

Mossel Bay in Hawaii

Ryan Johnson, Enrico Gennari, Adam Johnstone and Antonin Blaison from Oceans Research flew the flag of Mossel Bay at the International White Shark Symposium in Honolulu, Hawaii. Together they contributed an oral presentation and a poster to highlight their research efforts on the white sharks of Mossel Bay.

The Oceans Research team was able to present their research to the world's most esteemed shark biologists, including Dr Eugene Clark, a pioneer scientist who illustrated the learning capabilities of sharks in the 50's.

Also in attendance was John O'Sullivan, the aquarist who first succeeded in keeping a white shark in captivity at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. "Having the opportunity to present our Mossel Bay research to the world's top shark scientists was an incredible privilege and honour, especially with the positive feedback we received" said Oceans Research scientist Ryan Johnson who presented work on the predator-prey strategies of Mossel Bay's white sharks and Cape fur seals.

Numerous countries attended including South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Mexico, New Caledonia and scientists from the University of Hawaii. The diversity of countries reflected the growing knowledge on the migrations and movements of white sharks

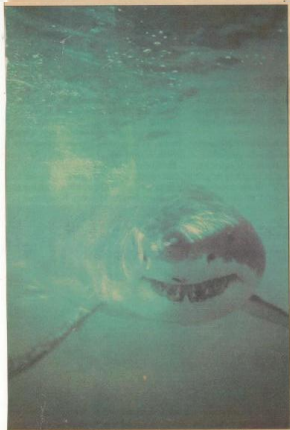
globally.

Many of the conference presentations focussed on these newly discovered migratory pathways between countries and continents. Some of the conferences other highlights included a round table discussion on the implementation of an international white shark photo identification catalogue that would enable long distance migrations to be documented and domestic population estimates to be calculated.

Another topic of interest was the heated debate on the research ethics surrounding the white shark, and in particular the protocols involved with capturing and restraining white sharks to attach satellite tags.

According to Oceans Research scientist Enrico Gennari the presentations given at the symposium "represented the cutting edge of white shark research, these presentations allow us to compare where we are at internationally, and also gain many ideas to improve and expand our research project here in Mossel Bay".

The conference will be producing a book in the near future that will feature the latest research discoveries on the white shark. This book will undoubtedly be the go-to reference guide for white sharks for the next decade. Ensuring that the great whites of Mossel Bay are featured in this publication will ensure that local research into this charismatic species will further expand and grow.



Face to face with the predator

Photo: Fiona Ayerst