Australia (in 1984) off of South Neptune Island with Captain Bill Zealand. (Even in 1984 the White Pointer was a rarity.) I have caught tigers, blue sharks, brown sharks, duskeys, common hammerheads, great hammerheads. makos, blacktips and lemon sharks. I kept the big ones for trophies and threw the smaller ones back. I have caught sharks by trolling, chumming, and off the kite as well as bouncing a "cannonball" off the ocean floor.

But here's the bottom line: I made a huge mistake killing these magnificent animals and have done a 180 degree turn - I want to help save our sharks because without them our aquatic ecosystem will collapse. In my youth I made some reckless choices; maturity has led me to realize that sharks are not dumb, man-eating, flesh-addicted terrors. They are partners with us on earth and their 400 million years of evolution do not deserve to be wiped out by long-liners, fin mongerers and trophy seekers.

So, how can I help SRI? I am not a man of wealth but I am a published author and an experienced (and not shy) public speaker. And I do know a bit about sharks...Anthony Micolo, New York
New T-shirts Available

Donald Shultz of Animal Planet’s Wild Recon was recently chasing down rhino poachers in Africa when he met artist Ryan Steely and asked him design a shirt for SRI. You can order the shirt directly at http://nadabrand.3dcartstores.com/Respect-the-Fin_p_120.html and Joel is putting a link to nadabrand on our website. For every ‘Respect the Fin’ shirt purchased, Ryan Steely and Nadabrand are donating $9 to SRI.

Mark your Calendars

October 7, 2011: SRI member Dr. Dino Rulli and his band, Sharks on Bicycles, are opening for Robert Gordon (rockabilly legend) at The Wonder Bar in Asbury Park, NJ.

October, 28-30, 2011: The European Elasmobranch Association’s 15th Annual Scientific Conference. The meeting, hosted by the German Elasmobranch Society and the Natural History Museum of Berlin, will take place in Berlin, Germany. Deadline for abstract submission is August 31, and the deadline for registration is September 30. Invited are contributions on all aspects of chondrichthyan research; a special focus will be given on shark fisheries and conservation. Further details on the programme, abstract submission, registration, social events, and EEA student travel awards are on-line on the EEA website at: www.eulasmo.org

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.

Field Expeditions

WHALE SHARKS
Cancun, Mexico: July 23 to July 30, 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
Isla Guadalupe: Dive with Stan Waterman on his 90th Birthday! Although not an SRI expedition, legendary underwater photographer Amos Nachoum will celebrate Stan’s birthday with a few friends October 5-12 (cost $5,900) and October12-18. (cost $4,900). If you’d like to join them, please contact SRI HQ at (609) 921-3522.
The US National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has listed the largetooth sawfish (*Pristis perotteti*) on the Endangered Species Act (ESA), an important move toward protecting the species and raising public awareness about the plight of all sawfish species. As of August 11th, 2011, the species has US federal protection.

Sawfish are rays characterized by long, tooth-studded snouts. They are very vulnerable to overexploitation because of their slow growth, late maturation and small litters of 1 to 13 pups. In 2007, all sawfish species were placed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*; except *P. microdon* which is listed on Appendix II. Appendix I essentially bans all international trade in a species.

Largetooth sawfish occur in warm temperate to tropical coastal waters and rivers in Mexico, Central and South America, and West Africa. In the US, the species has been reported in the Gulf of Mexico, primarily in Florida and along the Texas coast, although it hasn’t been recorded there since the 1960s. The only other species of sawfish in the USA is the smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) which was listed on the ESA in 2003. Under the ESA, it is illegal to catch or harm an endangered species. If a sawfish is caught accidentally, there are guidelines for fishermen how to safely handle and release them.

The biggest threats to sawfish are incidental take (or "bycatch") in fishing gear — nets, lines and, in particular, shrimp trawls. Juveniles utilize shallow near-shore habitats such as mangrove forests but degradation of these areas has probably contributed to decline of this species. Sawfish rostrums (i.e., their "saws") are sold as curios; and their fins are among the most valuable in the shark fin trade.

Critically endangered, sawfish numbers have declined by 99%. "Sawfish are among the most endangered fish in the world," said Shark Advocates International President, Sonja Fordham. "By adding largetooth sawfish to the Endangered Species List, the U.S. government is taking an important step toward preventing extinction of this remarkable animal." Fordham adds that the US will encourage other range countries to protect the species.

