



Shark Foundation Annual Report for 2009

October 2010

General

Foundation

The Foundation continued to be active in shark protection measures in 2009. In June we successfully prevented a shark massacre. Thanks to the intervention of the U.S. Shark Foundation we were able to convince the organizers of a shark fishing competition in Fort Myers, Florida, not to kill the sharks caught but to mark them and set them free. Although sharks are extremely stressed when being caught and can be seriously injured by fish hooks, they at least got a second chance to live.

In August the Shark Foundation supported the production of a video on shark protection that was filmed and broadcast on the Fiji Islands.

In September the Shark Foundation designed a display cabinet showing Elasmobranchii (chimeras, rays and sharks) in honor of Charles Darwin's 200th birthday. The exhibit was set up in the Zurich Main Railway Station. In connection with this Darwin Year, the ETH and University of Zurich made a replica of the Tree of Life with all its branches. The exhibit attracted ten thousands of visitors and was a huge success.

In December we submitted a petition to the State of Florida requesting the statewide protection of lemon sharks. The importance of protecting this shark species in Florida was proven in various hearings by means of data available from the Foundation's Lemon Shark Project.

All projects that were supported brought satisfactory results, especially the Lemon Shark Project in Jupiter, Florida. In addition, four scientific articles were published in various professional journals in the scope of these projects in 2009.

In 2009 the Foundation again received large and small donations which helped to support our work. **We would like to express our deep gratitude to all our donors and sponsors for their support. Our work would not be possible without you!**

US Shark Foundation

The U.S. Shark Foundation was again registered at its seat in Miami, Florida, as a charitable foundation in 2009. 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 2009.

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

Projects

Shark Exhibit

Following an extensive update and renovation, the Exhibit was reopened by Dr. Toni Bürgin and Dr. Alexander Godknecht on April 25 in the Museum of Natural History in St. Gallen where it again triggered great interest. It was closed on October 25, 2009, and put into storage since no further exhibit locations were found.

Expenditures/investments 2009: approx. CHF 8,630
Total expenditures/investments to date: approx. CHF 210,000

Shark Identification "Virgin Birth"

Professor Mahmood J. Shivji from Nova University in Florida and his colleagues continued to work on various shark research projects in 2009. In the same year the Foundation supported the publication in a trade journal of a scientific report on shark fin trade.

Investments 2009: approx. CHF
Total investments to date: approx. CHF 161,000

Shark Nurseries

Pat O'Donnell continued to manage the Shark Nursery Project in Rookery Bay, Ten Thousand Islands, together with the Mote Marine Lab. In 2009 data collection work was continued.

Investments 2009: CHF 0
Total investments to date: approx. CHF 21,100

Basking Sharks

The study of nurseries and migrations of basking sharks off the coast of Wales and Scotland (under the scientific direction of Colin Speedie) has been successful and will continue to receive the Foundation's support. In 2009 research continued with a new ship, the "Pelerin" (French for basking shark), and the search for basking shark populations was extended to regions that, based on historical data, were rich in basking sharks years ago and could thus be the home of potential nurseries.

Investments 2009: CHF 0
Total investments to date: approx. CHF 43,210

Bull Shark Tagging Fiji (Subproject 2)

The Foundation has supported this project since 2004. In 2009 the dense network of stationary receivers on Shark Reef in Fiji was continually extended and various bull sharks were tagged with acoustic transmitters to enable more precise examination of their small-scale movements in that region.

Investments 2009: CHF 4,600
Total investments to date: approx. CHF 45,800

Shark Protection Zone Fiji

Today the Fiji Shark Protection Park Project is self-supporting. Part of the proceeds stemming from the sale of the "Reef Warden" were allocated to the production and broadcasting of a shark protection video in Fiji.

Investments 2009: CHF 0
Total investments to date: approx. CHF 31,300

Lemon Sharks Jupiter (Florida / USA)

In 2009 the data collection on lemon sharks continued in Jupiter. This data helped to launch a very promising petition for the protection of lemon sharks that was submitted to the State of Florida.

Investments 2009: CHF 13,610
Total investments to date: approx. CHF 66,600

Shark Protection Hong Kong Time restrictions prevented any additional work on this project in 2009.

Investments 2009: CHF 0

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 14,400

Angel Sharks on Grand Canary

This project examines the angel shark populations in the Grand Canary region in order to better protect the last habitats and nurseries found around the Grand Canary Islands. Between 2008 and 2009 more than 100 tissue samples were collected and sent to Professor Mahmood S. Shivji's laboratory for molecular biological kinship analysis.

Investments 2009: CHF 4,480

Total investments to date: approx. CHF 19,200

Whalesharks Mozambique

New Project

Whale sharks are on the IUCN Red List and Addendum II of CITES. The coastal region near Tofo Beach in Mozambique is an internationally significant region where whale sharks gather during the plankton bloom. The project was initiated in accordance with a request from the Mozambique government. In order to establish a marine protection area for whale sharks off its coast, Mozambique needs a scientifically-backed recommendation on where and how large such an area should be. Distribution data should build the foundation for determining an optimal location and necessary extension of the whale shark protection area in Tofu Beach. The protection area should, however, also benefit the local population since whale sharks are considered an attraction that promotes tourism in the region.

Project leader: Simon J. Pierce

Investments 2009: CHF 18,400

Public Relations Activities of the Shark Foundation and Shark Info

Media / Public Relations

In 2009 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.

Worth special mention are lectures held on sharks in the course of the Shark Exhibit in St. Gallen by Dr. Jürg Brunnschweiler, Rene Kindlimann and Dr. Alexander Godknecht.

In November 2009 Alexander Godknecht represented Switzerland/The Foundation at the Annual Meeting of the EEA (European Elasmobranch Association) in Mallorca. At the same time some old contacts were renewed and new ones established at a parallel congress held on shark and skate research.

European Shark Week (ESW)

The third European Shark Week began in October 2009. 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. The Shark Foundation helped in collecting tenths of thousands of signatures.

Web Server

In 2009 the Shark Foundation's German web site (www.hai.ch) recorded approx. 244,000 visits, the English web site (www.shark.ch) roughly 305,000. Clearly leading in popularity in the sides frequented on both servers was the Shark Database. Compared to 2008, 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.
