



Shark Foundation Annual Report for 2008

March 2009

Generall

Foundation

The Foundation continued to be active in shark protection measures in 2008. In addition to project support, the Foundation organized the move of the Shark Exhibit to an excellent location in the German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund. All projects brought satisfactory results, especially the lemon shark project in Jupiter, Florida, and the shark identification project. Both are making good progress and delivering valuable results. In the scope of our project work in 2008, three scientific articles were published in professional journals and two posters of angel sharks were printed. The important project on angel sharks in Gran Canary was newly taken up in the Foundation's project portfolio.

In February the Foundation delivered shark decoration material for the Zurich Theater which organized a large event to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the University of Zurich.

Also this year, the Foundation again received some generous and small donations from small and large shark friends who want to support our work.

Meanwhile, our Foundation is now 12 years old and on this occasion we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all benefactors and sponsors without whose help our work would not be possible!

US Shark Foundation

The U.S. Shark Foundation was again registered at its seat in Miami, Florida, as a charitable foundation in 2008. Gary and Brenda Adkison, as well as Professor Mahmood S. Shivji, continue in their function as directors of the U.S. Foundation, which was also self-supporting in 2008.

Total administrative costs to date: approx. CHF 36,000

Projects

Shark Exhibit

The Shark Exhibit was reopened on July 24, 2008, by Dr. Alexander Godknecht in the German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund where it also found keen interest in the media. It will remain there until the end of January 2009. By the end of December about 20,000 visitors had seen the Exhibit and very good contacts were established with the Oceanographic Museum and regional fishery managers.

Expenditures/investments 2008: approx. CHF 8,630

Total expenditures/investments to date: approx. CHF 200,000

Shark Identification

Professor M. Shivji from Nova University in Florida and his colleagues continued to make progress in 2008. The project supported by the Foundation and our U.S. affiliated foundation since 2000 endeavors, on the one hand, to identify sharks and determine their regional origin, based on the analysis of minute tissue samples. Using similar analysis methods, attempts are also being made to investigate multiple paternity as well as virgin conception with sharks. Both

research programs provide important information on the life of sharks and serve their direct protection. By clearly identifying sharks and their origin, it will become increasingly difficult for illegal fishermen to deceive fishery supervisory authorities. Knowledge on the various reproduction methods of sharks gives us deeper insight into shark biology and makes it possible to provide them with more specific protection.

In 2003 the shark identification project based on minute tissue samples was a prominent topic in the media. Being able to identify the white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) was a big step forward in connection with the animal's protection by CITES. Professor Shivji is also using his method to perform examinations on shark fins in Chilean and Asian fish markets. His DNA forensic studies on the fin trade have enabled us to better understand the relationship between Hong Kong fin trader names (in Chinese) for the fins and actual scientific species. For the first time this information has revealed which shark species are primarily being killed to supply the international fin markets, resulting in the first quantitative determination that up to 73 million sharks are killed each year just to supply the global fin markets.

"Virgin Birth"

Professor Shivji's research is supported by the Shark Foundation and has resulted in major revelations in the field of shark reproduction. Recently his team made the important discovery that female sharks can give birth without their eggs being fertilized by sperm from male sharks. This remarkable insight into shark virgin birth, scientifically known as parthenogenesis, was reported worldwide in the media with the result that textbooks on vertebrate reproduction have to be modified to include this new information

In 2008 Prof. Shivji and his team published two scientific papers, one on virgin birth and another an analysis of shark fin trade in Chile. Publications

Investments 2008: approx. CHF 24,200

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 137,000

Shark Nurseries

The shark "nurseries" project in Rookery Bay/Ten Thousand Islands remains under the management of Patrick O'Donnell in cooperation with the Mote Marine Lab. In 2008 additional young sharks were tagged, increasing the database to a total of 816 tagged young sharks, and which can be used later on to analyze the influence of restoring marshland areas. By the end of 2008 volunteers had already put in more than 7,400 hours for the project. The project manager requested no money in 2008, but an annual sum of \$4,500 is being reserved for both 2009 and 2010.

Investments 2008: CHF 0

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 21,100

Basking Sharks

Research on shark nurseries and migrations of basking sharks off the coast of Wales and Scotland (under the scientific direction of Colin Speedie) has met with success and will continue to receive the Foundation's support. Research activities have now been extended to the following regions: Cornwall, Devon, Wales, the Irish Sea, the Firth of Clydes and the Hebrides. Initial data collected is very interesting The first scientific publication appeared in 2005 and additional publications are expected in 2009. The project was mentioned in several English animal protection publications. Unfortunately, research had to be discontinued in the 2008 season because the research ship, "Forever Changes," had to be scrapped due to serious rudder damage.

In 2009 research will continue on a new ship, the "Pelerin" (French word for basking shark). At the end of 2008 the Basking Shark Report appeared on the "Natural England" website.

In 2008 the Foundation again made its digital camera available for the project.

Investments 2008: CHF 0

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 43,210

Bull Shark Tagging Fiji (Subproject 2)

Biological data is missing for practically all shark species, especially on their exact geographical and local distribution areas, their migratory behavior, or reliable statistics on population sizes. This also applies to such widely distributed, coastal species as the bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*).

The Foundation has been supporting the project since 2004. From 2007 to 2008 a dense network of acoustic transmitters and stationary receivers was built up in order to more precisely examine the small-scale movements of bull sharks in the region of Shark Fin Reef. In 2008 the Foundation also forwarded a water analysis device (CTD) from its basking shark project in England to Fiji in order to help researchers gain additional information on water quality in the observed region.

