



SHOTLINES



Give Sharks A Chance

SHARKS GET more than their fair share of media attention but unfortunately this is usually for all the wrong reasons. One UK charity is working hard to promote a greater understanding of sharks, both in our own waters and further afield. Established in 1997, the Shark Trust is the UK registered marine charity dedicated to promoting the study, management and conservation of sharks, skates, rays and chimeras.

Awareness and education form the backbone of the Trust's work. Sharks, more than any other group of animals are surrounded by myth and misinformation, which contribute to the 'popular-culture' image of sharks as mindless killing machines, fuelling an innate fear in the minds of many people.

If you can look beyond the 'Shark Attack' media coverage the real news about sharks reads just as alarmingly:

- Deepwater sharks reached the headlines in autumn last year following an exposé of the unregulated deepwater gillnet fishery off the NW coast of Scotland. Following pressure from the conservation sector the fishery was closed, however the fate of these sharks hangs in the balance, with no legal protection they are still vulnerable to other fisheries.



now extinct angel shark - Simon Rogerson

- Reports from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) confirmed the Shark Trust's concerns with a formal declaration of extinction for the Angel Shark, *Squatina squatina*, in the North Sea, and a call for zero catch for Porbeagle, Spurdog, Thornback Ray and Common Skate – none of these recommendations were adopted in the latest round of fisheries quotas.
- Europe continues to hold the position of biggest exporter of fins into Hong Kong – 27% of the total trade. Shark finning is singularly the biggest threat to sharks with an estimated 100 million sharks lost to the trade every year –

that's three sharks per second!

However all is far from lost. There are many ways in which you and your family can get actively involved in shark conservation: hunt for mermaid's purses as part of the Great Eggcase Hunt; photograph Basking Sharks; report any shark sightings you might have both home and abroad; and support fundraising initiatives such as Scottish company Blueone (www.blueone.co.uk) who have designed a unique Deepwater Dogfish tshirt!

Visit the Shark Trust website for more details, and become a member to really make a difference! www.sharktrust.org.

Dust Those Cameras Off



Reclining Emperor Shrimp (Malcolm Hey) - highly commended in the underwater world section

IT'S THAT time of the year again - time to get snapping whilst out diving in a bid to win the Underwater World category in the Shell Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition.

All you need is imagination, a love of your subject and an underwater camera - as enthusiasts and professionals of all ages and nationalities are invited to enter their pictures in the world's largest and longest running wildlife photography competition.

Winners will have the accolade of seeing their images displayed at the Natural History Museum and in the BBC Wildlife maga-

zine. There is also a share in a £15,500 prize pool to whet your appetite for success.

Last year's competition received nearly 17,000 entries from more than 55 countries - so competition is stiff, but come on guys - lets show them what Scotland's photographers (amateur and professional) have to offer!

The closing date is 31 March and you can get yourself an entry form in the February issue of BBC Wildlife magazine, from the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition office (0207 942 5015) or on the website www.nhm.ac.uk/wildphoto.

Mini Conservation Trips

CORAL CAY has announced a new series of mini expeditions that have been launched in order to attract people who would like to be involved in marine conservation but due to time constraints are unable to participate in the usual 3 week plus stints. These mini expeditions are truly unique, led by top marine scientists they provide a rare opportunity for members of the public to gain hands-on experience in surveying some of the world's top marine environments.

Any funds that are raised through people going on these trips will be ploughed straight back into the charitable work of the CCC Trust, which is the UK's only charity dedicated to protecting coral reefs and tropical forests.

So, what do these mini expeditions entail and where can you go? First up is Whale Shark surveying for 7 or 14 days aboard the *DSV Discovery* at Sogod Bay in the Philippines. Not only will you survey these wonderful creatures but you will also get the opportunity to dive with them, in spectacular surroundings that are still relatively unknown to the common tourist. Home to the Napantao Marine Reserve the number of coral species is still unknown but thought to be around 300 plus - it may even surpass those of the Great Barrier Reef!

Or what about Tubbataha Atoll also in the Philippines? Here you will spend 9 days aboard the *DSV Discovery* to survey and dive the area - a UNESCO

World Heritage Site. Local scientists will give talks on reef ecology and provide training to allow you to take part in the reef's research programme.

Maybe you fancy going to the Red Sea, well you can spend 7 days on an expedition of the Northern Red Sea, where a typical day's programme will include a mix of lectures and up to four dives.

Lastly there is Danjungan Island located in the Sulu Sea, 3km west of Negros Occidental. The island was established as a Marine Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary in 2000. You will spend 10 days on this stunning island, with three scheduled



Do what you love doing and make a difference on Coral Cay trip

boat dives per day to explore and survey the island's protected reefs, unlimited snorkelling, kayaking and treks to explore the biodiverse shoreline, beaches and lagoons.

If this is the sort of thing you feel born to do and the short length of the trips is more in keeping with your busy life then go to: www.coralcay.org for more information.

Discover Archaeology At NAS Open Day

IF YOU are a wreck enthusiast and are looking for a day out, then get yourself along to the National Museum of Scotland for a special day organised by the host venue and the Nautical Archaeology Society.

Not only will you have the opportunity to see behind the scenes at Scotland's principal laboratory for conserving marine finds but there will also be hull timbers from the Dartmouth,

carvings, other finds from the Duart Point wreck and Italian maiolica and pottery from a Spanish 16th/17th century vessel.

You will also have the chance to speak to the archaeologists and conservators who have been investigating the sites of the above finds.

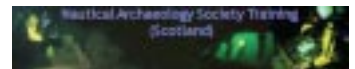
In addition to all this you will be able to have a go at finds photography and drawing and

you will learn what to do if you locate an archaeological site underwater - what the law is in terms of marine finds and how it affects you.

The day is free - but if you would like to attend then you must notify Philip Robertson, who needs names and expected arrival times of those interested. It is worth noting that this must be done at least 2 weeks prior to the event so that security

clearance can be arranged and numbers managed.

You can contact Philip on: 0131 552 5795 or email him: philiprobertson893@btinternet.com. More information can be found at: www.nasscotland.org.uk



London Dive Show

THE NEW dive season will get underway as the London International Dive Show



announces its dates for this year. Expect a plethora of exhibitors all eager to show you their wares - from technical equipment and dive suits to far flung holiday destinations..

There will also be a wide range of presentations, seminars and in-hall features.

The event will take place over the weekend of April 1 /2. Tickets cost £7.50 if booked in advance or £10.00 on the door, you can book tickets by going to www.diveshows.co.uk

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