* Matthew McDavitt, a lawyer from Virginia, worked on his own for a decade, gathering data on the international sawfish trade. In 2007, his comprehensive overview of the trade enabled the US to successfully propose sawfishes for CITES Appendix I, making them the only Family of elasmobranchs listed on Appendix I. In 2008, Mr. McDavitt was one of the recipients of our Shark Conservation Awards in recognition of his outstanding efforts in securing international protection for sawfishes.
An estimated 90 percent of the world shark population has disappeared in the last 50 years. There is now a giant vortex of plastic trash in the Pacific Ocean. In Costa Rica, an estimated 14 turtles are caught per every 1,000 long-line hooks, the world’s highest percentage. These alarming statistics, as well as several other grim realities about the world’s seas, were presented during the State of the Oceans Summit in San José, Costa Rica. The summit, held during EcoWeek August 13-20, was organized by Richard Stewart of Ocean Realm magazine, and featured a panel of national and international environmental experts, all with a shared concern over the deteriorating state of the world’s oceans. The unifying theme of the summit centered on conservation.

Jupp Kerckernick Borg, president of the Shark Research Institute and the Summit’s keynote speaker, has committed his life to lobbying for a worldwide moratorium on shark finning. “The biggest problem with the human species is that we willingly kill the species that share the world with us,” Kerckernick said. “We are looting the ocean of one of its most vital species.”

“The amount of people out there fighting to save our oceans is a small but powerful group who realize that the oceans are the heart of the world,” said Jani Schulz, moderator of the summit and founder of Rainforest Radio in the southwest Osa Peninsula. “We are all working on reducing the amount of human impact on the oceans to conserve them for future generations. We must unify our efforts and ideas so that we can work together to save the waters that we love.”

Randall Arauz, president of the Marine Turtle Restoration Program (Pretoma), spoke about the importance of enforcing responsible fishing practices, banning the importation of shark fins and creating a national fishing schedule, which would limit the extraction of certain species during periods of the year when catch quantities are at their lowest. Arauz presented figures that indicate a shrinking number of sharks, dolphins, yellow-fin tuna and mahi-mahi in national waters. “What Costa Rica really needs is an emphasis on solutions that benefit all species, mainly the sensitive and endangered species,” Arauz said. “Currently, the only ecosystem solution in Costa Rica is to reduce fishing, though no one wants to reduce the number of fishing boats or reduce the size of the fishing areas, meaning any sort of protective progress is stalled or making only very tiny strides.”

Presentations were also given by Ronald Sanabria, vice president of Sustainable Tourism at Rainforest Alliance, and Jenny Arce, a biologist at the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Tele-communications (MINAET). Sanabria’s presentation addressed the importance of developing national and regional tourism in a way that is harmonious with the environment.

Dustin Macdonald, chair of the Los Angeles County Surfrider Foundation in California, told of his organization’s work to reduce plastics and styrofoam in the ocean. He explained how fish, birds and sea creatures are regularly consuming plastic particles. The Surfrider Foundation and marine biologists conducted tests on fish and found that large percentages had plastic in their digestive systems. “A recent study was published that tested 671 lantern fish, the most common fish in the central Pacific,” he said. “Thirty-five percent were found to have ingested plastic. Lantern fish are usually eaten by seals, dolphins, humans and mahi-mahi, meaning plastics are then transferred throughout the food chain.” His father, Bill MacDonald, an environmental film producer and former Marine Awareness coordinator for The Cousteau Society, has spent most of his career educating people about increasing amounts of ocean trash and plastic accumulation. “Parts of the ocean have become disgusting cesspools of the plastic,” he said in one of his documentaries. “It has to be burned into the conscience of humanity that the ocean is now a plastic wasteland.”

A highlight of the event was María José Suárez, a sixth grader from Lincoln School, and her presentation about the importance of involving a younger generation in the fight to save the ocean. Suárez, who is a Costa Rican environmental youth ambassador, gave an impassioned speech about the important role the younger generation needs to play to protect oceans from further degradation.
**Study of Tainted Seafood Kept Under Wraps for Seven Years**

Spain’s Environment Officials Claimed Document was not for Public Consumption

What is not surprising is the fact that shark, as well as swordfish and the shortfin mako shark, contain high levels of mercury. What is alarming, however, is that the government kept quiet for seven years about a study carried out by the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO) which concluded there were mercury-concentration levels higher than permitted by law in these popular seafood dishes fished in the Atlantic and Indian oceans.