Investments 2008: CHF 4,600

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 41,200

Shark Protection Zone Fiji

The Foundation's Shark Protection project in Fiji supports Mike Neumann's goal of converting "Shark Fin Reef," a coastal area located off the southern coast of Viti Levu, into a shark protection zone.

In a first step the Foundation financed the 10-meter long motorboat "Reef Warden."

The shark protection zone was extended in 2006 and the Foundation guaranteed a sum of CHF 3,600 for the compensation of a newly participating village in return for yielding their usage rights to its reef areas in the protection zone. Today the project is self-supporting and in 2008 the Foundation received no request for funds. The Foundation will continue to provide support if and when required.

In 2008 the "Reef Warden" was sold because a larger overhaul was no longer reasonable from a financial point of view. It was replaced by a new ship from the dive center. Proceeds of this sale will go to the bull shark tagging project.

Investments 2008: CHF 0

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 31,300

Lemon Sharks Jupiter (Florida / USA)

Since the end of 2006 the Foundation has been supporting a research project initiated to investigate the lemon shark population in Jupiter (Florida, USA). The project is managed by the world-famous shark researcher Professor Samuel "Doc" Gruber and realized together with the Shark Lab (Bimini, Bahamas).

During the winter season, hundreds of lemon sharks gather off the Jupiter coast. Often they lie quietly on the seabed and appear to wait for something. The project aims at examining this unusual behavior more precisely. For this purpose selected females are tagged with acoustic transmitters and their movements are analyzed using stationary receivers. Biochemical and molecular biological analyses of the sharks are also performed in addition to investigating the sharks' swimming and migratory behavior.

Investments 2008: CHF 19,500

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 53,000

Shark Protection Hong Kong

Hong Kong is the international hub for shark fin trading. More than 70% of all shark fins are transported via Hong Kong into the Asian region, especially to the Chinese mainland. In cooperation with Alex Hafford and Paul Hilton, two photographers living in Hong Kong, an information campaign is being established on the shark fin trade. An exhibit and information brochure will be organized, supported by photos and film material from Alex and Paul. If this project is successful the information campaign will be extended to the Chinese mainland. The Foundation supports this project both financially and with its experience, as well as with material from the Shark Exhibit.

Investments 2008: CHF 11,300

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 14,700

New project:
**Angel Sharks on Grand
Canary**

Fourteen (14) out of 21 angel shark species are found on the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Shark Species (2006), including the angel shark *Squatina squatina*. This species is already extinct in the North Sea and critically endangered in the Eastern Atlantic. Some small populations can be found in the Southern Mediterranean and around the Canary Islands and priority must be given to their protection.

The project examines the angel shark population in the Grand Canary region in order to achieve better protection of their last habitats and nurseries in the Canary Islands.

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 10,300

Public Relations Activities of the Shark Foundation and Shark Info

Media / Public Relations

In 2008 the administrative office of the Shark Foundation and *Shark Info* again answered hundreds of calls and emails on questions regarding sharks. They also wrote various articles on sharks and gave interviews on current shark topics.

Although *Shark Info* does not produce any publications at the moment, it regularly receives inquiries on questions regarding sharks.

Worth special mention are lectures held on sharks in Zurich and St. Gallen by Dr. Jürg Brunnschweiler and Dr. Alexander Godknecht.

European Shark Week (ESW)

The second European Shark Week began in October 2008. The campaign week was organized in cooperation with Shark Alliance, Ocean Care and the EEA with the aim of pointing out the dramatic drop in shark populations in Europe, Europe's role in the international trade with sharks and the worldwide threat to sharks. In ESW 08 a petition was launched to support discussions foreseen for early 2009 on the draft of a European action plan for the protection of European shark populations.

In the scope of the ESW 08 Dr. Jürg Brunnschweiler gave a lecture in the Museum of Natural History in St. Gallen.

Through an online petition and the distribution of documentation and brochures the Foundation collected more than 4,100 signatures. These were presented to the European Commission together with signatures collected by other organizations

Web Server

In 2008 the Shark Foundation's German web site (www.hai.ch) recorded approx. 271,000 visits, the English web site (www.shark.ch) roughly 310,000. Clearly leading in popularity in the sides frequented on both servers was the Shark Database. Compared to 2007, a slight decrease in the number of visitors to both servers was registered.

Administration

Financial Policy of the Shark Foundation

Established on August 29, 1997, the Shark Foundation is an internationally active organization that falls under the supervision of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) / Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority in Bern. The Foundation can accept tax-deductible donations and once a year it submits its annual report and financial statement to the supervisory authority for

approval.

The Foundation finances all its activities through donations, presentations or the sale of products such as T-shirts or plush toy sharks. The Board of Trustees works on a voluntary basis and its members receive neither attendance fees nor salaries. The Foundation runs a "Shark Shop" on its Internet website (t-shirts, cuddly plush toy sharks, tear-off notebooks, postcards, shark sponsorships). Sales revenues flow directly into the Foundation account, and once a year all interested parties are sent a mailing requesting donations and including a pay-in slip.

In its first meeting of the respective year, the Board of Trustees of the Shark Foundation decides on the usage of any accumulated income and donation money from the previous year. Up until then no reserves are set aside; instead all funds are released to cover ongoing projects, investments and administrative costs. The annual accounts for both the Foundation and Shark Info are checked by Revisal, an auditing company located in Gossau.