After a three-year legal battle before the Spanish High Court, the environmental group Oceana won access to the report. In its refusal to make it public, the Environment Ministry argued that the study was an internal working document.

On December 5, 2003, the IEO concluded a major study concerning the levels of arsenic and heavy metals in fish and shellfish sold to consumers. The three-volume report analyzed contamination in 90 species. IEO scientists took hundreds of samples from the high seas and in fisheries of every species consumed in Spain. The 321-page reports deals with all types of contamination in all possible species, from pink salmon to mussels and squid.

The conclusions were astonishing: 62.5 percent of the 128 samples of shortfin mako shark had mercury levels much higher than permitted by law while 54.2 percent of swordfish also exceeded the limit. Metal levels in bluefin tuna, however, were much lower: only four samples passed the legal limit for mercury.

In 2006, Oceana became aware of the report and demanded a copy. “They didn't want to give it out because they didn't want to cause alarm. Heavy-metal pollution in large pelagic species is a serious issue, but they feared the impact it could have on the fishing industry if were to be made public,” explains Xavier Pastor, director of the Oceana.

An Environment Ministry spokesman explained that over the years officials felt that it was "an internal opinion to be forwarded to the European Commission," which would decide what to do with it.

The 2006 Law on Access to Environmental Information requires that all such documents are made public as outlined by the Aarhus International Convention. The High Court ruled in favor of Oceana in December 2009. But when the government still delayed its release, Oceana filed another complaint and finally received a copy in March 2011.

Congratulations to Oceana for persisting and bringing this important study to light!

**Food Network Removes Shark Receipes After 30,000 Sign Change.org Petition**

The Food Network showcases thousands of recipes, and for years some have included sharks: shark tacos, shark au poivre, shark fin soup. Thanks to the 30,000 people who signed change.org’s petition to stop listing all recipes that featured shark, such menu items will no longer appear on the network. The petition was prompted by concerns about the crashing populations of sharks.

The petition began on August 2nd, taking advantage of the interest in sharks and in time for Discovery Channel's Shark Week. Ten days later, the Food Network responded and agreed not to feature any shark dishes. The sole shark recipe that remains is for a drink called “Shark Attack” which features Bacardi rum. Well done, Change.org!
Whale Poop Needed for Healthy Fisheries

In addition to advocating for protection for sharks and many marine species at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), SRI advocates for whales and the upholding of existing international protections for whales. For years, we’ve been blasted by Japan with the argument for slaughtering whales: “Whales eat fishes; they compete with fisheries”.

But now, thanks to a paper by Joe Roman of the University of Vermont and James McCarthy of Harvard University, published in PLoS1, we have some additional ammunition with which to counter Japan.

We know that whales contribute to the ocean ecology even after death, their carcasses landing on the seabed and forming the basis for communities known as ‘whale falls’. However, Roman and McCarthy have discovered that in addition to seeding the seabed, whales also stimulate biological production at the ocean’s surface with their nutrient-rich feces. Whale feces are expelled in the form of light plumes, as result they do not sink, but float (if at the surface) or disperse laterally or upwardly (if below).

As a result, whales actually increase primary productivity — that is, they create conditions that allow the growth of greater amounts of phytoplankton, the basis of the marine food web, which feed on the nutrients in cetacean fecal matter. This in turn leads to greater secondary productivity: the tiny animals called zooplankton that eat the tiny phytoplankton, and so on.

Roman and McCarthy found that, in this way, whales in the Gulf of Maine add 23,000 metric tons of nitrogen to the ocean each year — a greater nutrient input than all the rivers that feed into the gulf combined. And that's NOW, after whale populations worldwide have been decimated. The mere presence of many more whales in the past would almost have certainly have meant the ocean was a vastly more productive place than today, they argue.

And, as far as the whalers’ arguments to justify their activities, ‘that whales compete with fisheries and should therefore be culled in order to allow fish populations to grow’, Roman and McCarthy’ answer that the opposite is true. “Not only is that competition small or non-existent, but actually the whales’ presence can increase nutrients and help fisheries and the health of systems wherever they are found,” reports Roman. “By restoring populations we have a chance to glimpse how amazingly productive these ecosystems were in the past.”